Disciple Christian

Chapter 8

The Christian Daily Walk - What God has Purposed Us To Do and How should are behavior be as Christians

Preface

Christian Discipleship is a vital process that every believer and follower of Jesus Christ should and needs to go through by the guidance of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the word of God. This involves a sincere believer and follower of Jesus Christ to continue to receive and believe the word of God by faith found in Bible, as God's Holy Spirit leads a person into all truth. Discipleship involves wholehearted commitment to Jesus Christ as one's only Lord and Savior. Those individuals who have a genuine faith in Jesus, desire to love God and others and further to be diligent and faithful to learn, believe, grow in, apply and adhere to the teachings and principles of Jesus. They are not completely perfect in all of their behaviors, but purpose to repent and put to death their old sinful ways. Such individuals are correctly called "Christians" or "disciples" of Jesus Christ, and they are born again, abide in God's grace properly and are imputed the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

In contrast, are those who falsely claim to be a "christian' neither believe, nor desire to learn or follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, nor repent of their old sinful ways nor do the will of God, these individuals are pseudo christians, lukewarm, hypocrites and liars and have no part in God. No one can come to God the Father except through Jesus Christ, this also includes unbelievers, individuals of others religions and false worldly beliefs, idolatry etc. This Chapter contains and gives a biblical commentary on many of the main topics, doctrines and teachings found in God's Word, which we are called to embrace and live out with our love for God and for others. These principles guide us in how to reflect Jesus Christ in our lives, embody His character, and fulfill His purpose in the world.

Table of Contents

Introduction 14

(1) Being a Disciple of Jesus Christ: 17

(2) Living in Willful Obedience out of Love for God and Others: 18

(3) Summary: Some of the Main Reasons - 19

WHY To Believe in Jesus as your Lord And Savior and be a disciple of Jesus Christ 19

(4) We are called by Jesus Christ to become and make " Disciples " of others. 20

(5) “ Disciple " Defined: - Who is a "disciple" of Jesus Christ, or What does it mean to be a " disciple of Jesus Christ ? 20

(6) Who can become a disciple of Jesus Christ ? 22

(7) The Process of Christian Discipleship takes place over time: 22

(8) What are some of the benefits and blessings of being a Christian ? 24

(9) List of some of the Promises and Blessings from God to *believers and *followers of Jesus Christ, (*To His disciples) 25

(10) Why Be Discipled? 30

Why should we be discipled? And Why should we be a disciple of Jesus Christ? 30

(11) How Do We Make Disciples Of Jesus Christ? 31

(12) Who Cannot Be A Disciple Of Jesus Christ?: 35

(13) God’s Callings: 37

1) God’s calling and invitation to salvation: 37
2) The general callings of God for every Christian: 37
3) Specific callings and talents given to certain Christians: 38

(14) Walking With God And Walking With The Spirit Of God 42

(15) How Should We Walk?: 45

(16) The Holy Spirit 54

(17) Why should we receive the Holy Spirit of God ? 55

(18) How do we receive the Holy Spirit ? 58

(19) What , If anyone does Not receive The Holy Spirit ? Or if anyone does not have a sincere faith in Jesus Christ? 59

(20) Walking in the Spirit: The Transformative Role of the Holy Spirit in the Lives of Christians 62

(21) The Narrow Way 66

(22) Following Jesus 71

(23) Reverence Jesus as Lord 78

(24) Intimacy with Jesus Christ 80

(25) Drawing Near To God 81

(26) Abiding In Jesus and God the Father : 81
What does Abiding in Jesus Christ mean? 82
How Can We Abide In God’s Love? 83
So what are some the Commandments and Instructions of Jesus Christ that we should obey so that we will Abide in God and in His love? 84
So How do we ' Know ' with certainty that we abide in God and He in us ? 85
So How do we receive God's Spirit ? 86
So How do we know that we have God's Holy Spirit ? 88
Where should we abide ? 91
What Must We Do To Be Assured That We Abide In God’s Love? 92
Who may dwell and abide in God’s Kingdom and Lord, who shall abide in your tabernacle? who shall dwell in your holy hill? 92
Who Does Not have God The Father or The Son nor does that individual Abide In God? : ... 93
Who Does Not Abide In God Nor His Love? 93
Who Does Not Abide In God Nor His Kingdom? 94
What if Someone Chooses Not To Abide In Jesus Christ? 95
(27) Abide In God 95
(28) Repent / Repentance 98
(29) Abide in the Grace and Forgiveness of Jesus Christ 103
(30) Hyper-Grace and Abusing God's Grace: 107
(31) Aligning with God's Heart 110
(32) Water Baptism 111
(33) The Church - Christian Fellowship 116
(34) Continue In The Word Of God 117
Historical Facts About The Bible: 118
(35) The Word of God - Study Contents 121
Forms of The Word of God - Found in the Bible 122
Symbolical Terms - Which represents the Word of God; 123
How Can We Understand God's Word ? 123
Why Should We Read, Listen, Study And Learn God’s Word? 126
Why Should We Meditate On, Speak, Proclaim, Teach And Preach God’s Word? 126
How Does God Want Us To Relate To His Word? 128
How and what, in the word of God, should we share? How should we preach ? 129
What is NOT The Word Of God? 130
The Nature Of God’s Word: 130

The Foundation Of The Word Of God - Jesus Christ 132
God's Word as Divine Revelation: The Inspired and Authoritative Word 136
Evidence of the Reliability of the Bible as God's Word; Sharing Your Faith 140
Doctrines of Men Are Not the Word of God 144
What are the benefits of learning and doing God's Word? 147
Cleaned By God's Word: 151
Applying God's Word To Our Lives 152
(36) Clean Heart: 154
(37) Wisdom, The Fear Of The Lord: 156
Wisdom INTRODUCTION 157
What Or Who Is Spiritual Wisdom ? 158
Who Can Receive And Bring Forth Wisdom ? 160
Why Should We Obtain Wisdom ? 160
How Do We Acquire Godly Wisdom ? 165
How to retain Wisdom and increase in Wisdom ? 167
WHAT HINDRANCES will cause a person Not to acquire or increase in Wisdom, till that person overcomes those hindrances and any other hindrance daily, through Jesus Christ ? 169
(38) The Fear Of The Lord: 172
What Is The Fear Of The Lord ? 172
(39) Believe In Jesus Christ and Be Saved 174
(40) Humility, Humbleness 179
(41) Meek, Meekness 185
(42) Faith and Faith In Jesus: 190
WHAT is FAITH ? 191
In WHOM should we have FAITH and HOPE ? 193
WHAT are some Biblical examples, of Who we should have Faith in ? and What we should or can have FAITH for ? 194
HOW do we RECEIVE Faith? 194
Should we GROW in Faith? 195
HOW do we GROW in FAITH ? 195
WHAT will HINDER our FAITH from GROWING? 196
WHY should we have FAITH? 197
How should our FAITH be; And How our FAITH be demonstrated ? 201
HOW should our FAITH, NOT Be ? 202

Are some Christians weak in the Faith, or lack Faith? 204
Will God be FAITHFUL, even when we faithless ? 205
Will some Christians choose to stray and depart from the FAITH ? 206
Will our FAITH in Jesus Christ be TESTED ? 206
Should we examine ourselves to see if we are continuing in the Faith ? 207
Do we need to supplement our Faith, with anything? 207
Should Christians come into UNITY of the FAITH? 207
What are some Biblical examples of Faith ? 208
Unbiblical HYPER FAITH beliefs 211
(43) Take on the Righteousness of Jesus by Faith: 222
(44) Communion - The Last Supper 226
(45) Total Commitment to Jesus Christ: 227
Without Lukewarmness or double mindedness 227
(46) Total Commitment to Jesus: 228
Surrendering All to Follow Him: 228
(47) Fulfilling God's Calling And Will: 233
(48) LOVE: 238
See my Book "The Greatest Love Of All - Jesus Christ" 240
(49) Loving God Above the Things of the World and above all others: 240
(50) Expressing Or Love For God: 241
(51) Wholehearted Devotion and Love for God: 241
(52) Loving Others As Jesus Loved Us: 244
(53) Be Christlike: 245
(54) Love One Another: 246
(55) Love does not seek it's own way or interests: 247
(56) Laying Down Our Lives for Our Friends: 249
(57) Compassion: 251
(58) Charity / Giving To Those In Need: 256
(59) Tithes And Offerings: 261
(60) Spiritual Fruit: 263
(61) Christian Works And Talents: 268
(62) Compassion: Reflecting God's Heart: 273
(63) Radical Generosity: Selling Possessions to Serve the Needs of Others: 274
(64) Feed The Hungry, Clothe The Naked, Shelter The Homeless, and Welcome The Strangers: 279

(65) The Consequences of Neglecting to Care for the Needy: 284
(66) Visit and Support, The Sick, Widows, Orphans, The Broken Hearted, Lonely, Prisoners: 288
(67) Sharing in Common: 289
Among fellow Believers of Jesus Christ: 289
(68) Hospitality: 290
(69) Bear One Another's Burdens: 296
(70) Gentleness: 297
(71) Kindness: 304
(72) Honor Your Father and Mother: A Commandment of Respect and Blessing 313
(73) Be Lead By God's Holy Spirit: 318
(74) Witness For Christ: 321
(75) Confess Jesus As Your Lord And Savior 328
(76) Justice: 330
(77) Not by Power Not By Might, but by God's Spirit: 337
(78) Share the Truth and Love of Jesus, Plant and Water: 339
(79) Understanding the Parable of the Sower: Planting and Watering God's Word: 342
(80) Prayer: 344
What is Prayer ? 345
Kinds of Prayers: 346
Does God always Answer our Prayers? 348
What should we pray for ? 350
For WHOM should we pray ? 352
How should we pray ? In what manner and ways ? 352
When should we pray ? 354
Where have God's people prayed ? 355
Why should we pray ? 355
Why should we intercede for others in prayers ? 356
What should we pray for ? When we are interceding for others ? 356
What should we pray for ? 357
In what circumstances should we pray to God ? 358
Under what conditions will our prayers be heard and granted by God while having great effect ? 358
Under what conditions will our prayers be heard and granted by God while having great effect ? 358
Prayers Answered 359

Under what conditions will our prayers not be heard by God? Nor granted? 359
More reflections about Prayer: 360
(81) Quiet Time With Jesus: Be Still 364
(82) Blessing God and Others: 366
(83) Blessing is Better Than Cursing Others, Including Our Enemies: 372
(84) Believing in the Promises of God and His Word: 376
(85) Trusting In God: 382
(86) Trusting and having Faith In God and Jesus Christ: 385
(87) Trusting God in Decision Making: 385
(88) BIBLICAL EXAMPLES Of Trusting and having Faith In God and Jesus Christ: 387
(86) Trusting In God's Timing: 394
(90) Trusting In The Lord'sWisdom: 399
(91) Have Patience: 406
(92) Be Led By God's Holy Spirit: 410
(93) Decision Making: 411
(94) Christian Fellowship - The Church: 413
(95) Understanding We Are Temple of God: 414
(96) Worship and Praise To God: 421
(97) Adoration for God: 428
(98) Thankfulness And Gratitude To God: 431
(99) Expressing Our Gratitude To God: 437
(100) Christian Behavior: 442
(101) Living Sacrifice: 448
(102) Fasting: 454
(103) Appearance - Spiritual, Modesty, Impartial 458
(104) Stewardship: 462
(105) Making The Most Of Time: 471
(106) Counting All Things Loss For The Sake Of Gaining Christ: 472
(107) Setting Our Minds on Heavenly Things: 473
(108) Contentment: 474
(109) Contentment in God's Provision: 476
(110) Finding Contentment in Jesus Christ: 481
(111) Spiritual Good Fruit: 482
(112) Holiness: 488
(113) Be Holy, As God Is Holy: 494

(114) Self Denial: 501
(115) Take Up Your Cross Daily 508
(116) Avoid The Cares and Riches That Choke Out The Word Of God: 513
(117) No One And Serve Two Masters: 514
(118) Lay Not Up Treasure For Yourself: 522
(119) The Eternal Perspective on Wealth: 523
(120) Forgiving Others: 527
(121) The Act and Authority of Forgiveness: 535
(122) Sharing in the Sufferings of Jesus Christ: 540
(123) Self-Control and Discipline: 543
(124) Judging Others: 549
(125) Jesus' Instruction To Us: To Love Our Enemies: 556
(126) Reconciliation: 557
(127) Beware Of False Teachers and False Prophets: 561
Will false teachers bring in destructive heresies among us, even within our churches and fellowships ? 564
Where does God's Word instruct us to TAKE HEED and to be BEWARE of false teachers, and false prophets ? 565
Why must we take heed and beware of false teachers ? What detrimental results could happen if we allow ourselves to be deceived, by every wind of doctrine ? 567
How could a Christian be deceived by false teachers, false prophets, and by false brethren ? What would cause a Christian to be deceived ? 567
How could a Christian be deceived by false teachers, false prophets, and by false brethren ? What would cause a Christian to be deceived ? 568
Why would God allow hypocritical Christians and unbelievers to be deceived ? 568
How could a Christian be deceived by false teachers, false prophets, and by false brethren ? 571
WHAT should we do to protect ourselves and to know the Truth ? 571
HOW will we as Christians KNOW the TRUTH in order to recognize false teachers ? 571
How Do We Recognize And Discern Who Is A False Teacher, False Prophet OR An Anti-Christ? Continued… 573
Are various non-christian religious sects, organizations, occult, and New Age beliefs, destitute of the Truth, even though they sometimes use scriptures from the Bible or even believe Jesus existed ? 574
Are there many individuals ...even within various Christian Churches, who lack the Truth and Why ? 574
(128) Beware: 574

(129) Where does God's Word instruct us to TAKE HEED and to be BEWARE of false teachers, and false prophets ? 576
(130) Beware of False Gods and Idols: 577
(131) Beware of false Christs and Antichrists: 578
(132) The Dangers of Idolatry: 583
(133) Guard Your Heart and Mind in Christ Jesus: 584
(134) Walking in Good Behavior: 586
(135) Christian Behavior: 587
HOW should we behave ? 588
How Our Behavior Should Be as Christians: 589
How should we NOT behave ? 591
(136) Overcoming Sin And Temptations : 594
So how do we overcome sin and temptation and end repeating various sins, according to God's Word ? 594
WHY is it necessary for us to overcome sin and temptation each day ? 596
God's Word Clearly Instructs Us Not To Continue In Sin; 597
So How do we overcome temptation and end re-committing various sins ? 600
So How do we overcome temptation and end re - committing various sins ? Here are 55 Points: 601
Here are some Key Scriptures that indicate how God is working on our behalf so that we can overcome temptations and repeating certain sins: 602
Here are a few Biblical principles which describes what God is doing or has already done for us, to help us overcome temptation and sin; and what we can do as well: 604
(137) Guard Against Pride and Arrogance: 633
(138) Avoid and Overcome Sexual Immorality, Adultery, Fornication Etc. 638
(139) Overcoming Doubt And Unbelief: 642
When can a certain measure of doubt sometimes happen? 643
How does God help our unbelief and doubt? 644
What should a Christian do if they have some doubt or unbelief? And How can a Christian Overcome Doubt in their relationship with God? 644
(140) Overcoming Anxiety and Worries, Depression: 648
(141) Overcoming Envy, Covetousness, Materialism with Gratitude and Contentment: 649
(142) Overcoming the Cares and Deceit of the World 650
(143) Guarding Against Lustful Desires: 655
(144) Compromise / Hypocrisy**:** 656
(145) Do Not Let Your Heart Be Hardened 661

(145) Do Not Let Your Heart Be Hardened: 665
(146) Overcoming Lukewarmness: 666
(147) Accountability: 669
(148) Don't Neglect Salvation: 673
Can a person who once believed in Jesus Christ neglect their salvation and not be saved? 673
(149) Spiritual Warfare Against Satan and Demons: 681
(150) Overcoming evil by others: 685
(151) Fear Not, Jesus Has Overcome the World: 692
(152) Take Our Thoughts Captive: 695
(153) Doers of God's Word, Not Just Hearers: 699
(154) Obedience And Free Will: 700
How is Love Perfected In Us? How Do We Know That We Are In God? 702
Obedience to God: 702
Free Will: 704
DOING THE WILL OF GOD - Continued… 706
How do we discern and know the Will of God for each of us? 708
THE WILL OF GOD - KEY SCRIPTURES 708
There are many morally right and good spiritual virtues, acts and aspects that are directly connected to God's Will - Here are just some… 714
Some Biblical Examples of Those Who Did the Will of God 718
(156) The Words Of Our Mouth: 720
Introduction 721
KEY SCRIPTURES 723
Guard our Mouth and our Words 726
Key Scriptures: 727
HOW and WHY should we be careful what we speak and to guard our mouth ? 728
Key Scriptures: 729
How does God want our words to be ? 729
Key Scriptures: 731
How does God want our words NOT to be ? 732
Key Scriptures: 736
How Should Our Words Be According To The Bible, God's Word?: 736
GOOD SPEECH 740
WORDS FROM GOD 744
WORDS TO GOD 745

BAD SPEECH AND WORDS THAT BRINGS DEATH....745
(157) Taming the Tongue: 754
(158) Bridling the Tongue: Harnessing Our Words, to be more Christlike....756
(159) Let Your "Yes" Be Yes and Your "No" Be No:....756
(160) Unworthiness / Worthy Through Jesus Christ: 760
(161) Facing Problems, Trials, and Sufferings:....765
Problems,Trials, Sufferings,Tribulations, Persecutions....769
(161) Hope:....776
(162) Don't Take Revenge – Trusting God with Justice:....779
(163) Judging Others: 782
(164) Discernment and the Discerning of Spirits: 789
(165) Be Slow To Anger :....797
(166) Serve One Another:....799
(168) Servanthood: 804
(169) Submit To One Another:....810
(170) Edify and Encourage One Another:....816
(171) Upholding The Weak:....819
(172) Let You Light Shine: 823
(173) Labor and Responsibilities: 830
(174) Go the Extra Mile:....832
(175) Run The Race: 836
(176) Steadfastness:....838
(177) Weakness And Failures:....841
(178) Endurance / Perseverence:....848
(179) Fortitude - Be Strong And Of Good Courage: 853
(180) A Man Or Woman After God's Own Heart:....858
(181) Exhort One Another:....864
(182) Three Cord Is Not Easily Broken:....868
(183) True Success In Life:....871
(184) Integrity:....877
(185) The Importance of Being Equally Yoked: 881
(186) Have No Fellowship With Darkness: 882
(187) Awake, O Sleeper:....886
(188) Surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus Christ: 888
(189) Maintain Unity Within The Church:....893

(180) Keep God’s Commandments: 897
(191) Be Christlike: 901
(192) Keep Oil In Our Lamps: 902
(193) Prepareness For Christ’s Return: 903
Introduction 905
Be Awake 905
Be Watchful 906
Understanding the Signs of the Times 907
Living Wisely in the Present Age 908
Live Not Foolishly in this Present Age 909
Repent 909
Repent from Lukewarmness 910
Repent from Hypocrisy 910
Repent from Sin 911
Intimate Time With Jesus 911
Preparing Our Hearts 912
Guarding Our Hearts: Staying Alert to the Deceptions of the World 913
Preparing Our Minds 913
Clothe Ourselves in the Love and Righteousness of Jesus 914
Holiness 915
Seek God’s Holy Spirit and Be Filled 915
Preparing Our Lives by Our Actions: To Love, Serve, and Minister to Those in Need 916
Blessings vs. Consequences of Preparing or Not Preparing Our Lives by Our Actions: To Love, Serve, and Minister to Those in Need 917
Share the Good News of Jesus Christ, Evangelize, Missions, Witness 921
Pray 922
Pray for All Disciples of Jesus Christ, Around the World to Be Established in the Love of Jesus Christ and to Be Prepared for His Return 922
Pray That God Raise Up and Send Workers for the Harvest 923
Praying for the Return of Christ 923
Preparing to Be the Bride of Jesus Christ 924
The Marriage Supper of the Lamb -Contined… 925
(194) Vision / Objectives: 926
How can our lives be purposeful for God's kingdom ? 928
(195) Missions - Christian Ministry, Evangelism, and Missions: 935

(196) How did Jesus Instruct and commission His disciples to reach the lost of House of Israel? 939
(197) General List Of Ministries, Evangelism, Missions: 944
(198) Discipleship: 952
HOW DO WE MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST ? 953
Who is a "disciple" of Jesus Christ, or what does it mean to be a"Disciple" of Jesus Christ ? 955
Who Cannot Be A Disciple Of Jesus Christ?: 959
Why should we be discipled ? and Why should we be a disciple of Jesus Christ ? 961
(199) How Do We Make Disciples For Christ? 962
(200) Good Works: 966
(201) Walk in the Light of Jesus Christ, ... 969
Not in compromise: 969
(202) Do Not Love God and Others in Falsehood or in Vain 972
(203) Trying to Love Others in Sinful Ways Contrary to God's Word is Not of God's Spirit nor Truth: 975
(204) Any Form of Earthly Love Apart from God's Kind of Love is All in Vain 978
(205) Love in Spirit and Truth: 981
(206) The Greater Moral Standard of Jesus 983
(207) Walk in the Love, Grace and Righteousness of Jesus Christ: 990

Introduction

Why Believe In Jesus Christ?

To receive salvation from the consequences of our sinful actions, to be totally forgiven by God, reconciled to Him, and to receive His love and goodness into our hearts, along with the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. When any of us geniunely believe in Jesus, we receive His unmerited gift of new life and be born again.

Why Become A Christian and Disciple of Jesus Christ ?

To learn God's way to life, to understand how we are meant to live each day, to know right from wrong, and to follow what He desires for us to do, avoid and not do. We also learn His unique purpose and calling for each of us. By following Jesus and being led by the Holy Spirit, we come to know the truth—especially how and why we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love and treat others as Jesus has loved us. We are also equipped to share the good news of salvation through Jesus with others and to make disciples throughout the world.

God loves each of us and has a wonderful plan for our lives—if we believe in and follow Jesus Christ. As part of His divine purpose, God desires to free us from the evil caused by our sin, which separates us from Him and leads to spiritual death. Through Jesus, we can be forgiven, reconciled to God, and receive His love. In doing so, we come to know what true love is—and we are then able to share His amazing love with others.

Beyond our most magnificent dream, every person who becomes a Christian inherits a multitude of blessings, including God's promise of rest, peace, comfort, spiritual strength, security, and eternal life, which is immortality with God, and fullness of joy.

The God of Christianity is the Most High God, with all authority far above every other so-called god, gods, or idols. He is the only true God to be recognized and worshipped by all peoples of every nation, tribe, and every island throughout the world. There are three separate divine persons that reign collectively as the one true Deity. They are: God the Almighty Father, called YaHWeH or "I AM," God the Son, who is Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ, who was sent from God the Father, fully demonstrated God's love towards us so that we might understand how to love the way God intended. The awesome love that Jesus Christ gave in word and deed in so many ways is recorded in the Word of God, the Bible.

A Christian, or disciple of Jesus Christ, is a person who follows the teachings of Jesus Christ and desires to learn and grow in God's love and goodness. They purpose to love God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love others as Jesus Christ loved us. God desires to exceedingly bless us and give us a completely new and better life now, so enriched with His goodness and beyond our limited comprehension. Any person who believes and follows Jesus Christ can be a Christian and receive the spiritual benefits and eternal rewards, regardless of their past. God has also promised to provide for our basic physical and material needs if we seek first God's Kingdom and His

righteousness. Yet, for many of us, we might be somewhat satisfied with our present lifestyle, success, or other religious beliefs, other than Christianity, and see no reason to become a Christian. However, there are several vital life-relating reasons why everyone should not only consider, but rather wisely choose to become a Christian.

First of all, every person has an imperfect spiritual nature and exhibits actions of anger, hatred, selfish ambition, arrogance, greed, lies, stealing, profanity, envy, covetousness, immorality, violence, etc. This is called our sinful nature, and this is what separates us from having a good relationship with God, who is spiritually pure, and what keeps us from being filled with God's love. In many instances, because of personal pride and arrogance, we are not readily willing to admit our wrongful behavior, nor are we willing to admit that we need to correct our sinful actions or see any valid reason to change. Then one day, as God continues to shine the light of His truth into our darkened hearts and draws us to Himself through His loving kindness, some of us fortunately begin to recognize our spiritual uncleanness. In response, we repent—changing our minds and turning from sin—seeking to be cleansed. When we place our faith in Jesus, those who are humble receive His salvation, washed clean by his word and by his atoing grace and mercy, giving us new life.

Are we just deceiving ourselves by assuming that our lives are fine? Could we really be going down the hill fast in our spiritual character and not realize just how hurtful our present lifestyle may be to ourselves and others? God wants the very best for our lives. However, every evil way that each one of us does, works contrary to God's wonderful plan. These evil actions, called sin, are detrimental to our personal eternal spiritual welfare and are harmful towards those around us. Sin also brings eventual spiritual death and eternal destruction and separation from God. Yet, God did not leave us spiritually destitute without hope; God desires every one of us to be saved from our own self-destruction.

Therefore, God sent Jesus Christ, who is God the Son, into the world to set us free from sin and to demonstrate and establish God's love within anyone's life who chooses to believe in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, every Christian is able to be delivered from their fears, depression, and the bondage of sin by the power of God's Holy Spirit.

Any person who believes and calls on the name of Jesus will be saved and, if they confess their sins to God in prayer, they will be completely forgiven from every evil way and sin through the precious grace of Jesus. Salvation is a free gift from God; there is nothing that you can do to earn it. Therefore, any person who believes and has faith in Jesus is reconciled spiritually back into good fellowship with God and entitled to a heavenly inheritance from God.

No other religious belief or person has the power to deliver anyone from the bondage of spiritual evil, except Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ was the only one who was sinless and who properly fulfilled God's requirement for true spiritual justice. By giving His pure life at the cross in the place of each one of us, there was a ransom or payment for the penalty which we all deserved for our wrong deeds, and He thereby made the hope of reconciliation to God available to anyone who willingly accepts His grace.

Jesus Christ is the only one who has died, rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven. He is alive today, and we can have new life through Him. If you want your guilt taken away... if you want to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that when you die you will go to heaven, then you need Jesus Christ. Heaven is an eternal Kingdom more magnificent beyond anyone's expectation!

Jesus Christ has gone to prepare a glorious place specifically for you and me if we choose to believe in Him. The angels rejoice more over one sinner who repents than the ninety-nine righteous ones who need no repentance. To repent means to change your mind and to turn your life away from the evil direction that you've been going and then to follow Jesus. God loves us with a steadfast love and hopes that none of us would perish.

Anyone who is not cleansed of their unrighteousness by the grace and words of Jesus Christ is destined to eternal spiritual destruction after they die. Anyone who accepts Jesus Christ has eternal life. These might sound like biased statements, but in regards to spiritual reality, these are established truths.

The facts to prove such statements to be true can be found by any individual who humbles themselves and accepts Jesus first by faith and who sincerely seeks to learn and to know God. Anyone can then have the confidence that they will learn the truth when that person thoroughly examines the consistency of the evidence found and revealed within the Bible by God's Holy Spirit.

As Jesus said, "If you continue in My Word, you are truly My disciple (student), and you shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free." — JOHN 8:31-32

It is essential that every person come to the saving knowledge of who Jesus Christ is and what He has done for us and follow Him so that we can overcome the evil within our lives and come to an understanding of what God's love is. This can only be accomplished when we ask God's Holy Spirit and His wisdom to come into our life. Thereby, through the power of God's Holy Spirit in our life and by the truth of God's word, we then can understand, receive, and grow in the same love that Jesus Christ demonstrated towards us.

We all need to believe and receive Jesus Christ into our hearts by faith through asking God in prayer. This is of the utmost importance so that we might escape eternal destruction because of our sin. We will then have an abundant and blessed life now and further receive eternal life as promised by God.

On this earth, there is one thing we know for sure: every person who is born into this world will certainly one day die. Yet, we should ask ourselves: if there was even one chance that we could find a way to live forever, wouldn't we be foolish not to acquire it? Jesus Christ is our only life-saving opportunity.

Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. We should worship, adore, and give all of our praise and thanksgiving only to Him, along with God the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Satan and demonic spirits have tried to deceive all mankind into making and worshipping images that are made of wood or stone that have no life nor any Godly power. These elementary spirits of the universe try to take the glory from God. Rather, we should give glory to the one true God Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, and everything in it.

This world is full of distractions, keeping us preoccupied and confused so that we might settle for earthly and physical trinkets rather than true heavenly spiritual treasure. Jesus Christ is the tree of life; He is the fountain of all life. Therefore, everyone who thirsts, let them come and drink freely of the Living Waters and be refreshed!

The free gift of eternal life and God's precious promises are available to any one of us this very day through God's Holy Spirit! Each individual who becomes a Christian receives spiritual wisdom, godly knowledge, and discretion. These spiritual gifts will safeguard their life from spiritual deception and from the lies of false doctrines. Moreover, God will send His holy angels to keep you safe.

Every person who also becomes a Christian enters the family of God and has the opportunity for good fellowship and assistance from other Christians throughout the world.

We can't afford not to receive and experience the transformative spiritual power of Jesus Christ in our life, through God's Holy Spirit. We need to humble ourselves and lay aside any preconceived notions of Christianity so that we might learn and, more importantly, receive the eternal blessings that God intended for each one of our lives.

Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." — John 14:6

Everyone's eternal welfare depends upon them accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, believing in Him and what He alone achieved at the cross, and truly knowing God and following Jesus Christ.

Ask Jesus in prayer to come into your heart, and He will. He'll never leave you or forsake you.

Jesus will spiritually walk with you all the days of your life, to strengthen you, to protect you, to comfort you, and to direct you. Only through Jesus is true love to be found and the fullness of joy.

(1) Being a Disciple of Jesus Christ:

As disciples of Jesus Christ, our lives are to be marked by a radical commitment to following the teachings and example of our Lord. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus gives the Great Commission, instructing believers to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, **and** teaching them to obey everything He has commanded. This commission is a call to intentional discipleship, a journey of becoming more like Jesus in every aspect of our lives.

One foundational aspect of being a disciple is found in Luke 9:23, where Jesus declares, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." Denying oneself involves surrendering personal desires, ambitions, and priorities to align with the will of God. It is a daily choice to put God first and to live in obedience to His Word.

Discipleship also entails a deep commitment to learning and applying the Scriptures. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul emphasizes that all Scripture is inspired by God

and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. The disciple of Jesus is one who immerses themselves in God's Word, allowing it to shape their beliefs, values, and actions. Furthermore, the life of a disciple is characterized by love. Jesus instructs His disciples in John 13:34-35, saying, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are My disciples if you love one another." Love is the distinguishing mark of a true disciple, reflecting the selfless and sacrificial love that Christ demonstrated on the cross.

In summary, being a disciple of Jesus Christ involves denying oneself, taking up the cross daily, immersing oneself in the Scriptures, and embodying Christ-like love. It is a transformative journey that requires intentional commitment and a continual pursuit of conformity to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). May we heed the call of discipleship with a wholehearted devotion to follow our Lord and Savior in every aspect of our lives.

(2) Living in Willful Obedience out of Love for God and Others:

A central aspect of discipleship is the call to live in obedience to the teachings of Jesus Christ and God's commands. Jesus affirms this in John 14:15, saying, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." Obedience is not a mere adherence to rules but a heartfelt response to God's love. It involves aligning our will with His and faithfully walking in His ways. The disciple of Jesus seeks to obey God's Word with joy and gratitude, recognizing that it leads to a life of blessing and intimacy with the Lord.

In addition to obedience, disciples are called to bear fruit that glorifies God. Jesus uses the metaphor of a vine and branches in John 15:5, stating, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." Discipleship is not just about personal growth but also about bearing fruit that reflects God's character and spreads His love to others. This fruit includes the virtues outlined in Galatians 5:22-23—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Furthermore, the disciple of Jesus engages in the spiritual discipline of prayer. In Matthew 6:6, Jesus encourages private, sincere prayer, emphasizing a personal and intimate connection with God. Prayer is a means of seeking God's guidance, expressing gratitude, and interceding for others. It is an essential aspect of the disciple's life, fostering a deep and dependent relationship with the Father.

As disciples, we are also called to be salt and light in the world. Jesus declares in Matthew 5:13-16 that disciples are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Salt preserves and flavors, while light dispels darkness. Discipleship involves positively influencing the world by living out the teachings of Jesus, bringing hope, healing, and truth to those around us.

In conclusion, discipleship encompasses living in obedience to God's commands, bearing fruit that glorifies Him, engaging in the discipline of prayer, and being salt and light in the world. May we embrace these aspects of discipleship wholeheartedly, allowing the transformative power of Christ to shape every area of our lives.

(3) Summary: Some of the Main Reasons -

WHY To Believe in Jesus as your Lord And Savior and be a disciple of Jesus Christ

*(This is not an all inclusive list)

- To be delivered and saved from our sins and the evil that we have done
- To receive the Grace and forgiveness for all our sins through Jesus Christ
- To be born again, salvation
- To come to know God and to receive His Love and share His Love with others
- To be able to Love God and to come into His presence
- To receive a complete new and better life
- To come to know the one true God (The Father, Yahweh) through Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Holy Spirit - Three divine persons in one Godhead.
- To be delivered out of fear, depression, confusion etc. and to have victory over the bondage of sin and evil
- To be reconciled back to God and to have God and Jesus Christ abide in you through the Holy Spirit
- To inherit a multitude of blessings including rest, comfort and joy
- To escape eternal destruction and punishment in hell because of sin
- To become a good witness to others while bringing the good news of Salvation
- To receive Godly wisdom, and understanding and the benefit of God giving good direction to your life.
- Every person who becomes a Christian enters the family of God and has the opportunity of good fellowship and assistance from other Christians throughout the world.
- To have our basic needs provided for by God
- To gain Godly knowledge and discretion to safeguard and protect your life from spiritual evil and deception
- To have victory over satanic powers
- To receive God's Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit will be your Helper
- To be able to bear true spiritual fruit in your life so that you can effectively minister to the needs of others

- To receive rest for your soul
- To receive the true peace of God and become a peacemaker
- God will never forsake you or leave you
- To enter the Kingdom of God
- To receive eternal Life from God, and to avoid

(4) We are called by Jesus Christ to become and make " Disciples " of others.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them , saying...

" And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. **Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you:** and, see, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen..” Matthew 28:18-20 (AKJV)

(5) “ Disciple " Defined: - Who is a "disciple" of Jesus Christ, or What does it mean to be a " disciple of Jesus Christ ?

Becoming a Disciple - The Process of Discipleship

John 13:34 (AKJV) " A new commandment I give to you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another."

Romans 10:15 (AKJV) “ And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! "

Who is a "disciple" of Jesus Christ, or what does it mean to be a"Disciple" of Jesus Christ ?

The word **"disciple"** comes from the Greek word - Mathetes which lit., a learner (from Manthano, to learn, from a root ' math '),

(Indicating thought accompanied by endeavor).

Hence the word "disciple" means or denotes one who is a **learner or student of the teachings of Jesus Christ.**

Moreover, the title "disciple" refers to a person who follows the teachings of Jesus Christ and who desires to persevere, to learn, and to do the will of God, in spite of the individual's

sin nature or failures, because that individual understands that their sins are covered and forgiven by the grace of God. They further believe and trust God to help them overcome as they learn His ways.

Jesus Christ was not just another spiritual teacher; rather, He is *The Teacher*, far surpassing any other teacher in wisdom, truth, and love. Only through Jesus Christ can anyone be made righteous and grow in God's love and wisdom.

God always intends every disciple to become a *participant* in doing that which he learns and not just an observer, even though we will do some observing.

As a disciple or student of Jesus Christ, one must be willing to choose to learn and follow the same ways that Jesus Christ demonstrated throughout His life. A disciple purposes to love others as Jesus Christ loves us. A person must go beyond just learning about Jesus Christ *intellectually*; rather, a person must be open in their mind and heart and sincerely desire to know, follow, and obey Jesus Christ. A person needs to desire to receive Him into their heart by the Holy Spirit and ask Jesus to be the Lord and Savior of their life. Only then will Jesus Christ begin to teach that person the height and depth of His divine spiritual wisdom.

No one can grow into spiritual maturity just by intense study about Jesus Christ or even the Bible without truly accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, because we also need God's Holy Spirit to give us the insight and understanding of His Word. That is why many religious scholars have so many contradictions and errors in their beliefs—because they are leaning on their own understanding and assumptions rather than truly seeking Jesus Christ to show them the truth and the way by His Spirit.

God will never force His principles on anyone. Instead, He offers us a totally new life, full of blessings, and sets us free from our old life, which was full of darkness because of evil.

Who is a "disciple" of Jesus Christ, or what does it mean to be a"Disciple" of Jesus Christ ?

Jesus wants to teach us the truth and lead us away from all confusion and lies and to be delivered from depression and anxiety, so that we can be at rest.

Jesus Christ wants to reveal to anyone the truth if they just humble themselves and sincerely ask God in prayer to show them the way and have the patience for Him to do so, in His own wise way and time.

Every disciple of Jesus Christ has the opportunity to learn and grow in God's Love, Wisdom and Joy, without cost and receive an abundant life now and further Eternal Life with God in His Kingdom.

- **A disciple of Jesus Christ is not just a hearer of His word but a doer.** James 1:22
- **A disciple perseveres to learn -**

Seek and you shall find; Knock and the door will open" Matthew 7:7

- **A disciple of Jesus Christ, continues to abide in His word...** "If you abide in my word you are truly my disciple and you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free" John 8:31,32
- **A disciple of Jesus Christ is a person who desires to Love God with all your heart, mind, and strength... And to love one another as Jesus Christ loved us...** Matthew 22:37-40 John 15:9-12
- **A disciple of Jesus Christ is a person who chooses to follow Jesus Christ and be an imitator of His way in their daily life.** Mark 8:34
- **A disciple of Jesus Christ chooses willingly to obey His commandments.** John 14:21,23 1 John 5:2,3

(6) Who can become a disciple of Jesus Christ ?

- Anyone who believes in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, repents, follows and obeys Him can become and be a disciple of Jesus Christ

(7) The Process of Christian Discipleship takes place over time:

First and Primary: Jesus and The Holy Spirit does the work within us, sanctifying, transforming and regenerating our lives. ***Then secondly** Jesus disciples us by His Word and God's Holy Spirit guides us into all truth so that we might become and lives our lives as genuine Christians and disciples of Jesus Christ. And be equipped for serving God and ministering to others in the world. *(God will also use other mature Christians to disciple us)

Here are Some of the aspects related to becoming and being a disciple of Jesus Christ : (This is not all inclusive nor necessarily in order);

- **As God draws you near to Him:** Hear, Learn, and become aware of who Jesus Christ is (The Son of God and the only way to be reconciled to God). Learn all that Jesus has done for us and about His great unmerited love and forgiveness.
- **Acknowledge Your Need for Salvation:** Recognize your need for Jesus and His saving grace, accepting that you cannot achieve righteousness on your own.
- **Believe in Jesus Christ as Your Lord and Savior**

- **Repentance:** Turn away from sin and seek forgiveness. Repentance is a heartfelt decision to change your direction toward God.

- **Have Faith in Jesus:** Place your trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, believing in His death and resurrection for your salvation.

- **Baptism:** Publicly declare your faith through baptism, symbolizing your commitment to following Jesus and identifying with His death and resurrection.

- **Building a Personal Relationship with Jesus:** Cultivate an intimate relationship with Jesus through prayer, worship, and daily conversations, inviting Him into every aspect of your life.

- **Hear and Learn God's Word:** Faith comes by hearing God's Word, and this is essential for being a disciple of Jesus.

- **Attend a Biblically-Based Christian Church, Fellowship, Bible Studies**

- **Continuing in God's Word:** Regularly read, study, and meditate on the Bible to understand God's character, His will for your life, and how to apply His teachings daily.

- **Prayer:** Establish a consistent prayer life to communicate with God, seek guidance, and deepen your relationship with Him.

- **Love for God:** Our love for God with all of our heart, mind, and strength is foundational. It involves worship, obedience, and seeking to align our hearts with His will.

- **Learning to Love Others as Jesus Christ Loves Us:** Love as Action – Love is not just a feeling; it's demonstrated through actions. Serving others, showing kindness, and being present are ways to express love.

- **Dying to Our Old Sinful Ways, Continuing to Repent**

- **Abiding in Jesus:** Stay connected to Jesus, drawing strength and guidance from Him through prayer, worship, and a life of obedience.

- **Living Out Your Faith:** Apply biblical principles in your daily life, demonstrating Christ's love and values in your actions and interactions.

- **Regarding God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit Above All:** Place God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit at the center of your life, prioritizing their guidance and wisdom over worldly influences and self.

- **Not Regarding or Adoring Anyone or Even Our Own Self-Interest Above Our Regard, Worship, Obedience, and Love for God:** Develop a deep understanding of

God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, prioritizing God**'**s will, guidance, and wisdom above all else.

- **Fellowship with Believers:** Engage with a community of believers through church activities, small groups, or Bible studies for mutual support and spiritual growth.

- **Seeking and Receiving God's Holy Spirit:** Follow the guidance and truth of Jesus and God**'**s Holy Spirit.

- **Service to Others:** Actively serve others in love, following Jesus **'**example. Look for opportunities to meet needs within our community, and minister to people around the world through various Christian mission endeavors. Feed the hungry, clothe and provide shelter for the needy, visit the sick, those in prison, visit widows, help those in need, etc.

- **Living a Life of Worship:** Worship God in all aspects of your life, recognizing that your actions, work, and relationships can reflect your devotion to Him.

- **Sharing the Gospel:** Be a witness for Christ by sharing the good news with others. Look for opportunities to share your faith story and invite others to know Jesus.

- **Continuous Growth:** Commit to lifelong learning and spiritual growth through reading books, attending seminars, and engaging in teachings that deepen your faith.

- **Being Thankful to God: Practicing Gratitude** – Develop a heart of gratitude by regularly reflecting on God**'**s blessings and faithfulness in your life, acknowledging His goodness.

- **Engaging in Spiritual Disciplines:** Practice spiritual disciplines like fasting, solitude, and silence to deepen your relationship with God and grow in your faith.

- **Accountability:** Find a mentor or accountability partner to help you stay committed to your spiritual journey and encourage your growth in Christ.

- **Overcoming Trials with Faith:** Learn to trust God in difficult times, seeing trials as opportunities for growth and deeper reliance on His strength.

- **Discipleship and Mentoring:** Be a disciple and make disciples. Invest in the lives of others, helping them grow in their faith and understanding of Jesus.

(8) What are some of the benefits and blessings of being a Christian ?

And What are some of the benefits and blessings, which we obtain when we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and as we continue to be His disciple **?**

- **Eternal Life**

John 3:16,17 AKJV) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.."

John 6 : 40 (AKJV) “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which sees the Son, and believes on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

- **Rest for Your Souls**

Matthew 11: 28 - 30 (AKJV) Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke on you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. 30For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.."

(9) List of some of the Promises and Blessings from God to *believers and *followers of Jesus Christ, (*To His disciples)

Some Promises are unconditionally done or given by God for believers and followers of Jesus Christ, while other Promises are Conditional -

Abide in God and God and Jesus Christ will Abide in you - 1 John 4:13-21

You will be Loved by God - John 3:16

You can abide in God's Love - John 15:9-10

You'll be able to Love God and one another - John 13:34,35

Abundant Life - John 10:10

Jesus will never forsake you or leave you - Hebrews 13:5

Assurance - 2 Timothy 1:12

Cleansing, Spiritual- John 15:3

Comfort - Isaiah 51:3

Deliverance - 2 Timothy 4:18

Everlasting, Eternal Life - John 3:16

Good Spiritual Fruitfulness - John 15:4-5

Born again of Spirit - John 3:3-6

Gifts of the Holy Spirit - 1 Corinthians 12

Gift of prophesying - Romans 12:6

Receive Godly Wisdom - James 1:5, 2 Timothy 3:15, Psalm 119:98

Receive Understanding - Psalm 119:104

Rest - Hebrews 4:9,11

Joy - Isaiah 35:10

Peace, Spiritual - John 14:27
Security, Protection from God - 2 Samuel 22:31, Psalm 9:9
God will provide all of your needs - Philippians 4:19, Matthew 6:25-34
Provides delight; provides counsel,-Psalm 119:24
You will do greater work - John 14 : 12
Makes us grow to spiritual maturity -1 Peter 2:2
Ask whatever you desire & it shall be done for you - John 15 : 7,8
You'll be able to Love and forgive everyone -John15:9-12, Matthew 6:14,15
Receive strength from God - Philippines 4:13
Receive a heavenly home -John 14:1-3
Receive physical healings - Matthew 9:2, Mark 2:5, Matthew 9:29
Receive spiritual healings - Hosea 6:1
You can know the Truth and be set free - John 8:31,32
You can be forgiven of all your sins - 1 John 1:9
Receive God's Righteousness - Romans 5:17
You will receive the crown of life - James 1:12
Direction for your life - Proverbs 3:6
God will put angels over you -Luke 4:10, Psalm 91:11
You will have Hope - Hebrews 6:18,19
Rejoices the heart - Psalm 19:8
Restores our soul; makes wise the simple - Psalm 19:7
God gives us Faith - Ephesians 2:8
Makes us prosper; gives us success -Joshua 1:8
God will write His Laws of upon our hearts and minds - Hebrews 10:16
God will remember our sin no more - Jeremiah 31:33,34
Keeps our way pure; keeps us from sin -Psalm 119:9,11
Gives comfort in affliction - Psalm 119:50
Provides warnings; provides rewards -Psalm 19:11
Keeps us from "slipping" - Psalm 37:31
Provides spiritual nourishment - Matthew 4:4
Guides us: watches over us in unguarded moments - Proverbs 6:22
We are sanctified by God - Acts 20:32
Many will believe through the word which we share - John 17:20
Gives us hope for the future -Romans 15:4

Where two or three gather in His Name Jesus will be with you - Matthew 18:20

Whatever you bind on earth, will be bound in heaven - Matthew 18:18

Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.- Matthew 18-18

Your reward will be great in heaven - Matthew 5:1-12

Victory - 1 John 5:4

Spiritual Treasures - Matthew 6:19-21

Inheritance - 1 Peter 1:3-4

Answers to prayer - 1 John 5:14

To know God - John 17:3

Seek and you will find, Knock and the door will open - Matthew 7:7,8

God will be Faithful - 1 Corinthians 1:9

Receive God's Forgiveness - Matthew 6:14-15

Jesus will come again - Matthew 6:14-15, John 14:18

He has prepared a place for us, and will take us with Him - Matthew 6:14-15, John 14:1-4

God will create a New Heaven and a New Earth - Revelation 21

God will wipe away every tear - Revelation 21:1-4

There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain - Revelation 21:1-4

God will crush satan under your feet - Romans 16:20

When we lose our (selfish old nature) lives, we find our Life - Matthew 10:39

Will receive Living Water, and never thirst again - John 4:14

All things work for good who Love God - Romans 8:28

You will not be over taken with a temptation- 1 Corinthians 10:13

God will provide a way of escape -1 Corinthians 10:13

God's Grace is sufficient for us, - 2 Corinthians 12:9

His power is made perfect in weakness - 2 Corinthians 12:9

Jesus will not leave us as orphans - John 14:18

Jesus came not to judge the world but to save the world - John 3:17

We have passed from death to life - 1 John 3:14

Whom God Loves He disciplines - Hebrews 12:6

- Being disciplined by God will it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. - Hebrews 12:11
- The Lord forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases (Psalm 103:3).
- Jesus took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, by his wounds (stripes) we are healed (Isaiah 53:4-5).

- **“**If . . . My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” - 2 Chronicles 7:14
- As many as received Jesus, to them gave He power to become the sons of God - John 1:12
- The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.- John 14:26
- Whoever acknowledges Me (Jesus) before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven - Matthew 10:32
- Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet**’**s reward,- Matthew 10:41
- Whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person**’**s reward.- Matthew 10:41
- If anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward. - Matthew 10:41
- For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.” Matthew 12:50
- God promises to bless my life IF I meet with him daily. **“**Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching DAILY at my doors, waiting at my doorway.” Proverbs 8:34
- But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. Matthew 19:26

PSALM 103:1-5- Bless the Lord, O my soul,

And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name.

2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,

And forget none of His benefits;

3 Who pardons all your iniquities,

Who heals all your diseases;

4 Who redeems your life from the pit,

Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;

5 Who satisfies your years with good things,

So that your youth is renewed like the eagle.

PSALM 107:19-21-

Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble;

He saved them out of their distresses.

20 He sent His word and healed them,

And delivered *them* from their destructions.
21 Let them give thanks to the Lord for His lovingkindness,

CONDITIONS - Isaiah 58:7

Share your food with the hungry - Isaiah 58:7
Provide the poor wanderer with shelter - Isaiah 58:7
When you see the naked, to clothe them, - Isaiah 58:7
Do not to turn away from your own flesh and blood - Isaiah 58:7

PROMISES- Isaiah 58:6,8

To loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke,- Isaiah 58:6
To set the oppressed free and break every yoke- Isaiah 58:6
Your light will break forth like the dawn - Isaiah 58:8
Your healing will quickly appear - Isaiah 58:8
Your righteousness will go before you - Isaiah 58:8
The glory of the Lord will be your rear guard - Isaiah 58:8
The Lord will answer you - Isaiah 58:9

CONDITIONS - Isaiah 58:9,10

If you do away with the yoke of oppression,- Isaiah 58:9
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,- Isaiah 58:9
and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry -Isaiah 58:10
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,- Isaiah 58:10

PROMISES - Isaiah 58:10,11,14

Your light will rise in the darkness - Isaiah 58:10
Your night will become like noonday - Isaiah 58:10
The Lord will guide you always - Isaiah 58:11
The Lord will satisfy your needs in a sun scorched land - Isaiah 58:11
The Lord will strengthen your frame - Isaiah 58:11
You will be like a well watered garden - Isaiah 58:11
You will find the Joy of the Lord - Isaiah 58:14
God will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land - Isaiah 58:14
You will feast on the inheritance of Jacob - Isaiah 58:14

(10) Why Be Discipled?

Why should we be discipled? And Why should we be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

1) So we will know the truth

When we are continued to be properly discipled and receive God's Holy Spirit and His word...we gain understanding and godly wisdom.

- When we are discipled we learn the truth about all of the following...
- We'll learn, Who God really is;
- We'll learn about, Why we need Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior;
- We'll learn about, What is God's plan and will that is essential and beneficial for our lives;
- We'll learn about, How much God truly loves us, and what He has already done for us, and continues to do for us and to further know and become partakers of His divine promises and so forth;
- We'll learn about, How to be set free from spiritual bondage, and penalty of our sins and How to overcome temptation and sin;
- We'll learn about, What is God's Will, His commandments, and what is sin and evil;
- We'll learn about, Why we need God's Helper, the Holy Spirit, and How to receive God's Holy Spirit;
- We'll learn about, How we can fully Love God and others, as Jesus Christ first Loved us;
- We'll learn about, How to be equipped to share the Good News of Salvation through Jesus Christ with with all nations of the world;
- We'll learn about, How we can be able to minister to the needs of others and bear good spiritual fruit;
- We'll learn about, How to beware of false teachers, and false doctrines, and How to avoid spiritual hindrances.
- We'll learn about, How we can receive Eternal Life with God

2) So we will be set free

- When we are discipled and learn and believe His truth, we are then set free continually from many spiritual bondages. such as: We are set free from sin, when we hear God's truth and believe and confess our sins, and repent, and receive the grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ.
- John 8:31,32 - Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
- John 15:3 “ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you ".

- We are also set free from confusion, doubt, lies, pride and every evil way as we continue to be discipled by God's word of truth and the Holy Spirit.

3) So we can be empowered by God's Holy Spirit to attain all of His will and plan for our lives.

4) So we will grow up into the maturity of the nature of Jesus Christ and bear spiritual fruit in our life...John 15:16

- Such as God's love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...Galatians 5:22,23

5) So we will be equipped and able to do God's word, good works and be a witness and receive divine guidance for our daily situations.

6) So we will be protected from all evil and from the works of satanic powers.

7) So that we may be partakers of God's precious promises and so our joy may be full.

8) So we can Love God and others, as Jesus Christ first Loved us.

9) So we can as Christians can clearly give an answer to all those whom we are witnessing to , and testifying about the Hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

(11) How Do We Make Disciples Of Jesus Christ?

Making Disciples For Christ, Is preparing our own hearts, minds and daily lives in alignment with God's Word first, then allowing God's Holy Spirit to work through us to help disciple others. To God be all Glory, because we can do nothing of our own accord.

The way that we should make Disciples is the way Jesus Christ made disciples**.**

1. We should always encourage other Christians to first establish a intimate relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ
2. We should instruct fellow Christians to continue in God's Word Daily
3. We should instruct fellow believers of Christ to pray for God's Holy Spirit, who will guide them into all truth
4. We should also teach fellow Christians the foundational biblical doctrines of Christianity.
5. We should spend quality time with small core groups of Christians—two or more, for instance, 3-12 individuals—just as Jesus did, primarily. However, this should not be seen as a required standard, but rather in a way that the Holy Spirit leads us.
6. While it's biblical to preach and evangelize the multitudes, to declare the importance to come to Jesus Christ and to teach and preach, verse by verse, and certain main

topics of Christianity, True Discipleship, can more fully and readily takes place by Jesus Christ, as we continue to learn of and receive God's Word, in smaller core groups, and on an individual basis.

And although we need to learn from mature Christian Pastors and Teachers, it can't be emphasized enough that we are only to be disciples of Jesus Christ, in other words, don't follow some teacher who is drawing your attention away from Jesus Christ onto himself, even though he may even teach biblical scriptures about Jesus. True Christian Pastors and Teachers will always direct you to Jesus Christ to be your Lord & Savior, and everything they teach will disciple you follow Jesus Christ, and to follow the truth of Gospel of Christ, as found in all the fullness of scriptures in the Bible.

As God instructs us, all of us as Christians should make disciples by teaching other Christians to observe and obey all that Jesus Christ commanded in His Word.

2) Concentrate in sharing God's Word between each other, demonstrate a genuine Love towards each other, serve each others needs and allow Jesus Christ to teach each other, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Becoming and continuing as a " DISCIPLE " of Jesus Christ, is a life long commitment, of being a LEARNER and FOLLOWER of Jesus Christ, to continue learn of Jesus Christ, to abide in God's Word, and Love, and to obey the commandments of Jesus Christ. Mainly to Love God with all our Heart, with all our mind, and with all our strength, and to Love our neighbor as ourselves. As a Disciple of Jesus Christ, It is essential for any Christian, to continue in God's Word, and learn what Jesus instructed us " TO DO " and what Jesus instructed us " NOT TO DO " in His Word, and by so doing we will know the Truth, and Truth shall set as free. So how is possible for us, to do all the things that Jesus instructs, to Love others, and to overcome sin and temptation etc...? Well with man it is impossible, but WITH God all things are possible. God will send us the HELPER, His Holy Spirit, not just to be with us, but to dwell within those, who ask God.

As we live our lives as true Disciples of Christ, and demonstrate His Love towards others, we should always be pointing the Way to Jesus Christ, sharing His Word, but it still remains that Jesus Christ is really THE TEACHER; So all Glory goes to God, because we cannot do anything apart from God, it is His work within us, and it is His Grace that forgives us when we fall short.

John 8:31,32 (AKJV)“ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; 32And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

God does not want us to hide the Truth that we learn, but rather He instructs us to share His Light, Love and Truth with others, and to go into all the world and make Disciples.

After learning and applying the truths of Jesus Christ within our own lives, it is essential that we individually teach (DISCIPLE) others all about the ways of God, His love and salvation.

Jesus Christ commissioned His disciples to go into all the world and to preach the Good News.

As Christians, we should begin instructing others about Jesus Christ, within our local communities and then as God would direct each person to various parts of the world.

There is a cost of discipleship, really not of earthy money, but rather of our time and denying one's self of various things and even sometimes of friends and family, so that we can more effectively learn and share with others about God, and His salvation and love.

When we make disciples, we should teach the word of God in a way that is easily understood, and always demonstrate God's love to those whom we are teaching.

As disciples of Jesus Christ we can be used by God in a special way, and thereby, many others we also have eternal life and gain eternal riches beyond compare.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Matthew 28:18 (AKJV) **"**And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. 19Go you therefore, (Make disciples) and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and, see, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.

Matthew 10:1 (AKJV) And when he had called to him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease

John 8:31,32 (AKJV)" Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; 32And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Jesus calls believers in Him to become disciples and learn, instruct and apply His teachings to others; This is a fundamental aspect of His ministry, and He instructs and encourages His followers to do the same.

Matthew 4:19: In Matthew 4:19, Jesus calls His first disciples, saying, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." This not only establishes the concept of discipleship but also underscores the transformative aspect—disciples are made, not just recruited.

Matthew 28:19-20: The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 encapsulates the mandate for making disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." This charge involves not only evangelism but the ongoing process of teaching and mentoring, encompassing the entire journey of discipleship.

Luke 6:40: In Luke 6:40, Jesus articulates the goal of discipleship, "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher." This emphasizes the transformative nature of discipleship—followers becoming like their Master through the process of training and learning.

John 15:8: In John 15:8, Jesus speaks about bearing much fruit, stating, "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." The evidence of being a disciple is seen in the fruitfulness of a transformed life, reflecting the values and character of Jesus.

2 Timothy 2:2: In 2 Timothy 2:2, the apostle Paul instructs Timothy, "and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." This passage illustrates the generational aspect of discipleship, highlighting the responsibility to pass on the teachings of Christ to others who can, in turn, disciple others.

Acts 14:21-22: In Acts 14:21-22, after Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel in Derbe and made many disciples, they returned to encourage and strengthen them. This exemplifies the ongoing relationship and investment in the lives of disciples beyond the initial stages.

The specific calling of being and making disciples is foundational in Jesus' ministry, emphasizing not just a one-time decision but a lifelong process of transformation and growth. Discipleship involves not only learning from Jesus's example through His Word, moreover through the leading of God's Holy Spirit and by other Christians but actively engaging in the process of guiding and nurturing others in their walk of faith.

John 13:34-35: Jesus emphasizes the importance of love in discipleship, saying, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." This underscores the relational aspect of discipleship, highlighting that genuine discipleship is characterized by love for one another.

Matthew 10:24-25: In Matthew 10:24-25, Jesus acknowledges the shared identity of discipleship, "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master." This reinforces the idea that discipleship involves aligning one's life with the teachings and example of the Master.

Philippians 3:17: In Philippians 3:17, Paul urges believers to imitate him as he imitates Christ, "Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us." This extends the concept of discipleship to the broader Christian community, encouraging believers to follow the examples set by those who are mature in their faith.

1 Corinthians 11:1: Paul sets himself as an example of a disciple in 1 Corinthians 11:1, saying, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." Here, the call to discipleship involves following the example of those who are themselves following Christ, creating a chain of influence and growth.

Colossians 1:28-29: In Colossians 1:28-29, Paul expresses his goal in discipleship, "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me." This reveals the labor and commitment involved in the process of making disciples mature in their faith.

(12) Who Cannot Be A Disciple Of Jesus Christ?:

Believers of Jesus Christ must be willing to do the following or they cannot be a disciple Jesus Christ…

Luke 14:26-33 (AKJV) – Main Points

- **Must Love Jesus Above All** – Anyone who does not "hate" (love less by comparison) their family and even their own life cannot be His disciple (v. 26).
- **Must Bear Their Cross** – A disciple must be willing to suffer and carry their own cross, following Jesus (v. 27).
- **Must Count the Cost** – Like someone building a tower, a disciple must evaluate if they are truly committed to finishing their faith journey (vv. 28-30).
- **Must Be Prepared for Spiritual Warfare** – Like a king going to war, a disciple must consider the cost of following Christ and be ready for the challenges ahead (vv. 31-32).
- **Must Forsake All** – Anyone unwilling to give up everything for Christ cannot be His disciple (v. 33).

Luke 14:26-33 (AKJV) If any man come to me, and *hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. *(We must regard others less than Jesus Christ) 27And whoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28For which of you, intending to build a tower, sits not down first, and counts the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29Lest haply, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31Or what king, going to make war against another king, sits not down first, and consults whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that comes against him with twenty thousand? 32Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an ambassador, and desires conditions of peace. 33So likewise, whoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he has, he cannot be my disciple.

Discipleship in the Christian context encompasses not only learning the teachings of Jesus but embodying His character, receiving, growing in and sharing His Love, His Truth, and Way ; Then replicating the process in the lives of others. It is a transformative spiritual daily walk that involves a continuous fruitful ministry of being disciples and making disciples.

Who Cannot Be A Disciple Of Jesus Christ?: Continued

- **Those who are not Born Again by not believing nor having faith in Jesus and the diety of Jesus:**

Matthew 18:3 (AKJV) **“***And said, Truly I say to you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”* Jesus

emphasizes the need for a conversion of heart, which includes repentance. To be a true disciple, one must continually turn from sin and embrace a childlike humility and trust in God.

John 3:3 (AKJV) **"***Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* Jesus makes it clear that being born again is a requirement for seeing and entering the Kingdom of God. Without this spiritual rebirth, no one can truly follow Christ. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ must believe and have faith in Jesus and the deity of Jesus Christ (Yeshua) as the Son of God, along with God the Father (Yahweh) and the Holy Spirit:

John 3:5 (AKJV) **"***Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7Marvel not that I said to you, You must be born again."* Here, Jesus emphasizes that both a physical birth (water) and a spiritual rebirth (the Spirit) are necessary to enter God**'**s Kingdom. Being born again by the Spirit is essential to being a true disciple of Christ.

- **Those who don't continue to Repent and turn from their sins:**

Luke 13:3 (AKJV) **"***I tell you, No: but, except you repent, you shall all likewise perish."* Jesus stresses the necessity of repentance. Those who do not repent of their sins will not be able to enter the Kingdom of God. Without repentance, there is no possibility of being His disciple.

Mark 1:15 (AKJV) **"***And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent you, and believe the gospel."* Repentance is a continual part of following Jesus. Jesus Himself preached repentance as a requirement to enter the Kingdom of God.

Revelation 3:19 (AKJV) **"***As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."* Jesus lovingly calls His people to repentance. Those who are rebuked and chastened by Him must respond with repentance in order to continue walking as His disciples.

- **Those who don't do the will of God:**

Matthew 7:21-23 (AKJV)**"***Not every one that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works? 23And then will I profess to them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity."*

- **Those who don't deny themselves:**

Luke 9:23 (AKJV) **"***And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."* Jesus calls His followers to daily

deny themselves, which includes turning from sin and worldly desires. A disciple must continually repent and live a life of self-denial, not clinging to sinful ways.

(13) God's Callings:

Basically there are three distinct Callings of God

1. First is God's initial calling and invitation is offered to everyone to be saved from the sinful evil that we have done and to be reconciled into a good relationship with God. Anyone can be saved by humbling themselves, believing in Jesus Christ, repenting and following Him as Lord and Saviour.
2. Second, it could be said also, that there are general callings that God gives to every after they become a Christian
3. Third, there are specific callings and talents that God gives to certain Christians and to every Christian.

1) God's calling and invitation to salvation:

God's calling and invitation to salvation is a profound expression of His grace and mercy, offered to every person, regardless of their past or present circumstances. The Scriptures affirm this universal invitation, as seen in John 3:16, which states, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." This highlights that salvation is not limited to a select few but is open to all who are willing to respond. The process begins with humility; as we recognize our sinful nature and our need for redemption, we are drawn to God's offer of reconciliation. Romans 3:23 reminds us, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," but it's through repentance—turning away from our sinful ways—that we begin to align ourselves with God's purpose. By placing our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are made new, a new creation, born again and we embark on a narrow patth that leads to eternal life. Acts 2:38 calls us to "repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins," illustrating the steps necessary to enter into a restored relationship with God. This journey is not merely about personal salvation; it invites us into a deeper understanding of who we are created to be and how we can live out God's plan in our lives.

2) The general callings of God for every Christian:

The general callings of God for every Christian encompass fundamental principles, biblical instructions and divinely appointed objectives that shape our lives and relationships. At the heart of these callings is the command to love God and one another, as emphasized in Matthew 22:37-39, where Jesus declares the greatest commandments: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" and "Love your neighbor as yourself." This foundational love is transformative; it compels us to seek a deeper relationship with God while also extending grace and compassion to those around us. Loving God fully involves worship, obedience, and a commitment to His Word, while loving others manifests in acts of kindness, empathy, and support.

Forgiveness is another critical calling that God places upon every believer. In Matthew 6:14-15, Jesus teaches, "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your

heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." This call to forgive reflects the nature of God's mercy towards us and is essential for maintaining healthy relationships within the community of believers. It allows us to release bitterness and anger, fostering reconciliation and peace.

Additionally, Christians are called to minister to the needs of others, as illustrated in Matthew 25:35-40, where Jesus speaks of serving those who are hungry, thirsty, sick, or imprisoned. This calling emphasizes a practical outworking of our faith, urging us to respond to the needs of our neighbors with compassion and action. Whether through acts of service, financial support, or simply being present for someone in distress, we are invited to embody Christ's love in tangible ways.

Bearing good spiritual fruit is another vital aspect of our general calling. In John 15:5, Jesus says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." This fruit is evidence of our relationship with Christ and includes qualities such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, as outlined in Galatians 5:22-23. These attributes not only reflect our character but also impact those around us, drawing others to the message of the Gospel.

Confessing Jesus before others is another essential element of our calling. Romans 10:9 states, "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." This public acknowledgment of our faith is crucial, as it shows our commitment to Christ and serves as a testament to His transformative power in our lives.

Witnessing to others is closely tied to this confession. In Acts 1:8, Jesus commissions His followers to be His witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." This call to evangelism is not just for the evangelist; it is for every believer. Our daily lives, conversations, and actions should reflect the hope we have in Christ, inviting others to experience His love and grace.

Finally, making disciples is an integral part of our general calling. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 commands us to "go and make disciples of all nations." This involves not just sharing the Gospel but also nurturing and mentoring others in their faith of Jesus Christ, and doing the will of God. Discipleship is about helping others grow in their understanding of God's Word in the Bible, encouraging them in their walk with Christ, and equipping them to live out their faith in the world.

In summary, the general callings of God for every Christian are our God given appointed responsibilities and response to God's will that emphasizes love, forgiveness, service, spiritual growth, public witness, and disciple-making. Engaging with these callings enriches and verifies to God the genuineness of our faith and strengthens and blesses the lives around us, ultimately reflecting the heart of Christ to a world in need.

By embracing these responsibilities, we participate in God's redemptive work and fulfill our purpose as members of His body.

3) Specific callings and talents given to certain Christians:

Beyond the callings, instructions and commandments given to every Christian, God has specific callings for each disciple of Jesus Christ. These callings are unique and

tailored by God to the individual or individuals whomGod chooses best to willfully, and faithfulbully fulfill God's master plan. God's criteria for choosing who He wants to give certain tasks or callings to or to bestow specific talents to, does not depend upon a person's social status, abilities, appearance or resources. Rather God chooses a person after God's own heart.

1 Samuel 16:7 "But the LORD said to Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

Ephesians 2:10 tells us, **"**For we are God**'**s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." This verse reassures us that each Christian has a unique purpose within God**'**s overarching plan. Some may feel called to pastoral ministry, others to missionary work, and many to serve in various capacities within their local communities or workplaces. Each of these callings serves the body of Christ and reflects the diverse ways in which God works through His people. For instance, the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 illustrates how different individuals receive different gifts and responsibilities, emphasizing that God expects us to use what He has given us for His glory. It**'**s vital to recognize that these specific callings are not just for the **"**elite" among us but are meant for all believers who seek to live in obedience and faithfulness to God**'**s direction in their lives.

In addition to the general callings and specific callings, God also equips certain Christians with unique talents and abilities that are vital for the advancement of His Kingdom. This notion is beautifully encapsulated in 1 Corinthians 12, where Paul describes the Church as one body with many parts, each serving a crucial role. Some may have the gift of teaching, while others might excel in hospitality, leadership, or mercy. Romans 12:6-8 encourages believers to use their different gifts according to the grace given to them: **"**If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement." God's Holy Spirit may reveal how individuals have used their unique gifts in their church or community, creating a fruitful service that glorifies God. Embracing our specific talents allows us to contribute meaningfully to the life of the Church, and through these contributions, we see God**'**s love and power manifested in the world around us. Ultimately, the journey of following God**'**s call is one of discovery, where each believer uncovers their role in God**'**s grand narrative and experiences the joy of serving Him and others.

God is Love, and it is His Love and goodness revealed in Jesus Christ is what and whom calls us and draws is to come to God and to be reconciled with Him, and to abide in Him.

In one respect, everyone is initially called by God, and invited to be forgiven of their sins and to be saved, by believing in Jesus Christ as declared in John 3:16-21

" For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.18He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already,

because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. 21But he that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are worked in God."

It is God the Father who draws us to himself, in John 6:44, is where Jesus emphasizes the divine initiative in the process of salvation, "No one comes to the Father except the Father draws him" This verse highlights that it is not merely through human effort or wisdom that individuals come to faith, but rather through the power of God by which he compels us to come to him. This aspect of God's competing unmerited love, mercy, kindness, goodness and authority demonstrated towards us, resonates deeply throughout scripture, affirming that our relationship with God begins with His invitation and action in our lives.

In reflecting on this passage, it becomes clear that the call to salvation is an act of grace. It illustrates God**'**s desire for a relationship with humanity, even though of our past disobedience, and sinful nature, He still chooses to provide the way of reconciliation through Jesus Christ, and draws us into that relationship. God does this not by force but by power of his Holy Spirit bestowing his love and truth towards us. Each of us has unique experiences that serve as points of connection to this drawing. For some, it may be a profound moment of realization or conviction during a difficult time; for others, it may be the gentle nudging of the Holy Spirit through everyday circumstances or the witness of others.

Jesus **'**statement reminds us that our journey toward Him is not one we initiate on our own. This truth invites humility, recognizing that our understanding and acceptance of the Gospel is a result of God**'**s gracious work in our hearts. As Romans 3:11 says, **"**No one seeks God," emphasizing our need for divine intervention. The process of being drawn to the Father is deeply personal and transformative, often involving struggles and questions that ultimately lead to deeper faith.

Moreover, once we respond to God's calling , along with drawing us near with His love and truth and upon accept Jesus Christ, our lives are forever changed. We are called not only to embrace salvation but also to share this message with others. 2 Corinthians 5:17 reminds us, **"**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" This new identity comes with the responsibility of reflecting Christ to those around us, participating in the ongoing work of drawing others to Him.

In essence, the call to salvation and the unique paths we take are rooted in God**'**s loving pursuit of each of us. He invites us into a relationship where we can discover our purpose and calling, ultimately leading us to participate in His mission of reconciliation and love in the world. Each believer has a story to tell about how God drew them close, and sharing these narratives can serve as powerful testimonies to His grace and power.

Being called by God is part of God's profound divine Master plan as seen throughout the scriptures, highlighting His intention and purpose for each individual. The Bible presents this calling not merely as a vocation or task but as a divine invitation into a relationship that shapes our identity and mission. For instance, in Jeremiah 1:5, God declares, **"**Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born, I set you

apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." This verse encapsulates the view that each person is known intimately by God, with a unique purpose assigned even before birth. It's a comforting reminder that we are not here by chance; God has a specific plan for our lives.

In the New Testament, the call to follow Jesus is a central message . Jesus Himself extends an invitation in Matthew 4:19, saying, "Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people." This call is both personal and communal, emphasizing the transition from an individual life to one that actively engages in the mission of bringing others into the Kingdom of God. Each Christian is called to be a disciple, which involves a commitment to learning from Christ and embodying His teachings in daily life. This call may manifest differently for each person—some may be called to pastoral ministry, while others might find their purpose in fields like teaching, helps ministry, visiting the sick, those in prison, elderly etc., providing food , clothing and shelter for the needy, and so forth. Regardless of what kind of service God directs a person to become involved in , the essence of the call remains the same: to reflect Christ's love and truth to those around us.

Salvation is through Jesus Christ alone is the main truth that sets our Christian faith and is what sets us apart from all other false gods, religious beliefs and doctrines. Ephesians 2:8-9 states, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." This grace is transformative, inviting believers into a new life that transcends their past failures and sins. Each Christian's journey of salvation is unique, often marked by personal struggles, doubts, and ultimately, the assurance of God's love. This grace not only rescues us from our brokenness but also propels us into a life of service and purpose.

As Christians, we are called to embrace our identities as children of God, and this entails living out the specific callings He has placed on our lives. Romans 12:6-8 encourages us to use our gifts: "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach…" This passage underscores the understanding that each gift is valuable and necessary for edifying the body of Christ. These are not random attributes but part of God's design for you to contribute to His kingdom in meaningful ways.

In navigating our individual callings, it is essential to cultivate a relationship with God through prayer, scripture, and community. Philippians 1:6 assures us, "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." This promise serves as encouragement that God is actively working within us, guiding us toward the fulfillment of our callings. It's a walk of faith of continual growth, learning to trust in His timing and direction.

Ultimately, the Christian life is marked by a series of callings—first to salvation, then to discipleship, and finally to our unique roles within the body of Christ. Each step is a reflection of God's grace and purpose, inviting us into a deeper relationship with Him and a more profound engagement with the world around us. Embracing this spiritual walk with Jesus means recognizing that we are not just passive recipients of His love but active participants in His divine plan, each with our distinct calling and contribution.

(14) Walking With God And Walking With The Spirit Of God

Walking with God and walking in the Spirit with God are closely connected biblical actions that describe our intimate relationship and daily interaction with our triune God. Walking with God implies a continuous walk of faith, trust, and obedience, while walking in the Spirit emphasizes the empowering presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Both spiritual acts involve being in communion with God, aligning with His will, and experiencing transformation through His grace.

To walk with God means to live in an active, intimate, personal relationship with Jesus Christ, acknowledging His authority and seeking His guidance in every aspect of life. It implies a daily surrender of our will to His and a commitment to obeying His commands. We find an example of walking with God in the life of Enoch, who "walked with God, and he was not, for God took him" (Genesis 5:24). Enoch's close fellowship with God and his obedience pleased the Lord, resulting in a remarkable outcome.

Walking with God also entails a life of faith and trust. In Micah 6:8, we read, "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Walking with God involves living in humility, acknowledging our need for Him, and relying on His wisdom and strength. It is an active pursuit of righteousness, guided by our relationship with Him.

Walking in the Spirit with God emphasizes our dependency on the Holy Spirit for transformation, guidance, and empowerment in our daily lives. The apostle Paul highlights this concept in Galatians 5:16, saying, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." Walking in the Spirit involves surrendering to the Holy Spirit's leading, allowing Him to shape our character, produce spiritual fruit, and empower us for Kingdom service. Through the Spirit, we experience the transforming work of God in our lives, enabling us to live victoriously over the fleshly desires.

Following Jesus Christ is central our Christian faith. It means embracing Him as Lord and Savior, surrendering our lives to Him, and seeking to imitate His character and teachings. Jesus said in Matthew 16:24, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Following Jesus requires a wholehearted commitment, which includes self-denial, sacrifice, and a willingness to prioritize His kingdom over worldly pursuits.

To walk with God means to align one's thoughts, actions, and values with God's will and teachings. It involves seeking God's guidance, following His commandments, and surrendering one's life to His purposes. It requires faith, trust, and reliance on God's wisdom and direction.

Walking with God involves having a personal relationship with Him through prayer, reading and studying the Bible, and engaging in worship and fellowship with other believers. It also includes developing virtues such as love, compassion, forgiveness, humility, and justice, as exemplified by Jesus Christ.

In essence, walking with God is an ongoing journey of spiritual growth and transformation, where individuals strive to become more like Christ and to live in harmony with God's principles. It is a life of intimacy, obedience, and dependence on God's grace and guidance.

Following Jesus involves not only a personal relationship with Him but also living out His teachings and example in practical ways. In John 8:12, Jesus declared, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." Following Jesus means embracing Him as the source of truth, allowing His light to guide our path, and reflecting that light to others through our words and actions. It also includes taking up our cross, embracing the call to selflessness, and being willing to endure hardship for the sake of the Gospel.

As we follow Jesus, we become His disciples, learning from Him and growing in our understanding of His ways. Jesus said in John 13:34-35, (AKJV) “A new commandment I give to you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.." Following Jesus means embodying His love, grace, and compassion in our interactions with others, displaying the distinctive characteristics of Christ's followers.

Walking with God and Loving Him should be the foundational aspects of every Christian’s life. It involves aligning our lives with God's purposes, seeking His guidance, obeying Him and cultivating a deep intimacy with Him. In Amos 3:3, the prophet asks, "Do two walk together, unless they have agreed to meet?" Walking with God necessitates agreement and unity of purpose. It requires that we prioritize Him above all else and pursue righteousness. In 1 John 1:6-7, we are reminded, "If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." Walking with God involves walking in His light, living in truth, and experiencing the cleansing power of His forgiveness.

Walking in the Spirit with God involves living a life empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:25 urges, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit." The Holy Spirit's presence within us enables us to bear spiritual fruit, as described in Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." Walking in the Spirit means yielding to His work in our lives, allowing Him to produce these transformative qualities within us.

Following Jesus Christ goes beyond mere intellectual acknowledgment; it requires wholehearted devotion and obedience. In John 10:27, Jesus declares, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Following Jesus entails listening to His voice, discerning His leading, and obeying His commands. It is a commitment to imitate His character and embrace His teachings. Jesus emphasized this in John 14:15, saying, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." True discipleship involves a love-driven obedience that flows from a heart transformed by God's grace.

Following Jesus also involves taking up our cross and denying ourselves. In Luke 9:23, Jesus instructs, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Taking up our cross means surrendering our own desires,

ambitions, and comforts for the sake of God's kingdom. It is a willingness to lay down our lives, sacrificing our selfish pursuits in order to live for Christ's purposes.

Furthermore, following Jesus means being transformed by Him and conforming to His image. Romans 8:29 states, "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." As we walk with God and walk in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit works within us, shaping us into the likeness of Christ. This transformative process involves renewing our minds, as Romans 12:2 emphasizes, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Walking with God, as seen throughout Scripture, is marked by trust, obedience, and an intimate communion with Him. In Genesis 6:9, Noah is described as a man who "walked with God." His faithfulness and obedience to God's instructions led to his preservation and the salvation of his family. Similarly, in Micah 6:8, the prophet reveals that God desires His people to "walk humbly with God." This involves acknowledging our dependence on Him, embracing humility, and following His ways.

Walking in the Spirit with God is a dynamic partnership with the Holy Spirit, who dwells within believers. Galatians 5:16 urges us to "walk by the Spirit" and not gratify the desires of the flesh. The Spirit empowers us to overcome the sinful inclinations of our human nature and guides us into a life that aligns with God's will. Romans 8:14 affirms, "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." Walking in the Spirit means yielding to His promptings, seeking His wisdom, and allowing Him to produce His fruit in our lives.

Following Jesus Christ is the core of our Christian faith. Jesus invites us to be His disciples, to follow His example, and to learn from Him. In Matthew 4:19, Jesus calls His first disciples, saying, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Following Jesus entails a lifelong commitment to learning from Him, growing in His teachings, and participating in His mission of reconciling people to God. It involves imitating His selfless love, compassion, and servant-heartedness.

To follow Jesus is to embrace a transformative life with Christ as our Lord, Deliverer and Savior. In 2 Corinthians 5:17, it is written, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." Through faith in Christ, we are born anew, and our lives are transformed by His grace. Following Jesus requires surrendering our old ways, allowing Him to renew our minds, and living out the values and principles of His kingdom.

In conclusion, walking with God, walking in the Spirit with God, and following Jesus Christ are intertwined aspects of every Christian's life. This involves developing a deep relationship with God, relying on the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and embracing a life of obedience and conformity to the image of Christ. These actions are not mere theoretical concepts, nor traditions and rituals of men but lived experiences through God's Holy Spirit that shape our identity as children of God and equip us to impact the world with His love and truth. In the Bible, the phrase "walk with God" could be presumed to be only used metaphorically, however, we should know that it primarily is to be understood literally spiritually to describe a close and intimate relationship with God,

when the Holy Spirit comes into a person**’**s life, and that person follows Jesus Christ, and the guiding of Holy Spirit. It signifies a lifestyle of faith, obedience, and fellowship with the divine. "Walking" suggests a continuous way of living, and "with God" implies a partnership and companionship with our Creator.

(15) How Should We Walk?:

How should we conduct our Lives as disciples of Jesus Christ?

Some Biblical Principles that Jesus and God’s Holy Spirit will guide and establish within us as we walk with Jesus throughout our lives.

Walk in Love : Walking with God involves extending love to others sometimes unconditionally, or sometimes unmerited or even towards our enemies just as Jesus loved us. To love those who love us is somewhat easy. But when we love those who don’t deserve it, our reward is great.

Matthew 5:46-48 (AKJV): “*For if you love them which love you, what reward have you? do not even the publicans the same? 47And if you salute your brothers only, what do you more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

In this passage, Jesus teaches that loving only those who love us is easy and doesn't set us apart as true disciples and followers of Him. The challenge—and the greater reward—comes in loving those who don't love us or even those who may not deserve it. By doing so, we reflect God's love, which is unconditional and extended to all people, regardless of their worthiness.

In John 13:34-35, Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another." Walking with God means demonstrating love that is sacrificial, selfless, not condoning evil, but loving others according to the will of God and His word, and the leading of His Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:2 urges believers to walk in love, imitating the sacrificial love of Christ. This love extends beyond mere affection, encompassing selflessness, compassion, and a genuine concern for the well-being of others. It is a love that reflects the very essence of God's character and serves as the main godly virtue that transforms the believer, as echoed in Ephesians 5:2.

Walk In The Light: Psalm 56:13 and 1 John 1:7 highlight the importance of walking in the light, which symbolizes living in righteousness and truth, free from the darkness of sin and deception. This spiritual illumination comes from abiding in God's presence and aligning one's life with His precepts, leading to a life of integrity and uprightness, as emphasized in Psalm 26:11 and Proverbs 10:9.

1 John 1:6,7 (AKJV)” If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleans us from all sin. “

Walking by faith, as elucidated in 2 Corinthians 5:7, implies a complete trust and reliance on God's promises and providence, even in the midst of life's uncertainties and challenges. It entails a steadfast confidence in God's faithfulness and a willingness to follow His lead, even when the path ahead seems unclear.

Walking in newness of life, as described in Romans 6:4, signifies a life that is transformed by the redemptive work of Christ, characterized by a renewed mind, a changed heart, and a purposeful pursuit of righteousness and holiness. It represents a departure from the old ways of sin and a commitment to live in the power of Christ's resurrection.

Walking in the fear of the Lord, as underscored in 2 Chronicles 19:9 and Psalm 128:1, encapsulates a life of reverence, awe, and deep respect for God's holiness and sovereignty. It involves a conscious awareness of God's righteous judgment and a desire to live in accordance with His divine standards and precepts.

Communion and Fellowship: Walking with God involves having a deep and intimate connection with Him. It means developing and continuing a relationship marked by open communication, where individuals regularly engage in prayer and heartfelt conversation with God. It also involves spending time in His presence, seeking His face, and experiencing the joy of fellowship with YaHWeH (God the Father) and Yeshua (Jesus Christ) and the Holy Spirit. **Trust and Surrender:** Walking with God requires trust and surrendering one's will to His guidance and sovereignty. It means acknowledging that God's ways are higher than our ways and trusting that He knows what is best for our lives. It involves surrendering personal ambitions, desires, and plans to align them with God's purpose and seeking His will in decision-making.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Walking with God entails forgiving others as Christ forgave us and actively seeking reconciliation. In Ephesians 4:32, it says, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Walking with God means letting go of grudges, offering forgiveness, and pursuing reconciliation in relationships, reflecting the reconciling love of Christ.

Compassion and Empathy: Walking with God involves showing compassion and empathy toward others, following the example of Jesus. Philippians 2:4 encourages us, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others." Walking with God means caring for the needs and struggles of others, extending a helping hand, and being willing to bear their burdens.

Servanthood and Humility: Walking with God means adopting a servant's heart and practicing humility, just as Jesus did. In Mark 10:45, Jesus said, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Walking with God involves seeking opportunities to serve others, considering their needs as greater than our own, and humbly serving them without seeking recognition or reward.

Grace and Mercy: Walking with God means extending grace and mercy to others, just as we have received from Him. Ephesians 2:4-5 reminds us, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved." Walking with God involves offering forgiveness and second chances, showing undeserved kindness, and extending mercy to others.

Reaching Out to the Lost: Walking with God includes a heart for evangelism and reaching out to those who do not yet know Him. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commissioned His disciples, saying, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." Walking with God means sharing the message of salvation, showing love to the lost, and leading them to encounter the transformative love of Jesus.

Unity and Reconciliation: Walking with God involves seeking unity and pursuing reconciliation among believers. In Ephesians 4:3, it says, "Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Walking with God means actively working towards unity, resolving conflicts, and promoting reconciliation within the body of Christ.

Holiness and Transformation: Walking with God entails striving for personal holiness and transformation. It involves allowing the Holy Spirit to work in one's life, conforming them to the image of Christ. Walking with God means pursuing righteousness, integrity, and moral uprightness while allowing God to shape and mold one's character.

Obedience and Alignment: Walking with God necessitates obedience to His commandments and guidance. It involves aligning one's actions, attitudes, and behaviors with God's revealed truth in the Bible. Walking with God means living a life that reflects His values and principles, seeking to honor and glorify Him in all areas of life.

Guidance and Direction: Walking with God means seeking His guidance and direction in every aspect of life. It involves acknowledging that God is the ultimate source of wisdom and relying on Him for guidance in decisions, relationships, and life's challenges. It means trusting that God will lead and direct individuals along the path that is best for them.

Perseverance and Faithfulness: Walking with God is a lifelong journey that requires perseverance and faithfulness. It involves remaining steadfast in one's commitment to follow God even in the face of difficulties, trials, and temptations. Walking with God means staying faithful to Him, relying on His strength, and continuing to grow in faith and obedience.

Listening and Discernment: Walking with God involves actively listening to His voice and discerning His leading. It requires attentiveness to God's promptings, whether through Scripture, the Holy Spirit, or godly counsel. Walking with God means being sensitive to His guidance and discerning His will amidst the noise and distractions of the world.

Relationship with Jesus Christ: Walking with God is intimately connected to having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus is seen as the bridge between humanity and God, and walking with God entails accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior, acknowledging His sacrificial death and resurrection, and living in communion with Him. It involves embracing His teachings, imitating His character, and following His example.

Fruit of the Spirit: Walking with God produces the fruit of the Spirit in one's life. The fruit of the Spirit, as described in Galatians 5:22-23, includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Walking with God involves allowing the Holy Spirit to work within, transforming one's attitudes and actions to exhibit these qualities.

Prayerful Dependence: Walking with God includes a posture of prayerful dependence on Him. It means recognizing one's need for God's grace, wisdom, and strength in every situation. Walking with God involves bringing concerns, needs, and desires before Him in prayer and trusting Him to provide, guide, and sustain.

Service and Kingdom Impact: Walking with God leads to a life of service and making an impact for God's kingdom. It means using one's gifts, resources, and opportunities to bless others and advance God's purposes in the world. Walking with God involves demonstrating His love through acts of kindness, compassion, and justice.

Joy and Contentment: Walking with God brings a deep sense of joy, contentment, and fulfillment. It involves finding true satisfaction and purpose in God's presence and living in alignment with His design for life. Walking with God allows individuals to experience a peace that surpasses understanding and a joy that is not dependent on external circumstances.

Worship and Adoration: Walking with God involves a lifestyle of worship and adoration. It means recognizing God's greatness, majesty, and holiness and responding with reverence, awe, and gratitude. Walking with God includes praising and worshiping Him not only in corporate settings but also in daily life, acknowledging His presence and giving Him glory.

Discipleship and Learning: Walking with God entails being a lifelong disciple and continually growing in knowledge and understanding of Him. It involves studying and meditating on the Scriptures to deepen one's understanding of God's character, His purposes, and His ways. Walking with God means seeking wisdom and insights from the Bible and allowing its truth to shape one's beliefs and actions.

Accountability and Community: Walking with God is not meant to be done in isolation. It involves being part of a supportive and accountable community of believers. Walking with God means engaging in fellowship, mutual encouragement, and accountability with fellow Christians. It includes participating in worship gatherings, small groups, and mentoring relationships where individuals can grow together in their faith.

Stewardship and Generosity: Walking with God involves recognizing that all aspects of life, including time, talents, and resources, are entrusted to us by God. It means embracing a mindset of stewardship and using these resources wisely and generously for His purposes. Walking with God includes practicing generosity, being good stewards of the environment, and caring for the needs of others.

Gratitude and Contentment: Walking with God fosters a heart of gratitude and contentment. It means recognizing and appreciating God's blessings, both big and small, and cultivating a spirit of thankfulness. Walking with God involves finding contentment in Him rather than seeking fulfillment in material possessions or worldly achievements.

Endurance and Perseverance: Walking with God requires endurance and perseverance through challenges, trials, and seasons of spiritual dryness. It involves trusting God's faithfulness and relying on His strength to overcome obstacles and remain steadfast in faith. Walking with God means leaning on Him in times of difficulty and allowing those experiences to deepen one's dependence on Him.

Mission and Kingdom Advancement: Walking with God involves actively participating in God's mission to reconcile the world to Himself. It means sharing the message of salvation and demonstrating God's love and compassion to others. Walking with God includes being a light in the world, bringing hope, healing, and reconciliation to individuals and communities.

Seeking God's Kingdom First: Walking with God involves prioritizing His kingdom and seeking His righteousness above all else. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." This means aligning our desires, pursuits, and decisions with God's purposes and values, trusting that He will provide for our needs.

Growing in Christlikeness: Walking with God involves the ongoing process of becoming more like Christ. Ephesians 4:22-24 encourages us, "Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." Walking with God entails intentionally shedding our old sinful nature and allowing the Holy Spirit to transform us into the image of Christ.

Trusting God in Difficult Circumstances: Walking with God means trusting Him completely, even in difficult circumstances. Proverbs 3:5-6 advises, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Walking with God requires surrendering our limited understanding and placing our trust in His wisdom, even when things seem uncertain or challenging.

Persevering in Faith: Walking with God involves persevering in faith, even amidst trials and tribulations. James 1:2-4 encourages us, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." Walking with God requires endurance, trusting that He is working in and through our trials for our ultimate growth and His glory.

Living as Ambassadors of Christ: Walking with God means embracing our role as ambassadors of Christ, representing Him to the world. 2 Corinthians 5:20 says, "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us." Walking with God involves living in a manner that reflects His character, love, and truth, and actively sharing the message of reconciliation with others.

Experiencing God's Presence and Rest: Walking with God includes experiencing His presence and finding rest in Him. Psalm 23:1-3 proclaims, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul." Walking with God involves seeking His presence through prayer, worship, and meditation on His Word, allowing Him to refresh and restore our souls.

Patience and Gentleness: Walking with God involves displaying patience and gentleness toward others, mirroring the character of Christ. In Colossians 3:12, it says, "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience." Walking with God means exercising patience in difficult situations, being gentle in our interactions, and treating others with kindness and respect.

Encouragement and Building Others Up: Walking with God means being an encourager and actively seeking to build others up in their faith. In 1 Thessalonians 5:11, it says, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing." Walking with God involves speaking words of encouragement, offering support, and helping others grow spiritually.

Seeking Justice and Mercy: Walking with God includes a commitment to seeking justice and showing mercy to the oppressed and marginalized. Micah 6:8 reminds us, "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Walking with God means advocating for the rights of others, standing against injustice, and extending mercy and compassion to those in need.

Selflessness and Sacrifice: Walking with God involves living a life of selflessness and sacrificial love. Jesus said in Mark 8:34, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Walking with God means putting the needs of others before our own, sacrificing our own desires and ambitions, and imitating the selfless love of Christ.

Faithful Witnessing: Walking with God means being a faithful witness of His love and truth to the world. In Acts 1:8, Jesus said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Walking with God involves sharing the gospel, living out our faith boldly, and pointing others to the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Prayerful Intercession: Walking with God includes interceding in prayer for others. In 1 Timothy 2:1, Paul urges, "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people." Walking with God means lifting up others in prayer, seeking God's blessing, guidance, and provision on their behalf.

Enduring Suffering: Walking with God involves enduring suffering and trials with faith and perseverance. James 1:12 states, "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him." Walking with God means trusting in His faithfulness, finding strength in Him during difficult times, and allowing trials to produce perseverance and spiritual growth.

Wisdom and Discernment: Walking with God involves seeking His wisdom and discernment in all aspects of life. Proverbs 3:5-6 reminds us, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Walking with God means relying on His guidance, seeking His perspective, and making choices aligned with His will.

Fruits of the Spirit in Relationships: Walking with God entails manifesting the fruits of the Spirit in our relationships. Galatians 5:22-23 states, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." Walking with God means allowing the Holy Spirit to produce these qualities in us, fostering healthy and loving interactions with others.

Holiness and Purity: Walking with God involves pursuing holiness and living a life of purity. 1 Peter 1:15-16 admonishes, "But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" Walking with God

means striving to align our thoughts, words, and actions with His standard of righteousness and purity.

Gracious Speech: Walking with God entails using our words to build up and encourage others. Colossians 4:6 advises, "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person." Walking with God means speaking with kindness, grace, and wisdom, and refraining from gossip, slander, and hurtful words.

Contentment and Trust: Walking with God includes developing a heart of contentment and trust in Him. Philippians 4:11-13 declares, "I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Walking with God means finding satisfaction and trust in Him, regardless of our circumstances.

Boldness and Courage: Walking with God involves stepping out in boldness and courage to fulfill His purposes. Joshua 1:9 encourages, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Walking with God means trusting His presence and power, and boldly obeying His call, even in the face of challenges and opposition.

HOW Should we walk? Continued…

John 12:35-36 AKJV 35 Then Jesus said to them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come on you: for he that walks in darkness knows not where he goes. 36 While you have light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light. These things spoke Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

Ephesians 5:15-21 (AKJV) See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.Why be you not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;Giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

- Walk in the Light - Psalm 56:13; 1 John 1:7; John 11:9; Psalm 89:15
- Walk in Love - Ephesians 5:2
- Walk in the Spirit - Romans 8:1, 14; Galatians 5:16, 22
- Walk with Integrity - Psalm 26:11; Proverbs 10:9
- Walk in Wisdom - Proverbs 13:20
- Walk Humbly - Micah 6:8
- Walk in Obedience - Deuteronomy 5:33

- Walk Uprightly - Psalm 84:11
- Walk in Truth - 3 John 1:3-4
- Walk Circumspectly - Ephesians 5:15
- Walk Worthy of the Lord - Colossians 1:10
- Walk by Faith - 2 Corinthians 5:7
- Walk in Newness of Life - Romans 6:4
- Walk in the Fear of the Lord - 2 Chronicles 19:9
- Walk as Children of Light - Ephesians 5:8
- Walk in the Way of Understanding - Proverbs 9:6
- Walk as He Walked - 1 John 2:6
- Walk Honestly - 1 Thessalonians 4:12
- Walk in the Commandments - 2 John 1:6
- Walk in Righteousness - Psalm 23:3
- Walk Blamelessly - Psalm 15:2
- Walk in the Law of the Lord - Psalm 119:1
- Walk in His Paths - Isaiah 2:3
- Walk in Peace - Romans 14:19
- Walk in the Light of the Lord - Isaiah 2:5
- Walk in the Fear of the Lord - 2 Kings 23:3
- Walk in the Statutes and Commandments - 1 Kings 8:36
- Walk in the Ways of the Lord - 1 Kings 2:3
- Walk in Good Works - Ephesians 2:10
- Walk as Wise - Ephesians 5:15
- Walk in Purity - 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4
- Walk in Humility - Philippians 2:3
- Walk in the Love of Christ - Ephesians 5:2
- Walk in the Fear of God - Ecclesiastes 12:13
- Walk in the Spirit of God - Zechariah 10:12
- Walk in the Light of Life - John 8:12
- Walk in the Commandments and Ordinances - Luke 1:6
- Walk in the Way of Righteousness - Proverbs 8:20
- Walk in the Ways of Integrity - Proverbs 13:6
- Walk in Holiness - 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- Walk in the Fear of the Lord - Proverbs 14:27

- Walk in the Fear of the Lord - Proverbs 16:6
- Walk in the Truth - 2 John 1:4
- Walk in the Light of Life - Psalm 56:13
- Walk in the Good Way - Jeremiah 6:16
- Walk in the Ancient Paths - Jeremiah 6:16
- Walk in the Fear of the Lord - Psalm 128:1
- Walk in the Way of His Steps - Job 23:11
- Walk in the Way of Truth - Psalm 86:11
- Walk in the Commandments - Psalm 119:45
- Walk in the Way of His Righteousness - Psalm 119:172
- Walk in the Commandments of the Lord - 1 Kings 8:58
- Walk in the Way of the Kings of Israel - 1 Kings 16:31
- Walk in the Truth and Love - 2 John 1:4
- Walk in the Way of the Lord - 2 Chronicles 17:3
- Walk in the Good Old Way - Jeremiah 6:16
- Walk in the Law of the Lord - Psalm 119:1
- Walk in His Commandments - Deuteronomy 8:6
- Walk in the Midst of Trouble - Psalm 138:7
- Walk in Your Truth - Psalm 86:11
- Walk in His Ways and Keep His Decrees - Deuteronomy 8:6
- Walk in the Paths of Righteousness - Psalm 23:3
- Walk in His Truth - Psalm 86:11
- Walk in the Law of the Lord - Psalm 119:1
- Walk in the Fear of the Lord - 2 Chronicles 19:9
- Walk in the Precepts of the Lord - Psalm 119:15
- Walk in the Counsels of God - Psalm 73:24
- Walk in the Statutes of the Lord - Psalm 119:1
- Walk in the Ways of God - Genesis 24:40
- Walk in the Paths of the Righteous - Proverbs 2:20
- Walk in the Truth - 2 John 1:4
- Walk in His Judgments - Psalm 119:7
- Walk in His Ordinances - Ezekiel 11:20
- Walk in the Commandments and the Law - 2 Kings 23:3
- Walk in the Ways of the Lord - 2 Chronicles 17:3

- Walk in His Testimonies - Psalm 119:2
- Walk in His Precepts - Psalm 119:35
- Walk in His Word - Psalm 119:1
- Walk in His Paths - Isaiah 2:3
- Walk in His Statutes - Psalm 119:45

(16) The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Divine Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the triune Godhead, who are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The orthodox doctrine of Christianity teaches that the Holy Spirit is part of the Godhead, co-eternal; The Holy Spirit is a person that is distinct from God the Father and God the Son, though united to both of them in oneness of the Godhead.

Although the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one in moral attributes, they are still distinctly different in function, and form/nature; However they rule together as " One God " in Heaven.

The ' Holy Spirit ' is just what His name declares; God's Spirit is HOLY- which means separated from evil, full of righteousness God's Holy Spirit is SPIRIT- You can not see it, He has an heavenly body The Holy Spirit of God is a living eternal divine almighty being and is not just an impersonal force or electrical power. The Holy Spirit also has several other names such as Comforter, Holy Ghost, Spirit of Truth, Counselor, Helper, Sanctifier; He is the source of all wisdom and spiritual power.

When a person becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes and dwells inside of a believer's heart and leads them into all truth, by teaching them all things that are essential, and further God's Spirit 'reminds' us of everything that Jesus spoke to us, (John 14:26) and moreover He convicts our hearts of sin and of the judgment to come.

THE HOLY SPIRIT - Key Scriptures

John 14:15-31 (AKJV) “ If you love me, keep my commandments. 16And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you. 18I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. 19Yet a little while, and the world sees me no more; but you see me: because I live, you shall live also. 20At that day you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21He that has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me: and he that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. 22Judas says to him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world? 23Jesus answered and said to him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my

Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our stayed with him. 24He that loves me not keeps not my sayings: and the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. 25These things have I spoken to you, being yet present with you. **26But the Comforter (Helper), who is the Holy (Spirit) Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I (Jesus) have said to you.** 27Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you: not as the world gives, give I to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. 28You have heard how I said to you, I go away, and come again to you. If you loved me, you would rejoice, because I said, I go to the Father: for my Father is greater than I. 29And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, you might believe. 30Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world comes, and has nothing in me. 31But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence."

Ephesians 1:13 -14 (AKJV) "In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of his glory."

Acts 2:17-18 (AKJV) And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:"

(17) Why should we receive the Holy Spirit of God ?

John 16:13 (AKJV) "However, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. 14He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you. 15All things that the Father has are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it to you."

In John 16:13-15, Jesus explains the vital role of the Holy Spirit and why we should receive Him. Here's a breakdown of the main points in these verses:

1. Guidance into All Truth

- **"He will guide you into all truth" (v. 13)** The Holy Spirit's primary function is to guide believers into truth. Without the Holy Spirit, it's difficult to discern the deeper truths of God and His will. He reveals the truth of God's Word and brings understanding, especially in times when we need wisdom.

2. The Holy Spirit Speaks What He Hears

- **"He shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak" (v. 13)** The Holy Spirit doesn't act independently but only speaks what He

hears from the Father and the Son. This assures us that the Holy Spirit's guidance is in complete alignment with God's will. We can trust that He will never lead us contrary to God's Word.

3. He Will Show Us Things to Come

- **"He will show you things to come" (v. 13)** The Holy Spirit also has a prophetic role. He reveals future events and guidance, helping believers prepare for what lies ahead. This can include personal guidance, understanding the times, or insight into God's eternal plan.

4. Glorifying Christ

- **"He shall glorify me" (v. 14)** The Holy Spirit's role is to glorify Jesus Christ. He does not point to Himself but always leads us to honor and worship Christ. This highlights the unity of the Trinity and the importance of focusing on Christ in the life of a believer.

5. Revealing What Belongs to Christ

- **"For he shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you" (v. 14)** The Holy Spirit reveals to us the things that belong to Jesus. This includes all the riches of grace, salvation, and understanding that are available through Jesus Christ. He makes the truths of Christ accessible to believers, helping us understand and apply them in our lives.

6. Everything the Father Has Belongs to Christ

- **"All things that the Father has are mine" (v. 15)** Jesus affirms that everything the Father has is His, and the Holy Spirit takes what belongs to Christ and makes it known to us. This means that through the Holy Spirit, we have access to the fullness of God's blessings and promises.

Conclusion:

We should receive the Holy Spirit because He is our guide into truth, helps us understand God's will, reveals the future, glorifies Jesus, and shares the treasures of Christ with us. The Holy Spirit is a crucial part of our spiritual growth, empowering us to live according to God's will and experience the fullness of Christ's work in our lives.

Why should we receive the Holy Spirit of God ? - Continued…

- To receive power (Spiritual) - Acts 1:8 , Romans 15:19
- To be an effective witness for Christ - Acts 1:8
- For direction, To be led - Romans 8:26
- To have strength - Ephesians 3:16

- To have the Love of God to be poured out in our heart- Romans 5:5
- To receive revelation - 1 Corinthians 2:10
- To receive the spirit of truth - John 16:13, 2 Corinthians 3:16, John14:16,17; 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13
- To have life and peace - Romans 8:6
- To have prayers answered - Romans 8:26
- To be holy - , Romans 1:4
- To come into unity - Ephesians 4:3
- For the common good - 1 Corinthians 12:7
- To have no condemnation - Romans 8:1-5
- To teach and preach - Luke 4:18
- To receive joy - 1 Thessalonians 1:6
- To receive freedom - 2 Corinthians 12:17
- To overcome weakness - Romans 8:26

Why should we receive the Holy Spirit of God ? -Continued…

- To be an overcomer - Zechariah 4:6
- To spiritually build yourself up - Jude 20
- To know the Spirit of Truth - John 14:16,17
- To become sons of God - Romans 8:14
- To receive dreams and visions - Acts 2:14-17
- To set liberty to the oppressed - Luke 4:18
- To proclaim Justice - Matthew 12:18
- To bring about the obedience of faith - Romans 1:5
- To comprehend the thoughts of God - 1 Corinthians 2:11
- To speak to another in spiritual songs - Ephesians 5:18,19
- To make melody to God - Ephesians 5:19
- To have victory - Matthew12:20
- To receive the spiritual gifts - 1 Corinthians 14
- To have a guarantee of salvation - 2 Corinthians 5:5
- To have sanctification - 2 Thessalonians 2:13

- To purify your soul - 1 Peter 1:22
- To be transformed into the image of the Lord from glory to glory - 2 Corinthians 3:17,18
- In order to truly worship God - John 4:24

(18) How do we receive the Holy Spirit ?

There are several ways outlined in the Bible that an individual can receive and be baptized by the Holy Spirit; There is not just one particular way that God uses to give us His Holy Spirit; All of these ways are found in the Bible…..

- **By Faith in Jesus Christ, and faith to receive promise of the Spirit of God by faith**

The most fundamental way to receive the Holy Spirit is by placing faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. **Galatians 3:14** says that "we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The Holy Spirit is given to all who believe in Jesus Christ and accept His salvation, as He is the one who baptizes us with the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17, Acts 1:5).

Key Point: The foundational requirement for receiving the Holy Spirit is placing your faith in Jesus Christ and accepting His sacrifice for your sins.

- **By Asking God In Prayer For The Holy Spirit**

Luke 11:10-13 (AKJV) For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened. 11If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? 12Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: **how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?**

- **Pray believing and do not doubt**

Mark 11:24- (AKJV) Therefore I say to you, What things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.

Matthew 21:21,22; (AKJV) - Jesus answered and said to them, Truly I say to you, If you have faith, and doubt not, you shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if you shall say to this mountain, Be you removed, and be you cast into the sea; it shall be done. 22And all things, whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive."

- **By Listening To The Word Of God**

Acts 10:44-48 (AKJV) While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

- **By Repenting And Being Baptized**

Acts 2:38,39 (AKJV) Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.(Holy Spirit) 39For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.

How do we receive the Holy Spirit ?

- **By The Laying On Of Hands, Not by money**

Acts 8:17(AKJV) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.(Holy Spirit) 18And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles **'**hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.(Holy Spirit) 20But Peter said to him, Your money perish with you, because you have thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21You have neither part nor lot in this matter: for your heart is not right in the sight of God. 22Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. 23For I perceive that you are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. 24Then answered Simon, and said, Pray you to the LORD for me, that none of these things which you have spoken come on me."

- **By Obeying God**

Acts 5:32 (AKJV)**"***And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to them that obey him."* The Holy Spirit is given to those who obey God. Rejection of the Holy Spirit can be seen as a rejection of God**'**s authority and will

(19) What , If anyone does Not receive The Holy Spirit ? Or if anyone does not have a sincere faith in Jesus Christ?

- They Do Not Belong To Christ

Romans 8:9-17 (AKJV) But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you. 12Therefore, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.**14For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God**. 15For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

What , If anyone does Not receive The Holy Spirit ? Or if anyone does not have a sincere faith in Jesus Christ?

If someone chooses not to receive the Holy Spirit, the Bible makes it clear that they do not belong to Christ. Let's break down the implications of rejecting the Holy Spirit based on **Romans 8:9-17**:

1. They Are Not Christ's

Romans 8:9 says, *"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."* This verse directly states that the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person's life is a defining characteristic of belonging to Christ. If someone does not have the Holy Spirit, they do not belong to Christ. The Holy Spirit is the seal of a believer's identity and their relationship with Jesus.

Key Point: Without the Holy Spirit, a person is not in Christ, and without Christ, there is no true life or salvation.

2. Their Bodies Are Dead Because of Sin

Romans 8:10 explains, *"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."* Without the Holy Spirit, a person remains spiritually dead, separated from God due to sin. The Spirit gives life, and without Him, one continues to live in the flesh, which leads to death—both physical and spiritual. Choosing not to receive the Holy Spirit means remaining in the bondage of sin and not experiencing the fullness of life that comes from Christ.

Key Point: Rejecting the Holy Spirit means remaining spiritually dead in sin, separated from the life that is in Christ.

3. They Live According to the Flesh and Face Death

Romans 8:13 says, *"For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live."* The Bible teaches that those who reject the Holy Spirit continue to live according to their sinful nature (the flesh). This leads to spiritual death. However, those who receive the Holy Spirit and allow Him to guide them are empowered to overcome sin and live according to God's will, which leads to eternal life.

Key Point: Living without the Holy Spirit means continuing in sinful behavior, leading to death. The Spirit empowers believers to live victoriously over sin and experience eternal life.

4. They Are Not Sons of God

Romans 8:14-15 states, *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."* A person's relationship with God as His child is made possible through the Holy

Spirit. The Spirit leads believers to live according to God**’**s will, and it is through the Holy Spirit that believers can cry out to God, **“**Abba, Father,” signifying an intimate, familial relationship with Him. Without the Holy Spirit, this connection is not possible.

Key Point: Rejecting the Holy Spirit means being excluded from the identity of being a child of God, as the Holy Spirit is the one who brings believers into the family of God.

5. They Miss the Assurance of Their Salvation

Romans 8:16 says, *"The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."* One of the functions of the Holy Spirit is to confirm to our hearts that we are children of God. This inner assurance, or witness of the Spirit, provides believers with confidence in their salvation. If someone rejects the Holy Spirit, they miss out on this confirmation and the peace that comes from knowing they are God's children.

Key Point: Without the Holy Spirit, there is no assurance of being a child of God, which can lead to spiritual insecurity and doubt about salvation.

6. They Are Not Heirs of God or Co-Heirs with Christ

Romans 8:17 states, *"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."* The Holy Spirit grants believers the status of heirs of God, co-heirs with Christ. This means they share in Christ's eternal inheritance and glory. Without the Holy Spirit, this inheritance is inaccessible, and one remains outside the promises of God.

Key Point: Rejection of the Holy Spirit means forfeiting the inheritance and glory that belongs to the children of God through Christ.

Conclusion:

Anyone who does not receive the Holy Spirit has profound consequences according to God’s word. It results in not belonging to Christ, living in sin and death, not experiencing the privileges of being a child of God, and missing out on the assurance of salvation and eternal inheritance. The Holy Spirit is the means by which believers in Jesus are sealed as God's children, empowered to live righteous lives, and assured of their future glory. Rejecting the Holy Spirit leaves one outside of these blessings and under the consequences of sin. Therefore, it is essential to receive the Holy Spirit, as He is the key to belonging to Christ, experiencing eternal life, and entering into the full promises of God.

What , If anyone does Not receive The Holy Spirit ? Or if anyone does not have a sincere faith in Jesus Christ? - Continued…

- **Blaspheming the Holy Spirit**

Matthew 12:31-32 *(AKJV)* **“***Why I say to you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven to men. 32And whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but*

whoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." This passage warns of the unforgivable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Rejecting or speaking against the Holy Spirit's work is a serious offense, with eternal consequences.

- **Resisting the Holy Spirit**

Acts 7:51 (AKJV) **"***You stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do you."* This verse speaks of the consequence of resisting the Holy Spirit. People who resist the Holy Spirit are compared to their ancestors, who rejected God's messages and guidance.

1 Corinthians 2:14 (AKJV)

"*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* This verse underscores the fact that those who do not have the Holy Spirit cannot understand the things of God. The Holy Spirit gives believers the ability to discern and understand spiritual truths.

- **Carnal minded**

Romans 8:7-8 (AKJV)**"***Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."* **This passage describes the conflict between the flesh (sinful nature) and the Spirit. Those who choose not to have a sincere faith in Jesus Christ and thereby not able to receive the Holy Spirit remaining in the flesh, are unable to please God or live according to His will.**

(20) Walking in the Spirit: The Transformative Role of the Holy Spirit in the Lives of Christians

The Holy Spirit is a central and transformative presence of God in our lives, guiding, empowering, and sanctifying us as we walk with God. The following are some of the key biblical teachings on the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of us as disciples of Jesus Christ, highlighting the multifaceted ways in which the Spirit of God provides guidance, leads us into all Truth, strength, comfort, and transformation.

The Promise of the Holy Spirit: In John 14:16-17, Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit as our Helper, who will be with us forever. This foundational biblical teaching establishes the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, serving as our guide, counselor, and comforter.

Empowerment for Witnessing: Acts 1:8 declares that we will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us, enabling us to be witnesses for Christ. This biblical principle

emphasizes the empowering work of the Holy Spirit in equipping us for effective testimony and service.

Guidance into All Truth: John 16:13 assures us that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. This biblical teaching highlights the Spirit's role as our guide, revealing God’s word and providing discernment as we navigate the complexities of life.

Sealing and Guarantee of Salvation: Ephesians 1:13-14 speaks of us being sealed with the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our inheritance. This biblical principle underscores the Spirit's role in affirming the security of our salvation, serving as a divine seal and guarantee.

Fruit of the Spirit: Galatians 5:22-23 outlines the Fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. This biblical teaching emphasizes the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in producing Christlike character traits and divine virtues in our lives.

Empowerment for Service and Ministry: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 highlights the diverse spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit for our common good, and livelihood. This biblical principle emphasizes the Spirit's role in empowering us for service and ministry, distributing spiritual gifts and talents as He wills.

Renewing the Mind: Romans 8:5-6 speaks of our minds set on the Spirit bringing life and peace. This biblical teaching guides us to allow the Holy Spirit to renew our minds, aligning our thoughts with God's truth and principles, helping us to take captive every evil thought to the obedience of Christ, then desring the Holy Spirit to transform our thoughts to think of things above according to God’s will, love and holiness. Being carnally minded is death, but being spiritual miinded is life and peace. This is a life long process, that helps shapes our thoughts, reasoning, decision making, maturity, and holiness in Jesus, so that our actions and thoughts are aligned with God’s.

Intercession and Prayer: Romans 8:26-27 reveals the Holy Spirit's role in interceding for us when we do not know how to pray. This biblical principle highlights the Spirit's intimate involvement in our prayer lives, helping us communicate with God even in our weaknesses.

Adoption as Sons and Daughters: Romans 8:14-16 declares that we are led by the Spirit and have received the Spirit of adoption, enabling us to cry out, "Abba, Father." This biblical teaching emphasizes the Spirit's role in establishing our familial relationship with God, fostering a deep sense of identity and belonging.

Transformation of the Inner Man: 2 Corinthians 3:18 speaks of us being transformed into the image of the Lord by the Spirit. This biblical principle underscores the Spirit's ongoing work in our lives, bringing about a transformative process that conforms us to the likeness of Christ.

Strength in Weakness: In 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Paul acknowledges that the power of Christ rests on us in our weakness. This biblical teaching highlights the Holy Spirit's role in providing us strength and resilience, particularly in moments of difficulty.

Comfort in Affliction: 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 describes the Holy Spirit as the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our afflictions. This biblical teaching highlights the Spirit's role as our source of comfort and solace during times of trial and hardship.

Resisting the Works of the Flesh: Galatians 5:16-17 encourages us to walk by the Spirit and not gratify the desires of the flesh. This biblical principle underscores the Spirit's role in empowering us to resist sinful tendencies and walk in obedience to God.

Teaching and Reminding: In John 14:26, Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as our Teacher who will remind us of His words. This biblical teaching highlights the Spirit's role in instructing and reminding us of God's truth, ensuring we are anchored in the teachings of Christ.

Conviction of Sin, Righteousness, and Judgment: John 16:8-11 describes the Holy Spirit's role in convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. This biblical principle guides us to recognize the Spirit's work in bringing conviction, leading us to repentance and a pursuit of righteousness.

The Indwelling Presence: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 emphasizes that we are temples of the Holy Spirit. This foundational biblical teaching underscores the intimate indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, sanctifying and consecrating us for God's purposes.

Discernment of Spirits: 1 John 4:1-3 instructs us to test the spirits to see whether they are from God. This biblical principle highlights the Spirit's role in providing discernment, enabling us to distinguish between the influence of the Holy Spirit and other spiritual forces.

Empowerment for Holiness: 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8 encourages us to be holy and sanctified, with God giving us His Holy Spirit. This biblical teaching emphasizes the Spirit's role in empowering us for a life of holiness and sanctification, setting us apart for God's purposes.

Walking in Step with the Spirit: Galatians 5:25 instructs us to keep in step with the Spirit. This biblical principle guides us to maintain a dynamic and responsive relationship with the Holy Spirit, aligning our lives with His leading and promptings.

The Overflow of Joy and Hope: Romans 15:13 speaks of us being filled with joy and peace in believing by the power of the Holy Spirit. This biblical teaching highlights the Spirit's role in bringing about an overflow of joy, peace, and hope in our lives.

Equipping for Spiritual Warfare: Ephesians 6:17 mentions the sword of the Spirit as the Word of God. This biblical principle underscores the Spirit's role in equipping us for spiritual warfare, guiding us to wield the Word of God in our battles against spiritual forces.

Wisdom and Revelation: Ephesians 1:17-18 prays for us to receive the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. This biblical teaching highlights the Spirit's role in imparting divine wisdom and revealing God's truths to us, guiding us in our understanding of God's purposes.

Renewed Spiritual Strength: Isaiah 40:31 speaks of those who wait on the Lord renewing their strength. This biblical principle guides us to recognize the Holy Spirit's role in renewing our spiritual strength as we wait on God and depend on His guidance.

Spiritual Gifts for Edification: 1 Corinthians 12:7 teaches that spiritual gifts are given for our common good. This biblical principle emphasizes the Spirit's role in distributing diverse spiritual gifts to us, guiding us to use these gifts for the edification of the body of Christ.

Spiritual Discernment: 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 teaches that we have received the Spirit of God to understand the things freely given by God. This biblical principle emphasizes the Spirit's role in granting us spiritual discernment, enabling us to comprehend and apply the deep truths of God's Word.

Revelation of God's Love: Romans 5:5 declares that God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. This biblical teaching highlights the Spirit's role in revealing and deepening our experiential knowledge of God's love, fostering a profound sense of His presence and affection.

Empowerment for Evangelism: In Acts 4:31, we see believers filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking the word of God boldly. This biblical principle underscores the Spirit's role in empowering us for evangelism, emboldening us to share the Gospel with courage and conviction.

Freedom from Bondage: Romans 8:2 proclaims that the law of the Spirit of life has set us free from the law of sin and death. This biblical teaching emphasizes the liberating power of the Holy Spirit, breaking the chains of sin and providing us freedom for a life lived in righteousness.

Restoration of Joy: Psalm 51:12 petitions for God to restore the joy of our salvation and uphold us with a willing spirit. This biblical principle highlights the Spirit's role in restoring joy to our hearts, even in the midst of repentance and restoration.

Inspiration for Worship: Philippians 3:3 encourages us to worship in the Spirit of God. This biblical teaching underscores the Spirit's role in inspiring and guiding our authentic worship, helping us draw near to God with sincerity and reverence.

Sanctification and Holiness: 1 Peter 1:2 speaks of us being sanctified by the Holy Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ. This biblical principle emphasizes the Spirit's role in the process of sanctification, setting us apart for holy living and obedient service to Christ.

Strengthening Inner Being: Ephesians 3:16 prays for us to be strengthened with power through the Spirit in our inner being. This biblical teaching highlights the Spirit's role in fortifying us, providing strength and resilience for the challenges of our Christian journey.

Intimacy in Prayer: Jude 1:20 encourages us to pray in the Holy Spirit, building ourselves up in our most holy faith. This biblical principle underscores the Spirit's role in fostering intimacy in prayer, guiding us to commune with God in His power and wisdom.

Comfort in Times of Grief: John 14:16-18 assures us that the Holy Spirit is our Comforter who will be with us forever. This biblical teaching highlights the Spirit's role in providing comfort, particularly in times of grief, loss, and difficulty.

Boldness in Times of Persecution: In Matthew 10:19-20, Jesus promises that the Spirit of the Father will speak through us during times of persecution. This biblical principle emphasizes the Spirit's role in granting boldness and articulation when we face opposition for our faith.

Victory Over the Flesh: Romans 8:13 declares that, by the Spirit, we can put to death the deeds of the body. This biblical teaching emphasizes the Spirit's role in empowering us to overcome the desires of the flesh and live according to the Spirit, leading to a victorious Christian life.

Harmony and Unity in the Body: Ephesians 4:3 urges us to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. This biblical principle highlights the Spirit's role in fostering harmony and unity within the body of Christ, guiding us to prioritize love and peace in our relationships.

Comprehensive Transformation: 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 describes us being transformed from one degree of glory to another by the Spirit. This biblical teaching emphasizes the comprehensive nature of the Spirit's transformative work, impacting every aspect of our lives and character.

Empowerment for Generosity: 2 Corinthians 9:7 encourages us to give cheerfully, for God loves a cheerful giver. This biblical principle highlights the Spirit's role in empowering us for a generous and sacrificial lifestyle, reflecting the character of a giving God.

Prophetic Utterances: 1 Corinthians 14:2 speaks of us speaking in tongues as we utter God's deepest truths and desires in the Spirit. We don't always know how to pray as we should, but God's Holy Spirit helps us. There are real and false tongues, and geniune and false prophesies, we need God's Holy Spirit and His word to help us discern and distinguish between them, and beware of what is false and receive only that comes from God. This biblical teaching underscores the Spirit's role in enabling us to express prophetic utterances and mysteries in prayer and worship, moreover to convey a message from God.

Joyful Living: Romans 14:17 declares that the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. This biblical teaching emphasizes the Spirit's role in bringing about joy as a manifestation of God's kingdom in our lives.

Guidance in Times of Uncertainty: Isaiah 30:21 speaks of hearing a voice behind us saying, "This is the way, walk in it." While this verse doesn**'**t explicitly mention the Holy Spirit, it guides us to seek His guidance in moments of uncertainty.

Eager Anticipation of Christ's Return: Romans 8:23-25 speaks of us eagerly awaiting the redemption of our bodies. This biblical teaching underscores the Spirit's role in creating a sense of anticipation and hope for the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises, including the return of Christ.

Conclusion: According to God**'**s Word, we are guided and led by the Holy Spirit, allowing God**'**s transformative power to shape our character, empower our service in ministering to others, and foster an intimate relationship with Him. As we follow Jesus and navigate the complexities of life, the Holy Spirit stands as our divine Guide, Comforter, and the One who gives us strength, leading us on a path of spiritual growth, sanctification, and joyful obedience to God's will. As we walk in the Spirit, we can demonstrate God**'**s love and bear much good spiritual fruit.

(21) The Narrow Way

Matthew 7:13-14 AKJV 13 Enter you in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads to life, and few there be that find it.

The doctrine of the **narrow way or path** versus the **broad road** is a powerful metaphor in the God's Word and in Christian Discipleship teaching, particularly in **Matthew 7:13-14**. These two paths represent two distinct ways of life: one leading to eternal life and the other to destruction.

The Narrow Path

In **Matthew 7:13-14**, Jesus contrasts the two paths:

- **"** Enter you in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads to life, and few there be that find it.
- **"** (AKJV)

The **narrow path** represents the way of following Jesus—living in accordance with God**'**s will, embracing His teachings, and choosing a life of obedience, sacrifice, and self-denial. It**'**s characterized by a commitment to righteousness, humility, and the pursuit of holiness, often in the face of opposition and difficulty. Jesus is the Door to life, and is the only Way to be reconciled with God the Father (Yahweh) and abide in Him, in heaven., that's why it's narrow. There is no other spiritual path that leads to eternal life.

- **Requires Discipline and Effort**: The narrow path is not easy, and following Jesus is often undesirable to those whose hearts and minds are focused on themselves, worldly desires, and temporary pleasures. However, those who truly seek to love God and others choose the more difficult path because they recognize and long for the goodness and righteousness that only comes from walking with Jesus. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will draw near to God and Jesus who gives us living water to satisfy our spiritual emptiness and also giving us a new meaningful fruitful existence.

- Choosing the narrow path requires discipline, self-denial, commitment, self-control, and even a willingness to suffer sometimes for what is good and just—because it leads to life now and eternally. Those who follow it do so out of a genuine love of God and a desire to fulfill His will, to please and glorify Him, and to love and care for others. Jesus often spoke of the cost of discipleship, as seen in Luke 9:23: *"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."*

- **Leads to Life**: The narrow path leads to eternal life and a closer relationship with God. It**'**s a path of faith, where followers of Christ rely on Him for salvation, growing in grace and truth. The narrow path is ultimately the way of peace, joy, and spiritual fulfillment, even though it may involve trials and suffering along the way.

- **Fewer Find It**: Jesus notes that few will find the narrow path, indicating that it**'**s not the easy or natural path for most people. It requires intentional effort to seek God and live by His principles in a world that often rejects or ignores them.

The Broad Road

The **broad road**, on the other hand, symbolizes the way of the world—living according to the desires of the flesh, pursuing personal ambition, materialism, and indulging in sinful behavior. It is a path that is easy, popular, and often leads to spiritual emptiness and ultimately destruction.

- **Wide and Easy**: The broad road is wide because it offers countless options that seem appealing in the moment. It is filled with worldly pleasures—the pursuit of material wealth, fame, and the desires of the flesh—often at the cost of moral integrity and virtue, without God. This path prioritizes temporary, physical gains over lasting spiritual fulfillment in following Jesus. It represents a life of self-centeredness, where people follow their own desires or conform to societal values without seeking God and His will. Because it demands no sacrifice or transformation, this road feels comfortable and easy, making it highly attractive to many. However, its ease is deceptive, leading away from true life and eternal fulfillment, only eventually bringing destruction and spiritual death.

- **Leads to Destruction**: Despite its initial appeal, the broad road leads to spiritual destruction. It**'**s a path of sin and rebellion against God, and it ends in eternal separation from Him. The broad road is associated with the consequences of choosing worldly values over God's commands, which ultimately leads to spiritual death and judgment.

- **Many Follow It**: Jesus points out that many people take the broad road, indicating that it is the natural choice for those who are not committed to following God's ways. It's the easy choice, driven by worldly influences, and most people follow it without questioning where it leads.

Key Differences Between the Two Paths:

- **Difficulty and Cost**: The narrow path is difficult and requires believing in Jesus, having faith, repentance, commitment, self denial, sacrificial love, willful obedience to God and His ways, while the broad road is easy and requires little effort.
- **Outcome**: The narrow path leads to life—eternal life with God—while the broad road leads to destruction—spiritual death and separation from God.
- **Popularity**: The broad road is followed by many, as it aligns with the desires of the flesh and the norms of the world, whereas the narrow path is followed by few, as it calls for a radical transformation of heart and mind to live according to God**'**s will.

Why Choosing the narrow path is Important

This metaphor serves as a warning and a guide for all of us as Christians. It challenges us to evaluate our lives and the choices that we are making. Are we following the easy, worldly path, or are we choosing the more difficult but rewarding path that leads to eternal

life? Jesus' message calls for intentionality, self-denial, and a focus on eternal values rather than temporal pleasures.

In **Luke 13:24**, Jesus says, *"Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to."* This highlights the urgency and importance of pursuing the narrow path with diligence and commitment.

Conclusion

The **narrow path** and the **broad road** represent two very different ways of living. The narrow path leads to eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ, requiring effort, sacrifice, and a focus on God's kingdom. The broad road, though easier and more comfortable, leads to destruction and spiritual death. Jesus' teaching encourages us to choose the narrow path, despite its challenges, because it ultimately leads to true life and fulfillment in Him.

Ephesians 5:15-21 (AKJV) See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.Why be you not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;Giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

These are just a few bible references that further elaborate on the various aspects of living a life in accordance with the teachings of the Bible, emphasizing the importance of walking in righteousness, wisdom, and obedience to God's Word.

Walking with Jesus Christ along the narrow way embodies our devotion to Him, guiding our every step with faith. Along this path, discipleship becomes an integral part of our devotion, shaping our spiritual growth and commitment.

At its core, is about developing a deep and unwavering intimate relationship and dedication to Jesus Christ, a commitment that transcends mere religious observance and permeates every aspect of one's life. It's a walk of faith marked by fervent love, humble submission, and an unyielding desire to conform to the likeness of Christ.

Devotion to Jesus involves wholeheartedly surrendering oneself to His teachings, His will, and His purpose. It's about recognizing His supreme authority in our lives and responding with humility, reverence, and obedience. This devotion isn't merely a matter of outward expression or ritualistic practice but springs from a genuine, heartfelt connection with the person of Jesus Christ. It's an intimate personal relationship characterized by prayer, worship, and a continual seeking after His presence.

Discipleship, on the other hand, is the practical outworking of devotion to Jesus. It's about actively following Jesus, learning from His words and actions, and purposing to conform our lives to His image. Discipleship involves a willingness to deny oneself, take up the cross, and follow Jesus wherever He leads. It's about embodying His teachings, emulating His character, and participating in His mission of redemption and reconciliation.

‘The Narrow Way ’of Jesus Christ is one of repentance, and self-denial where we turn from our sinful ways, and commit to following and obeying Him. We are to have a personal and intimate genuine relationship with Jesus Christ. Above all loving God and others as Jesus Christ loved us.

Walking on the narrow way with Jesus is not always easy. It requires perseverance, sacrifice, and a willingness to endure hardship for the sake of the gospel. The narrowness of this path speaks to the exclusivity of salvation and eternal life is only possible through believing in and following Jesus, in a world that often rejects or opposes His values and teachings. Yet, it’s precisely on this narrow path that true life and fulfillment are found, as Jesus Himself declared:

“Enter you in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads to life, and few there be that find it.” (Matthew 7:13-14, AKJV).

As we give our devotion to God, our hearts and minds are transformed by His Holy Spirit, and our souls become anchored in the unshakable love of our Savior

Walking The Narrow Way with Jesus Christ is the only way that leads to Life and to abide in His Love and presence forever.

The narrow path represents the way of discipleship, obedience, and self-denial, turning away from sin, and doing the will of God, that Jesus calls His followers to walk. It's a path that is characterized by righteousness, holiness, and devotion to God, even when it's difficult or unpopular.

Choosing the narrow path requires making intentional decisions to align our lives with the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. It means surrendering our own desires, ambitions, and comforts in order to follow Him wholeheartedly. It's about prioritizing the kingdom of God and His righteousness above all else.

In contrast, the broad path represents the way of the world, characterized by sin, evil ways, self-indulgence, moral compromise, and spiritual apathy. It's a path that promises temporary pleasure and satisfaction but ultimately leads to spiritual emptiness and eternal separation from God.

Walking the narrow path requires courage, perseverance, and faith. It means resisting the pressures to conform to the values and priorities of this world. It's about being willing to stand firm in our convictions and to live single minded doing the will of God, to glorify Him through Jesus Christ.

The narrow path is evident as we sincerely follow Jesus Christ and His word in our daily lives.

Following Christ's way involves embracing a lifestyle of humility, service, and sacrificial love. It means loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loving our neighbors as ourselves. It's about seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness in all that we do, trusting that He will provide for our needs and guide us in His perfect will.

The narrow path is not an easy path, but it's the path that leads to true and abundant life. It's the path that leads to intimacy with God, fellowship with His people, and the fulfillment

of His purposes for our lives. It's the path that ultimately leads to eternal joy and peace in His presence.

Every Christian is called by God to walk each day on a **narrow** and **difficult** path. What **“**narrow” means is that you cannot go in any direction that you want nor do just anything you want;

Instead, you must follow a particular course and which is following same self disciplines that Jesus did and giving the same love that Jesus gave. This narrow path of following Jesus Christ is **“**difficult” but not impossible because you can have God's Holy Spirit to help you.There are many paths in this world, but only this one leads to life;

Once you have found the way in Jesus Christ, you can see clearly and distinctly that there is no other way , worth taking. Therefore it isn't necessary to follow other teachings before realizing that every other earthly path is a dead end.

Life is like a maze with many spiritual paths. Some may seem to be right and even offer partial moral teachings, but they are not inspired by God and ultimately lead to spiritual death. Only one path leads to life, and that path is Jesus Christ. No one can come to or be reconciled with God the Father except through Jesus (a.k.a. Yeshua) .

Metaphorically speaking, there may be many keys on a keychain, but only one key will open the particular Door that leads to life. That Door is Jesus Christ, through whom anyone can enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The Key is to “believe” in Him, repent and follow Him.

A broad path is liken to when a person is self willed, goes their own foolish carnal evil way, or chooses to go after any religious belief other than Christianity, or even chooses to live a diluted version of Christianity. This is an 'easy' selfish way because a person disregards any responsibilities at the cost of not helping to fulfill the needs of other people.

The person who follows the broad path, does not do the will of God. Only the narrow path of Jesus Christ leads to life. And Jesus Christ is the only Narrow Gate, in Whom anyone can enter to the path that leads to Eternal Life.

(22) Following Jesus

Throughout our life, we have followed the example of many different people; we constantly look for role models to pattern our lives after and often do so unconsciously. Sometimes the people we wanted to follow seemed fun or beautiful outwardly, but still their imperfect lifestyle may have been full of rebellion, self seeking wrongful attitudes and evil deeds. Following a person with this kind of sinful nature only leads to an unfulfilled life and destruction. Furthermore apart from believing in and following Jesus we cannot be reconciled to God nor have eternal life in heaven.

Sometimes, we may also have been disappointed and confused when we would see a person we so highly admired fail in attitude or morality or lack the wisdom that we assumed they had or expected of them.

The world can be a maze of lies, confusion, and darkness, however if we follow God's word, and Jesus as our Lord and Savior, His Word becomes a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path to show us the right direction to go in life.

It is essential that we follow Jesus who is the way, truth and the life, who knows the way that leads to life, out of the evil darkness of worldliness and into God's goodness, love and true joy; There are many who claim to know the way but are arrogantly lost, and their vain imaginations and imperfections hinder the way back to God,

If we follow ungodly counsel we will not find the answers that we are looking for that will bring true success.

Yet, Jesus Christ, has the victory over sin and darkness, to light the way before us to follow.

As we believe in Him and follow the wisdom of His words, His commandments, through the direction and power of God's Holy Spirit, then God is faithful to lead us out of turmoil, despair, unfruitfulness.

Jesus Christ is the only one who lived a perfect and sinless life, therefore when we choose to follow Him, we'll never get off of the narrow path that leads to life.

The more we follow the same example of Jesus Christ, the less mistakes, and the less broken heartedness you'll experience.

Following God means that you are going in the right direction that God has purposed for your life, such as, being reconciled back in fellowship with God, to love God and love others, in pursuit of Godly things, serving others, living daily the essence of the lifestyle that Jesus Christ demonstrated and instructed us to follow.

Jesus said " Take up your cross and follow Me." Let each of us, sincerely ask ourselves....

Do we follow worthless trends or fads or are we following false religions and empty philosophies of men? Do we spend to much time following sports or social events or selfish ambitions, yet nothing seems to fulfill our heart ?

Do we rely on our imperfect knowledge, and limited imperfect intelligence ?

Solution: We simply all need to follow Jesus Christ.

We need to surrender to God, and die to selfish sinful nature, and follow Jesus, today, every day.

The Call to Follow Jesus

The Gospels capture the essence of Jesus **'**invitation to individuals and us to embark on a transformative walk of faith. In Matthew 4:19, He calls to Peter and Andrew, saying, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." This call signifies more than a mere physical journey; it is an invitation to embrace a life of discipleship, one that is deeply rooted in faith and commitment.

However, Jesus also makes it clear that discipleship comes with a cost. In Matthew 16:24, He emphasizes the importance of self-denial by stating, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." To follow Jesus requires

surrendering one's own desires, embracing self-denial, and being prepared to face the challenges that arise from living a life devoted to Him.

The Nature of Discipleship

Discipleship is fundamentally about learning from Jesus, who is often referred to as a Rabbi or Teacher. In Matthew 11:29, He invites us to take His yoke upon us and learn from Him, promising, "For I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." This ongoing process of learning is vital for spiritual growth and developing Christlikeness.

In addition to learning, discipleship requires obedience to Jesus' teachings. He states in John 14:15, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." This alignment with His principles is crucial for living out the faith and demonstrating love for Christ through our actions.

Relationship and Intimacy

A key aspect of discipleship is the intimate relationship that develops between the disciple and Jesus. In John 15:4-5, Jesus describes this connection, urging His followers to "abide in me, and I in you." He likens Himself to a vine, emphasizing that true fruitfulness can only come from a close relationship with Him. This abiding relationship is essential for spiritual growth and effectiveness in ministry.

Moreover, Jesus elevates the relationship with His disciples by referring to them as friends. In John 15:14-15, He explains, "You are my friends if you do what I command you." This friendship is characterized by openness, trust, and shared purpose, underscoring the depth of the relationship that Jesus desires with each of His followers.

Counting the Cost

As followers of Christ, it is essential to count the cost of discipleship. In Luke 14:27-28, Jesus warns that "whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." He illustrates this by asking who would begin building a tower without first determining if they have enough resources to complete it. Discipleship requires sacrifice, perseverance, and a commitment to prioritize following Jesus above all else.

Furthermore, Jesus teaches that our priorities must shift as we seek His kingdom. Matthew 6:33 reminds us to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Following Jesus involves reordering our lives to focus primarily on advancing His kingdom.

Bearing Fruit for the Kingdom

Discipleship also comes with the expectation of bearing fruit that glorifies God. In John 15:8, Jesus states, "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." This call to bear fruit emphasizes the transformative power of following Jesus, as our lives become testimonies of His grace and truth.

Moreover, the Great Commission, found in Matthew 28:19-20, charges disciples with the mission of making more disciples. Jesus commands us to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations," underscoring the importance of sharing the good news and multiplying discipleship. This task is integral to our calling as followers of Christ.

The Promise of Eternal Life

In following Jesus, we are assured of our salvation and security. John 10:27-28 provides comfort with the promise that "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish." This assurance reflects the loving care of the Shepherd, who protects and preserves His followers.

Jesus further emphasizes His role as the way to eternal communion with God in John 14:6, declaring, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Following Jesus is not merely a path but the only way to a lasting relationship with God, culminating in eternal life.

Conclusion:

Following Jesus Christ is not merely about adhering to a set of rules; it is the way to true life. It means intentionally learning from Him, obeying His teachings, and modeling our lives after His example. As we follow Him on the narrow path that leads to life, we are guided daily by God**'**s Word, His Holy Spirit, and proper Christian discipleship. Through this, we come to understand the vital importance of developing a deep and intimate relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, as well as witnessing, and ministering to those in the world.

Discipleship involves learning from Jesus, following His commands, to love God and others, bearing good fruit for His kingdom. It requires counting the cost, making sacrifices, serving others and prioritizing His love above all else. Ultimately, it comes with the promise of eternal life, the assurance of abiding in God**'**s love, and the joy of worshipping Him while receiving His spiritual blessings in heavenly places.

FOLLOWING JESUS CHRIST - Key Scriptures

Matthew 4:19-22 (AKJV) And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 19**And he says to them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. 20And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.** 21And going on from there, he saw other two brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. **22And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him."**

Mark 8:34,35 (AKJV) And when he had called the people to him with his disciples also, he said to them, **Whoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me**. 35For whoever will save his life shall lose it; but whoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel**'**s, the same shall save it."

Mark 1:16-19 (AKJV) "Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. **17And Jesus said to them, Come you after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. 18And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.** 19And when he had gone a little farther there, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. 20And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him."

Mark 10:28-31 (AKJV) "Then Peter began to say to him, See, we have left all, and have followed you. 29And Jesus answered and said, Truly I say to you, There is no man that

has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel**’**s, 30But he shall receive an hundred times now in this time, houses, and brothers, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. 31But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.”

- **John 10:27**:(AKJV) **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me”** Jesus states that His sheep hear His voice and follow Him, emphasizing the intimate relationship between believers and their Shepherd.
- **Matthew 16:24**: (AKJV) Jesus instructs his disciples, "Then said Jesus to his disciples, If any man will come after me, **let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me**. 25For whoever will save his life shall lose it: and whoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.," outlining the self-sacrificial nature of following Christ.
- **John 14:6**:(AKJV) Jesus declares, "Jesus says to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me," underscoring the exclusivity of following Jesus as the path to God.
- **Luke 9:23**:(AKJV) Jesus teaches, "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24For whoever will save his life shall lose it: but whoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" emphasizing the daily commitment and sacrifice required in discipleship.
- **John 8:12**:(AKJV) Jesus proclaims, "Then spoke Jesus again to them, saying, **I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life**. 13The Pharisees therefore said to him, You bore record of yourself; your record is not true. ," highlighting the transformative guidance found in following Christ.
- **Mark 8:34-35**:(AKJV) Jesus tells the crowd, "And when he had called the people to him with his disciples also, he said to them, Whoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 35For whoever will save his life shall lose it; but whoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel**’**s, the same shall save it. " reinforcing the radical nature of following Christ.
- **John 12:26**:(AKJV) Jesus declares, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor." connecting service with the act of following Jesus.
- **Luke 5:27**: Jesus calls Levi (Matthew), a tax collector, to follow Him, exemplifying Jesus' outreach to individuals from various backgrounds.
- **Luke 18:22**: (AKJV) Jesus instructs the rich young ruler, "Now when Jesus heard these things, he said to him, Yet lack you one thing: **sell all that you have, and distribute to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.** " revealing the cost of discipleship.
- **John 13:36-37**: Peter expresses his willingness to follow Jesus wherever He goes, showcasing the disciples' commitment even in the face of uncertainty..

- **John 21:19-22**: (AKJV)“This spoke he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he says to him, Follow me. 20Then Peter, turning about, sees the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrays you? 21Peter seeing him says to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 22Jesus says to him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to you? follow you me.
- **Matthew 10:38,39**: (AKJV) Jesus states, "And he that takes not his cross, and follows after me, is not worthy of me. 39He that finds his life shall lose it: and he that loses his life for my sake shall find i" emphasizing the centrality of the cross and the commitment required in following Him.
- **Luke 9:57-62**:(AKJV) “And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said to him, Lord, I will follow you wherever you go. 58And Jesus said to him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has not where to lay his head. 59And he said to another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 60Jesus said to him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go you and preach the kingdom of God. 61And another also said, Lord, I will follow you; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. 62And Jesus said to him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”Jesus encounters individuals who express a desire to follow Him, but He emphasizes the hardships and sacrifices that come with following the Son of Man.
- **John 21:19-21**:(AKJV) This spoke he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he says to him, Follow me. 20Then Peter, turning about, sees the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrays you? 21Peter seeing him says to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 22Jesus says to him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to you? follow you me” Jesus speaks to Peter, saying, "Follow me," after predicting Peter's future martyrdom, highlighting the unwavering call to follow Jesus even in the face of suffering.
- **Luke 14:27**:(AKJV) Jesus asserts, "And whoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" reinforcing the theme of discipleship as a journey of following Christ.
- **Matthew 8:22**:(AKJV) Jesus responds to a disciple who wants to bury his father first, saying, "But Jesus said to him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead." illustrating the immediacy and priority of following Jesus.
- **John 13:15-17**:(AKJV) Jesus sets an example for His disciples, stating, "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. 16Truly, truly, I say to you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.," emphasizing the model of following Him in serving others.
- **John 6:66-69** (AKJV) From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. 67Then said Jesus to the twelve, Will you also go away? 68Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? you have the words of eternal life. 69And we believe and are sure that you are that Christ, the Son of the living God.

- **Matthew 19:21,22**:(AKJV) Jesus responds to the rich young man, saying, "Jesus said to him, If you will be perfect, go and sell that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. 22But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.," highlighting the challenge of relinquishing material attachments in the pursuit of following Him.
- **Luke 9:62**: Jesus asserts, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God," underlining the importance of steadfast commitment and forward-focused dedication in following Him.
- **Matthew 11:28-30**: Jesus invites, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light," expressing the comforting aspect of following Him and finding rest in His teachings.
- **Luke 14:25-33**: (AKJV) Jesus emphasizes, "And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said to them, 26If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27And whoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28For which of you, intending to build a tower, sits not down first, and counts the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29Lest haply, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31Or what king, going to make war against another king, sits not down first, and consults whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that comes against him with twenty thousand? 32Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an ambassador, and desires conditions of peace. 33So likewise, whoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he has, he cannot be my disciple.," underscoring the radical nature of commitment required to follow Him.
- **Matthew 10:32-33**: Jesus declares, "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven," illustrating the public aspect of following Christ and confessing Him openly.
- **John 10:4,5**:(AKJV) Jesus describes Himself as the good shepherd, saying, "And when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." emphasizing the intimate relationship between Jesus and those who follow Him.
- **Matthew 7:21-23**: (AKJV) Jesus warns, "Not every one that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works? 23And then will I profess to them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity." underscoring the importance of obedient action in genuine

discipleship, truly following Jesus, the essentialness of not purposely devising and doing evil.

- **John 12:26**:(AKJV) Jesus states, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor." connecting the concepts of service and following Christ.
- **Luke 5:10-11**: Jesus calls Simon Peter to follow Him, and Peter leaves everything to become a disciple, exemplifying the immediate response and sacrifice often associated with following Christ.
- **John 21:19**: Jesus speaks to Peter, saying, "Follow me," after predicting Peter's future martyrdom, highlighting the unwavering call to follow Jesus even in the face of suffering.
- **Matthew 6:33**: Jesus instructs, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you," emphasizing the priority of seeking God's kingdom in the pursuit of following Christ.
- **John 20:21**: After the resurrection, Jesus commissions His disciples, saying, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you," marking the continuation of the disciples' journey in following Christ through mission and service.

(23) Reverence Jesus as Lord

- ADONAI (PL) ADON (SING) Master, Ruler, King

As Christians when we say, Jesus Christ is " Lord " we must regard and reverence Him as our Lord, by willing obeying and following Him and God the Father.

As Lord, Jesus Christ must be ruling and reigning foremost upon our minds, and hearts, above every person and every thing; If someone or something else is the master passion of our life, then that has become our god, and is an idol.

No one can serve two masters, either you will love the one or hate the other.

As Christians we are under the protection and wisdom of the perfect kingship of Jesus Christ who is the King of Kings;

Under a Kingship the people do not determine the life decisions of the people but rather of the King.

Jesus is the King of Kings and the Lord of lords:

Revelation 17:14 (AKJV) These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Jesus is not just “a king” nor just “a lord”, He is divine and above all .

The phrase "Jesus is Lord" holds profound significance within our Christian faith, encapsulating the essence of Jesus' divine authority and sovereignty. When we declare Jesus as Lord, we acknowledge His position as the ultimate authority over all creation, including our lives. If Jesus Christ is truly our Lord we will do the will of God and willingly obey the commandment and teachings of Jesus Christ. This proclamation highlights a central tenet of our belief: that Jesus is not merely a historical figure or a moral teacher, but the incarnate Son of God who possesses divine power and authority. Our understanding of this truth is rooted in various scriptural references that affirm Jesus' lordship and His relationship with God the Father.

Throughout the New Testament, the term of lordship is intricately tied to Jesus' identity as the Messiah. In our community of believers, we openly proclaim Jesus' lordship as a response to His resurrection and ascension. The resurrection is a pivotal event that confirms His authority over sin and death, transforming our understanding of life and hope. This powerful event leads us to recognize that Jesus is the one who fulfills Old Testament prophecies and establishes a new covenant. For us, acknowledging Jesus as Lord signifies our commitment to follow Him and submit to His teachings, reflecting our belief that He is the guiding force in our lives.

Moreover, the declaration that Jesus is Lord emphasizes His role in the Trinity. Our relationship with God the Father is fundamental to understanding Jesus ’divine nature. This relationship is characterized by mutual authority and purpose, illustrating the unity and distinctiveness within the Godhead. We affirm that Jesus, in His lordship, reveals the character of God and invites us into a deeper relationship with the divine. The call to recognize Jesus as Lord is an invitation for us to experience His grace, love, and transformative power in our daily lives.

The implications of declaring "Jesus is Lord" extend beyond our personal faith; they influence how we engage with the world around us. This declaration challenges societal norms and authority structures, as it places Jesus above all earthly powers. In a world often marked by division and strife, our affirmation of Jesus as Lord serves as a unifying call for us to embody His teachings, promote justice, and share the message of hope and salvation. Ultimately, proclaiming Jesus as Lord is both a personal confession and a communal commitment, shaping our identity and mission as the Church, the body of Christ, in the world.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Acts 17:24-25 (AKJV) God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands; 25Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he gives to all life, and breath, and all things;

For Jesus to be our Lord, we need to do the things that He says.

Luke 6:46-49 (AKJV) And why call you me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? 47Whoever comes to me, and hears my sayings, and does them, I will show you to whom he is like: 48He is like a man which built an house, and dig deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently on that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded on a rock. 49But he that hears, and does not, is like

a man that without a foundation built an house on the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

Romans 10:9 (AKJV) That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved.

Romans 10:13 (AKJV) For whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

John 20:28-29 (AKJV) And Thomas answered and said to him, My LORD and my God. 29Jesus says to him, Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

(24) Intimacy with Jesus Christ

Scripture: John 15:5-10 AKJV)“I am the vine, you are the branches: He that stays in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. 6If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you. 8Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be my disciples. 9As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: continue you in my love. 10If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love..”

Intimacy with Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Christian life. It is the deep, personal relationship we cultivate with Him through prayer, study of His Word, and communion with His Spirit. Just as branches draw their sustenance and life from the vine, so too do we find our strength, purpose, and identity in Jesus Christ.

Intimacy with Jesus is loving and obeying Him above all else in thought, word and deed. It is walking and communing with Him as our closest friend, yet also worshipping Him as our Lord and Savior.

In John 15:5, Jesus illustrates the importance of remaining connected to Him as the vine. He invites us into a dynamic relationship where He abides in us and we in Him. This intimate union enables us to bear fruit that glorifies God and blesses others. Apart from Jesus, we are powerless and ineffective, but in Him, we find abundant life and spiritual vitality.

Intimacy with Jesus involves spending time in His presence, listening to His voice, and aligning our hearts with His will. It requires vulnerability and openness, allowing Jesus to search our hearts and transform us from the inside out. As we abide in Him, His love fills us, His truth guides us, and His Spirit empowers us to live for His glory.

Let us prioritize intimacy with Jesus Christ in our daily lives, seeking to know Him more deeply and to walk closely with Him. Psalm 42:1 expresses the longing of our hearts: "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God." May we hunger and thirst for intimacy with Jesus, finding our satisfaction and fulfillment in Him alone.

(25) Drawing Near To God

Scripture: James 4:8 - "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded."

Drawing near to God is not merely a suggestion but a command and a promise. It is an invitation to experience the fullness of His presence, His peace, and His power in our lives. As we draw near to God, we discover that He is always ready and willing to draw near to us.

James 4:8a exhorts us to come near to God, and the promise follows that He will come near to us. This promise reminds us of God's faithfulness and His desire for intimate relationship with His children. When we make the intentional choice to draw near to God, we open the door for Him to work in our lives in mighty and miraculous ways.

Drawing near to God involves several key practices. Firstly, it requires humility. We must humble ourselves before God, acknowledging our need for Him and surrendering our will to His. Humility opens the door for God's grace to flow into our lives, transforming us from the inside out.

Secondly, drawing near to God involves prayer and worship. Prayer is our direct line of communication with God, where we can pour out our hearts to Him, express our praises and thanksgiving, and seek His guidance and provision. Worship lifts our eyes from our circumstances to the greatness of God, filling us with awe and reverence for His majesty.

Moreover, drawing near to God involves spending time in His Word. The Bible is God's written revelation of Himself, His character, and His will for our lives. As we immerse ourselves in Scripture, we are transformed by the renewing of our minds and equipped to live lives that honor and glorify God.

Furthermore, drawing near to God involves obedience. We cannot expect to experience the fullness of God's presence if we are living in disobedience to His commands. Obedience is the pathway to intimacy with God, as we align our lives with His will and walk in His ways.

As we draw near to God, we can trust that He will draw near to us. His presence brings comfort in times of trouble, strength in times of weakness, and joy in times of sorrow. May we, therefore, make it our daily practice to draw near to God, knowing that He is always faithful to meet us where we are and to lead us into deeper fellowship with Himself.

(26) Abiding In Jesus and God the Father :

CONTENTS

- What does Abiding in Jesus Christ mean?

- How Can We Abide In God And In His Love?
- So what are only some the Commandments of Jesus Christ that we should obey to Abide in God ?
- So How do we ' Know ' with certainty that we abide in God and He in us ?
- So How do we receive God's Spirit ?
- So How do we know that we have God's Holy Spirit ?
- Where should we abide ?
- What must we do to be assured that we Abide in God’s Love?
- Who may dwell and abide in God’s Kingdom and Lord, who shall abide in your tabernacle? who shall dwell in your holy hill?
- Who Will Not Abide In God Forever?
- Who Does Not Abide In God Nor His Love?
- Who Does Not Abide In God Nor His Kingdom?
- What If Someone Chooses Not To Abide In Jesus Christ?

What does Abiding in Jesus Christ mean?

To " ABIDE " means to " Continue, to Remain, to Live " in Jesus Christ, in God, to dwell within, as in the protection and shelter of our home. God the Father (YaHWeH) has provided everything in and through Jesus Christ (Yeshua) so that we can abide in Him and He in us. However there are things, according to Jesus Christ, that we are " To Do " and things that we are " Not to Do " in order for anyone to truly continue Abiding in God, and for God to truly Abide and remain in us.

Willing obeying and following the instructions and commandments of Jesus Christ and the Apostles while under Grace, is the narrow path the leads to Life and to abide in Jesus; This is completely separate from “works”. Some Christians have mistakenly thought and taught that even attempting to follow the truths of Jesus Christ is a “works based” Christianity, and all a Christian needs to do is believe in Jesus Christ and what He has done and nothing else, that is a misunderstanding.

While it is completely true that “believing” in Jesus Christ and all that he alone has accomplished is most essential, besides the foremost Commandment to Love God and others; still God desires that we respond to His divine provisions in certain ways to abide in Him and to continue to remain abiding in Him.

On the other hand for a person to attempt to obtain salvation and to abide in God, based solely on their own flawed righteousness or works of doing good deeds, apart from a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ, that would be indeed wrong and unattainable. That could be more properly called “worked based” Christianity.

We are saved by abiding in the grace and love of Jesus Christ, sincerely to continue to repent from sin, and not deliberately sinning, abusing His grace.

Our home should be a place of comfort, safety, and rest, especially if we are going to live there for eternity; Therefore when we truly abide in God and He in us, there can be no better place to live.

If and when as Christians, anyone should sin but their desire is not to do that sin, but rather their desire to overcome and turn away from a particular sin, because they want to Love God, and do His will, then His Grace forgives that person, and he continues to abide in God and in HIs Love.

However, if as a Christian, we deliberately purpose to continue knowingly in a sin that the Holy Spirit is convicting a person to turn away from, but that person chooses rather to harden their heart against the Holy Spirit, then that person is not abiding in Christ, nor God., until they repent and turn from that sin.

God has established and provided the way by which we can abide in Him and He in us; And that way is through Jesus Christ, who is now given to us by God the Father, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in Love.

Not every person in the world abides spiritually in God, only those who have a true relationship with Jesus Christ, abide in God and His Love.

Generally speaking, there are three main provisions in Christ which makes it possible for us to abide in God. Those three provisions are Jesus' Love, His Word and His Grace.

Jesus Christ declared ...

"He that eats my flesh (Jesus' Word), and drinks my blood (Jesus' grace), dwells (abides) in me, and I in him."**John 6:56** AKJV

How Can We Abide In God's Love?

We should keep and obey the Commandments of Jesus Christ -

John 15:9-10 (AKJV)" As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: continue you in my love. 10If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father**'**s commandments, and abide in his love."

Obviously if we are going to keep God's Commandments and instructions we need to first learn what those are according to God's Word. We no longer are obligated to follow the obsolete laws and rituals of the Old Testament, we should only follow the Biblical Commandments and Instructions found in the New Testament taught by Jesus Christ and His Apostles. Any divine commandment and instruction mentioned in the Old Testament that Jesus taught, or His Apostles and early Christian Church still taught and practiced should be observed as well. God's Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth.

So what are some the Commandments and Instructions of Jesus Christ that we should obey so that we will Abide in God and in His love?

- We should Believe and Have Faith In Jesus Christ

John 3:16-18 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

- Remain In Jesus (John 15:4,5)

In John 15:4-5 (AKJV) , Jesus says, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. 5I am the vine, you are the branches: He that stays in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing."

- We should not depart from loving Jesus nor believing in Him nor betray Him (Revelation 2:4,

Hebrews 3:12 (AKJV) Take heed, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

- We should Repent, Turn from sin, and not abuse the grace of Jesus Christ. (Romans 2:2-9,

In 1 John 3:6, it's stated, "No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him." Abiding in God's love involves a conscious decision to prioritize our relationship with Him, striving to live a life that reflects His love and righteousness.

- We should not purposely sin, but obey God’s Word (Hebrews 10;26)
- We should demonstrate God’s love, in works (good spiritual fruit) Faith without works is dead
- We should Love -

Matthew 22: 37-40 (AKJV)-”Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38This is the first and great commandment. 39And the second is like to it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Our love should be fully committed with all of our being in worshipping God, having faith in faith in Jesus Christ , and doing the will of God. Loving our neighbors as ourselves means treating them with all goodness and the righteousness of god, without doing evil towards them. The scriptures in God’s word are too numerous to list here regarding what

is sinful and evil, and if we continue unrepentful and deliberately sinning we are not abiding in God's love. Although at these times we are not fully abiding in His love, He still has love towards us and His steadfast kindness leads us back to repentance. And if we submit and repent, we will abide again in His love, grace and forgiveness.

John 15:12-13 teaches that Jesus commands us to love one another as He has loved us, demonstrating the depth of sacrificial love. When we embody this love, we remain in Him, and His love remains in us.

- **We should be Christlike and demonstrate the love of God in serving the needs of others:**

This is where, we as disciples of Jesus Christ need to learn more in God's Word, how to love in the ways that God intended, and apply those principles in our everyday lives, both in truly loving God and others.

1 John 3:17-18 challenges us: "If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth." This underscores the necessity of action in our expressions of love.

- **We should Forgive - Matthew 6:14,15.** (AKJV) For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

We receive and obtain God the Father's Love as we have Faith in Jesus Christ and believe & follow Him;

Ephesians 3:17 to 19, AKJV " That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God."

So How do we ' Know ' with certainty that we abide in God and He in us ?

- We know that we abide in God and He in us, if we have His Holy Spirit and if we truly Love one another…

1 John 4:13-21 (AKJV) **"**Hereby know we that we dwell (Abide) in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. 14And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. 15Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God. 16And we have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.

17Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. 18There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear has torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love. 19We love him, because he first loved us. 20If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21And this commandment have we from him, That he who loves God love his brother also."

So How do we receive God's Spirit ?

When we ask God in prayer for His Holy Spirit... Luke 11:9-13

1. Ask God in Prayer

Luke 11:9–13

Jesus encourages us to *ask*, promising that the Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who earnestly seek Him in prayer.

"How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (v.13)

2. Repent and Be Baptized

Acts 2:38

Peter teaches that repentance and baptism open the way for receiving the Spirit.

"Repent, and be baptized… and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

3. Believe in Jesus Christ

John 7:38–39

Faith in Christ opens the heart to receive the Holy Spirit, described as living water flowing within.

"Whoever believes in me… rivers of living water will flow… By this he meant the Spirit…"

4. Obey God

Acts 5:32

Obedience is a posture of heart that invites the Holy Spirit**'**s presence.

"The Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."

5. Laying On of Hands

Acts 8:17; 19:6

The Spirit is often imparted through the laying on of hands by mature believers.

"They laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." (Acts 8:17)

6. Hearing and Receiving the Word of God

Acts 10:44–47

As Peter preached, the Spirit came upon those who *heard and believed* the message.

“The Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.” (v.44)

7. Faith (Not by Works)

Galatians 3:2

Paul reminds the Galatians that the Spirit is received by faith, not religious performance.

“Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by believing what you heard?”

8. Being in Christ (Union with Christ)

Romans 8:9

Those who belong to Christ have His Spirit dwelling in them.

“Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him.”

9. Desire and Thirst for God

Isaiah 44:3; John 7:37

God promises to pour out His Spirit on the spiritually thirsty.

“I will pour my Spirit on your offspring…” (Isaiah 44:3)

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.” (John 7:37)

10. Waiting on the Lord (Tarrying in Faith)

Acts 1:4–5, 8

Jesus told His followers to *wait* in expectation of the promised Holy Spirit.

“Wait for the promise of the Father… you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you…”

11. Walking in the Spirit Daily

Galatians 5:16, 25

Living by the Spirit is not a one-time event but a continuous walk. As we submit daily, we experience His leading and power.

“Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh **”...**

“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”

12. Yielding Fully to God

Romans 12:1–2; Ephesians 5:18

To be filled with the Spirit means to surrender our whole lives—mind, will, and body—to God.

“Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice…” (Romans 12:1)

“Be filled with the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:18)

Summary: How to Receive and Walk in the Holy Spirit

- **Ask** with a sincere heart
- **Repent**, **believe**, and **obey**
- **Receive through faith**, **the Word**, and **baptism**
- **Thirst** for more of God
- Be **in Christ**, **yielded**, and **willing to wait**
- Receive through **laying on of hands** and **ongoing surrender**

There are also other biblical ways that believers can receive God’s Holy Spirit; SEE Holy Spirit - Sub Topic

So How do we know that we have God's Holy Spirit ?

12 Biblical Ways to Know You Have the Holy Spirit

1. Inner Witness and Assurance

Romans 8:16

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

- You have a deep, inward assurance that you belong to God — even when circumstances challenge you.

2. A Growing Love for Jesus

John 16:14

“He will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you.”

- The Spirit magnifies Jesus. If you find your heart drawn to love, follow, and honor Christ — that**’**s the Spirit**’**s work.

3. Conviction of Sin and a Desire to Live Holy

John 16:8

“When He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin…”

- The Holy Spirit doesn**’**t condemn, but He **convicts** and gently leads us toward holiness. A sensitivity to sin is a strong sign.

4. A New Spiritual Hunger

1 Peter 2:2

“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk…”

- You begin to **desire God’s Word**, prayer, worship, and the things of the Spirit. These aren**’**t forced — they come from within.

5. The Fruit of the Spirit Is Growing

Galatians 5:22–23

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness…”

- These **godly characteristics** begin to show in your life, often gradually, but noticeably over time.

6. A Love for Others (Especially Believers)

1 John 3:14

“We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers and sisters.”

- Love — especially for fellow believers — is strong evidence of the Spirit**’**s presence.

7. A Desire to Share Christ

Acts 1:8

“You will receive power… and you will be my witnesses…”

- The Spirit empowers believers to witness for Jesus. You feel a burden to share the gospel — even if you**’**re still learning how.

8. Power to Overcome Sin

Romans 8:13–14

“If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live…”

- You may still struggle, but you find strength through the Spirit to say **no to sin** and **yes to righteousness.**

9. Guidance and Direction

Romans 8:14

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”

- You start to sense God**’**s guidance in decisions, Scripture, or impressions confirmed by truth and peace.

10. Spiritual Gifts Begin to Operate

1 Corinthians 12:4–11

“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good…”

- The Spirit gives gifts (like wisdom, prophecy, healing, teaching, etc.). You may begin to notice **spiritual abilities** that serve others and glorify Christ.

11. Peace That Guards Your Heart

Philippians 4:7

“The peace of God… will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

- Even in trials, the Holy Spirit brings a **deep inner peace** that surpasses understanding.

12. You Call God “Father” (Abba)

Galatians 4:6

“Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, **‘**Abba, Father!’”

- You relate to God not as a distant judge but as your **loving Father**. The Spirit creates intimacy with Him.

- One way we know that we have received God's Holy Spirit is if we speak with other tongues, and magnify God, but not everyone who has received God's Holy Spirit has the gift of tongues, therefore the foremost evidence of anyone receiving God's Holy Spirit is if they sincerely desire to follow Jesus Christ and have a genuine Love for one another, according to the will of God. False christians, and some sincere believers, sometimes act as if they have the gift of tongues, and act as if they are filled with the Holy Spirit, when they may not be.

Acts 10:44-48 (AKJV) “While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.”

- Having true Love, expressing it to God, and loving others, reveals that God and Jesus abides in your heart, and the Holy Spirit, will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.

So How Can You Be Sure?

If you're experiencing **even several** of these signs, it's a good indication that the Holy Spirit is in you. The presence of the Spirit is **not proven only by emotions or dramatic experiences** — but by a **changed heart**, a **new direction**, and an **inner connection** with God.

- One way we know that we have received God's Holy Spirit is if we speak with other tongues, and magnify God, but not everyone who has received God's Holy Spirit has the gift of tongues, therefore the foremost evidence of anyone receiving God's Holy Spirit is if they sincerely desire to follow Jesus Christ and have a genuine Love for one another, according to the will of God. False christians, and some sincere believers, sometimes act as if they have the gift of tongues, and act as if they are filled with the Holy Spirit, when they may not be.

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- Having true Love, expressing it to God, and loving others, reveals that God and Jesus abides in your heart, and the Holy Spirit, will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.

Where should we abide ?

- In My (Jesus') Love; John 15:9

HOW ?

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in My Love." **John 15:10.**

Where should we abide ?

- In God the Father and in Jesus Christ
- In the doctrine of Christ - 2 John 1:9
- In the secret place of the Most High - Psalm 91:1, Psalm 31:20
- Under the shadow of the Almighty - Psalm 91:1
- In God's Word - Psalm 119:113,114; 1 John 2:24
- In God's tabernacle - Psalm 15:1; 27:5
- In His Holy Hill - Psalm 15:1, 24:3
- In Both the Father and the Son - 2 John 1:9; 1 John 2:24

- In the Rock, Fortress - The Lord - Psalm 18:2
- In the habitation of God's Home Where God's Glory dwell - Psalm 26:8
- In His Pavilion High upon a Rock - Psalm 27:5; 31:20
- Under the shadow of God's wings - Psalm 17:8
- In His Name - Psalm 69:36
- Hiding Place - Psalm 32:7, Psalm 119:114
- Enter the most Holy Place- Hebrews 10:19
- In the Light - 1 John 2:10

  HOW ? If we love our brother 1 John 2:10

What Must We Do To Be Assured That We Abide In God's Love?

John 15:9-10 (AKJV) " As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: continue you in my love. 10If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

NOTE : So if we want to Abide in God, in His Love, we need to wholeheartedly have faith in Jesus Christ and obey His Commandments; Therefore it is essential that we learn just what Jesus has commanded and instructed us to do in His Word.

What Should We Do To Abide In God's Love and Presences?

Believe in Jesus Christ and accept His unmerited love

- Have Faith in His Grace and Forgiveness and abide in His grace properly by not purposely sinning.

Who may dwell and abide in God's Kingdom and Lord, who shall abide in your tabernacle? who shall dwell in your holy hill?

- Anyone who sincerely believes in Jesus Christ and follows Him, has faith in Him and receives His grace and forgiveness, and loves as Jesus Christ loved us.
- He that walks uprightly, and works righteousness
- Speaks the truth in his heart
- He who does nor Backbite others
- Does Not do evil to his neighbor
- Does Not take up repoach against his neighbor
- View (unrepentive) vile persons in a scornful way
- He who honors those who fear the Lord
- He who swears to his own hurt, (Demonstrating unchanging sacrificial love)

- He who does Not put out his money to usury
- Does not take any reward against the innocent

This is in Part WHAT GOD'S WORD INSTRUCTS US TO DO- (Possible through God's Grace when we fail, and by the Holy Spirit)

Psalm 15:1-5 (AKJV) Lord, who shall abide in your tabernacle? who shall dwell in your holy hill? 2He that walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart. 3He that backbites not with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor. 4In whose eyes a vile person is scorned; but he honors them that fear the LORD. He that swears to his own hurt, and changes not. 5He that puts not out his money to usury, nor takes reward against the innocent. He that does these things shall never be moved.

Who Does Not have God The Father or The Son nor does that individual Abide In God? :

2 John 1:9 (AKJV):"Whoever transgresses, (without repenting) and stays not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God. He that stays in the doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son."

Whoever Transgresses (Sins without repenting and not receives the Grace of Jesus Christ)

Whoever does Not abide in the doctrine of Christ, does Not have God

Who Does Not Abide In God Nor His Love?

- Whoever does not Love his brother, abides in death - 1 John 3:10,14
- Whoever has good's and see's his brother in need and shuts his heart - 1 John 3:17
- If you hate your brother, ...no life is abiding in you - 1 John 3:15, 2:9
- If we show no mercy or forgiveness - James 2:13
- If we continue to be lukewarm - Revelation 4:16
- If we abuse God's Grace or fall short of Grace - Hebrews 12:15,16 - Hebrews 10:26
- If we continue to harden our heart, when we hear His Voice - Hebrews 3:7
- Whoever does Not practice righteousness - 1 John 3:10
- if you - willfully sin (Continue in sin without repenting) Hebrews 10:26, 1 John 3:8, James 4:15
- if you continue to practice lawlessness - Matthew 7:24-27
- If you hear the sayings of Christ and do Not do them - Matthew 7:24-27
- If we are an unfaithful servants - Matthew 25:24-30
- if we don't keep God's commandments - 1 John 2:4

- Unbelief - Hebrews 3:12, Hebrews 3:18, John 6:66
- if we don't continue to follow Christ - John 6:66
- If we choose Not to believe in the sayings of Christ - John 6:66

Who Does Not Abide In God Nor His Love?

Matthew 25:31-46

In as much as you did Not do it to one of the least of these, you did Not do it to Me (Jesus)

if we don't Love others

If we don't feed the hungry

If we don't give drink to the thirsty

If we don't take in the stranger

If we don't clothe the naked

If we don't visit the sick and those in prison

Who Does Not Abide In God Nor His Love?

No Inheritance - Ephesians 5:1-7

If you continue in ...

- Fornication
- Uncleanness
- Filthiness
- Foolish Talking
- Coarse Jesting
- Idolatry

*(Without Repenting)

Who Does Not Abide In God Nor His Kingdom?

- If we don't receive the Kingdom as a child (humble) Mark10:15
- If we continue to practice the works of the flesh Galatians 5:19-21
- Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like...Those who practice such things will Not inherit the Kingdom of God.

1 John 3:10,(AKJV) "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother."

What if Someone Chooses Not To Abide In Jesus Christ?

John 15:5-8 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me, you can do nothing. 15:6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

(27) Abide In God

In this world of constant turmoil, natural disasters and violence, we all need a safe place to live and to find shelter and protection.

We continually encounter spiritual warfare, accusations, hatred, adverse emotions, power struggles and the only place we will find true peace and security is to abide in God. If we keep God's commandments we will abide in God, and He will abide in us. As we keep His commandments we will also abide in Jesus' Love and He promises us that our joy will be full. Therefore it is important to learn just What are the commandments that Jesus Christ instructed us to follow.

KEY SCRIPTURES

John 15:1-10 (AKJV) **"**I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer. 2Every branch in me that bears not fruit he takes away: and every branch that bears fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken to you. 4Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. 5I am the vine, you are the branches: He that stays in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. 6If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you. 8Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be my disciples. 9As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: continue you in my love. 10If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father**'**s commandments, and abide in his love.10If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father**'**s commandments, and abide in his love."

Psalm 15:1-5 (AKJV) Lord, who shall abide in your tabernacle? who shall dwell in your holy hill? 2He that walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart. 3He that backbites not with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor. 4In whose eyes a vile person is scorned; but he honors them that fear the LORD. He that swears to his own hurt, and changes not. 5He that puts not out his money to usury, nor takes reward against the innocent. He that does these things shall never be moved "

Abiding in Jesus Christ is one of the central doctrines in the New Testament, emphasizing a deep, intimate, and enduring relationship with Him. This relationship of

abiding is rooted in Jesus' teachings, particularly in the Gospel of John. In John 15:4-5, Jesus uses the analogy of a vine and its branches to illustrate the importance of abiding in Him: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me, you can do nothing."

This passage underscores the truth that our spiritual livelihood and fruitfulness depend on our connection to Jesus. Just as branches draw life and sustenance from the vine, believers are called to remain in close communion with Christ. Abiding involves a continuous reliance on Him for strength, wisdom, guidance and life in Him.

In John 15:9-10, Jesus says, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love." This passage emphasizes the reciprocal nature of love and obedience. Abiding in God's love involves not only experiencing His love but also responding to it with obedience and adherence to His commandments.

Further, 1 John 2:6 highlights the need for us to walk as Jesus walked, signifying a lifestyle of obedience, humility, and love. Abiding in Christ involves aligning one's life with His teachings and example. In John 14:23, Jesus articulates the reciprocal nature of abiding: "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." This intimate dwelling of God the Father and Jesus with believers emphasizes the closeness and familial nature of the relationship.

Abiding is not merely a passive state but an active choice to remain steadfast in faith. Colossians 2:6-7 encourages believers to "walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith," reinforcing the idea that abiding involves continual growth and grounding in Christ.

Abiding in Jesus Christ is a multifaceted truth that extends beyond a mere adherence to religious rituals. It involves a profound transformation of the believer's heart and mind, aligning them with the principles of love, righteousness, and humility exemplified by Jesus. Romans 8:9 emphasizes the importance of the indwelling Spirit, stating, "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact, the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him." This indwelling Spirit is a vital aspect of abiding, guiding us and deepening our connection with Christ.

The process of abiding also entails a continuous surrender to God's will. In Matthew 16:24, Jesus instructs his disciples, saying, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." This self-denial involves relinquishing personal desires and submitting to God's purpose. Abiding requires a deliberate choice to prioritize God's plan over individual ambitions.

Moreover, abiding in Jesus involves persistent prayer and dependence on God. In John 15:7, Jesus declares, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." This underscores the connection between abiding, aligning with God's Word, and the efficacy of prayer. Our desires become increasingly attuned to God's will as we abide in Him.

The Apostle Paul, in Galatians 2:20, provides a profound insight into the transformed life of one who abides in Christ: "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Abiding leads to a life characterized by Christ's presence, influencing attitudes, actions, and relationships.

The Apostle John further expands on the precept of abiding in God's love in 1 John 4:16, stating, "So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and anyone who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in them." Here, the inseparable connection between abiding in God's love and abiding in God Himself is highlighted. It is a transformative experience where we are invited to dwell continually in the love that originates from God's very nature.

Moreover, abiding in God's love involves trust and surrender. In 1 John 4:18, the apostle writes, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love." Abiding in God's love dispels fear and fosters a deep sense of security in His love. It requires entrusting our lives into His hands, confident that His love is sufficient for our every need.

Choosing not to abide in God's love can also manifest in disobedience and a failure to love others. In 1 John 3:10, the apostle writes, "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother."

." This underscores the transformative power of God's love, which, when embraced, results in righteous living and love for others.

To further expound on the principle of abiding in God's love, it's essential to delve into the transformative nature of this relationship. The idea of abiding goes beyond a passive acknowledgment of God's love; it involves an active, continuous, and intimate connection with Him. Jesus uses the metaphor of a vine and branches in John 15 to illustrate this relationship: "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

in God's love is not a solitary act but a dynamic and relational experience. It's about remaining in a state of dependence on God, receiving life, love, and spiritual maturity from Him, and allowing His love to flow through every aspect of our lives. This abiding relationship leads to spiritual fruitfulness, as mentioned in the same passage. The fruit represents the virtues, character, and actions that reflect God's love working in and through believers.

Conversely, not abiding in God's love can lead to spiritual stagnation, anxiety, and a distorted perspective on life. When individuals detach themselves from the source of true love, they may seek fulfillment in worldly pursuits, relationships, or accomplishments, only to find emptiness and dissatisfaction. Without the anchoring love of God, there is a risk of being swayed by the transient and often unfulfilling nature of worldly desires.

So not abiding in God the Father and Jesus implies a disconnection from the source of true love and life. In 1 John 2:15-17, the apostle warns against the love of the world, stating, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." This highlights the contrast between abiding in the

love of God and being entangled in worldly pursuits that can lead one away from that love.

The call to abide in God's love is an invitation to a vibrant, dynamic, and life-transforming relationship. It's an ongoing process of aligning our hearts, minds, and actions with the love of God, allowing His love to shape our character and influence our interactions with others. As we abide in His love, we experience a depth of relationship that goes beyond external behaviors, permeating every aspect of our being and radiating outward in acts of love and compassion towards others.

Abiding in God's love involves a continuous relationship marked by faith, obedience, belief, and a deep awareness of His love for us. On the contrary, not abiding in His love signifies a separation from the transformative power of God's love, leading to a focus on worldly desires, sin and a lack of love for others. The call to abide in God's love remains an invitation to experience a life rooted in the profound and unchanging love of the Creator.

In conclusion, abiding in Jesus Christ encompasses a transformative walk with God, of surrender, obedience, love, faith, steadfastness and intimacy. As Christians we are called to a life deeply rooted in Jesus Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit, and marked by a continual alignment with God's Word and will. This abiding relationship brings forth spiritual fruit, enabling us to reflect the love and character of Christ in our daily lives.

(28) Repent / Repentance

- **Let us. Continue To Repent From Sin**

The Word " REPENT " means " To change one's mind, " To regret and change direction, to turn away from evil towards good.

Matthew 4:17 (AKJV) **“**From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. '

Luke 13:3 ... Unless you repent, you too will all perish.

A man or woman after God's own heart, is a person who admits their wrong deeds, and chooses to repent by turning away from all evil and seeks to do God's will.

Indeed, God's love is merciful towards all those who have sinned and who also sincerely constantly repent and desire to deny themselves and take up their cross daily to overcome their sinful ways, through Jesus. Yet true Godly love does not condone any evil to remain within ourselves; The provision of grace is given not so we can sin, but rather so we can progressively overcome our sinful nature through a true communion with Jesus Christ and thereby as we confess our sin, and turn away, He is faithful and just to forgive us.

God's Grace, Spirit, Truth and Love are never given to encourage evil nor to permit us the carnal freedom to sin; Grace is not a license to commit sin; But instead God's Spirit

and truth are given to convict our hearts of sin and of the judgment to come, in order to set us free from sin so that we will truly be at liberty in His spirit and have new life.

Any individual is in error who assumes that they can remain in any particular sin and still be forgiven without turning away from doing that evil; For unless they eventually repent, they will not be forgiven, neither are they walking in Love.

If we desire to demonstrate God's Love, we must not purpose to deliberately sin nor to continue in any evil way.

Let us first always examine ourselves within and not harden our heart against the voice of God, who will reveal our sin, so that we can lay it aside, and walk in the light of love. Love also does not perpetually accept evil to continue within the lives of the body of Christ.

Love calls for a repentance that fully transforms a person's inner nature, from their carnal ways of death into the new nature of Christ. Love instructs, corrects, reproofs, rebukes and warns others according to the truth, but only by the Spirit in a Christlike manner with the hope and sincere efforts of reconciliation, through patience, encouragement, and lovingkindness.

The truth of God's love and the wisdom to hate evil, should be proclaimed, not with the intent of judgment or condemnation, but should be preached in hope of edification and salvation to the hearers. For Christ came not to judge, but to save, so we must do also, now, doing everything to maintain the unity within the Body of Christ. The judgment of Christ will come in it's proper time.

Sincere repentance brings the righteousness of Jesus Christ by faith into our lives. Our obligation to God is not to eliminate evil from the whole world now nor to destroy evil persons; Christ at His coming will do this; Rather our obligation to God and our commission in Christ, is for each one of us to personally repent first and always, then to declare the Gospel of love, truth, repentance, and salvation through grace, so that those who would choose to believe, would then be able to turn from sin and destruction and obtain eternal life.

All those who choose not to believe because they love their evil ways, consequently, have the vengeance and wrath of God upon them. Again if we want to earnestly love others and most of all to love God with all of our heart, mind and strength as He commanded, then we will not allow sin like leaven to grow within us or our brethren;

Rather we must persevere to lay aside all evil as God enables us. And then after we have taken the log of pride and sin from our own eye, then we can see more clearly to encourage and to instruct others in the church and beyond to do the same.

Love is intended to be pure and holy without hypocrisy. Any deed that we hope to do in love must at that time be without evil and sinless or else it cannot be true love. As we die to our selfish life and turn away from sin, then the fullness of Christ and the Father's love can coincidentally grow up, unhindered within us, as we partake of His Word and of His Grace. By the work of the Holy Spirit, and the Blood of Jesus Christ, true repentance—earnestly changing one's mind and turning away from sin—takes place every time we choose to favor God, Jesus Christ, and His love over the sinful pleasures or actions that we are tempted to pursue. Love is what signifies a true follower of Christ. God's love will

be established within us , if we humble ourselves and receive the truth and Spirit of Jesus Christ in our life.

Further as we continually repent from evil and deny our self and abide in grace, then through us, true Godly love and spiritual fruit will come forth, by God.

Anyone can repent and turn away from any sin with the power of God working on their behalf, and if you sincerely want to change, God will certainly be with you now and forevermore.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Luke 15:4-7 (AKJV)“ And he spoke this parable to them, saying, 4What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? 5And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. 7I say to you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”

Psalm 34:14 Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

Matthew 9:13 (AKJV) But go you and learn what that means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

THE LOST COIN

Luke 15:8-10 (AKJV) **“**Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, does not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? 9And when she has found it, she calls her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. 10Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents."

REPENTANCE THE PRODIGAL SON

Luke 15:11-32 (AKJV) And he said, A certain man had two sons: 12And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me. And he divided to them his living. 13And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. 14And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave to him. 17And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father**’**s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you, 19And am no more worthy to be called your son:

make me as one of your hired servants. 20And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son. 22But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23And bring here the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. 25Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. 27And he said to him, Your brother is come; and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound. 28And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him. 29And he answering said to his father, See, these many years do I serve you, neither transgressed I at any time your commandment: and yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: 30But as soon as this your son was come, which has devoured your living with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf. 31And he said to him, Son, you are ever with me, and all that I have is yours. 32It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this your brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

REPENTANCE. - Continued…

Luke 24:46-49 (AKJV) And said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47**And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.** 48And you are witnesses of these things.49And, behold, I send the promise of my Father on you: but tarry you in the city of Jerusalem, until you be endued with power from on high..'

Isaiah 55:7 (AKJV) **"**Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

2 Peter 3:9 (AKJV) **"**The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Aspects of Repentance

1. **Relying on the Holy Spirit** Trusting in God**'**s Spirit to guide, convict, and empower us to turn from sin and live in alignment with His will.

2. **Submit To God and Resist the Devil and He Will Flee** Actively resisting temptation and spiritual attack is a part of repentance. *James 4:7*: **"**Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

3. **Ignore Earthly Temptations** Turning away from the fleeting pleasures and desires of the world demonstrates a repentant heart. *1 John 2:15-17*

4. **Daily Examination and Reflection** Regular self-examination helps identify areas needing repentance. *Psalm 139:23-24*

5. **Developing a Repentant Heart** A continual posture of humility, acknowledging sin, and seeking God**'**s forgiveness. *Acts 3:19*

6. **Confession and Seeking Forgiveness** Openly acknowledging sin and asking for God's mercy. *1 John 1:9-10*

7. **Confess Sin and Forsake It – Learn from Mistakes** Repentance includes learning from sin and making better choices. *Proverbs 28:13*

8. **Relying on God's Grace** Recognizing salvation and change come by grace, not by works. *Ephesians 2:8-9*

9. **A Clean Heart and Renewed Spirit** Repentance leads to internal transformation. *Psalm 51:10*

10. **Embracing a Teachable Spirit** Openness to correction, instruction, and growth. *Proverbs 9:9*

11. **Setting and Pursuing Righteous Goals** Aligning one**'**s life with God**'**s values leads to maturity. *Philippians 3:13-14*

12. **Practicing Gratitude and Contentment** Gratitude helps protect the heart from sinful desires. *1 Thessalonians 5:14-18*

13. **Guarding Against Spiritual Complacency** Vigilance keeps spiritual fervor alive. *Revelation 3:15-16*

14. **Engaging in Regular Fasting** Fasting draws us closer to God and aids repentance. *Joel 2:12-13*

15. **Clothed in Righteousness** Repentance results in spiritual renewal and holiness. *Zechariah 3:4*

16. **Practicing Restitution and Making Amends** True repentance may involve restoring what was wronged. *Luke 19:8-10*

17. **Embracing God's Promises of Forgiveness** Trusting in God's mercy strengthens a repentant heart. *Isaiah 1:18*

18. **Staying Grounded in God's Word** Scripture provides the foundation for lasting change. *Psalm 119:105*

19. **Developing a Spirit of Forgiveness** Forgiving others and oneself is key to healing. *Colossians 3:13*

20. **Embracing a Spirit of Obedience** Obedience reflects genuine repentance and love for God. *John 14:23*

21. **Seeking Holiness Through the Holy Spirit** The Spirit enables victory over sin and growth in holiness. *Romans 8:11*

22. **Walking in Holiness** Repentance purifies and sets us apart for God. *2 Corinthians 7:1*

23. **Remaining Watchful and Vigilant** Alertness to spiritual danger strengthens our walk. *1 Corinthians 16:13*

24. **Overcome Satan** We overcome satan, by the blood of the Lamb, the word of our testimony, and a willingness to lay down our lives for Christ. *Revelation 12:11*: **"**And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

25. Choose God's Love and Follow Jesus Over Earthly Pleasures and Evil

True repentance means daily choosing to love and follow Jesus rather than giving in to sinful desires or worldly distractions. This involves a heart that treasures God more than temporary pleasures.

Luke 9:23-24: **"**If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."

In summary, continuing to repent from sin is essential for our spiritual maturity in Christ Jesus and to receive the transformative power of God's mercy and love.

(29) Abide in the Grace and Forgiveness of Jesus Christ

1.1 The Foundation of Grace: Unmerited Favor from God

Ephesians 2:8-9 (AKJV)" – For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Grace is the unmerited favor of God extended to humanity, and it is the very foundation of the Christian faith. Paul makes it clear in Ephesians 2 that salvation is a gift from God, not something that can be earned through human effort or good works. This grace is the divine enablement that brings about salvation and a transformed life. It is not based on who we are or what we have done, but entirely on God**'**s love and mercy.

However if person chooses not to repent from their sins, and reject Jesus and His ways, will the grace of Jesus Christ be with that person? No, they have hardened their heart, and abused the grace of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the ultimate expression of God's grace. Through His sacrificial death on the cross and His resurrection, He made a way for us to be reconciled to God. Grace is not merely an abstract concept but is personified in the work of Jesus Christ. His grace is all-encompassing—covering our sins, our weaknesses, and our failures—and it is available to all who place their faith in Him.

Romans 5:20-21 (AKJV)“ – Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Where sin once reigned in our lives, grace now reigns through righteousness. While the law made sin evident, grace overcomes it and brings life. The abundant grace of Jesus Christ is more powerful than all the sin and failure of humanity. It not only forgives but also empowers believers to live lives pleasing to God, bringing us into a right relationship with Him through faith in Christ.

1.2 The Forgiveness of Sins Through Jesus Christ

1 John 1:9 (AKJV)“ – If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Forgiveness is at the very heart of the gospel message. Because of the grace of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven—not because of our own merit but because of His finished work on the cross. John tells us that when we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This forgiveness is not conditional; it is based solely on God's mercy and the atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

Jesus took upon Himself the punishment for our sins, allowing us to stand blameless before God. This forgiveness is not a temporary fix but an eternal reality. Once we are forgiven, we are forever forgiven in Christ, and nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:39).

Colossians 2:13-15 (AKJV)“ – And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

Christ’s forgiveness is complete. It is not partial, conditional, or based on our performance. He has forgiven all our trespasses and has removed the record of our sins, nailing them to the cross. The debt has been paid in full. In Christ, we have been reconciled to God and given a new standing—one of grace, favor, and acceptance.

The Importance of Abiding in Grace and Forgiveness

2.1 Living Under the Freedom of Grace

Romans 6:14 (AKJV)“ – For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace..”

Abiding in the grace of Jesus Christ means living under the freedom that grace brings. Grace does not give us a license to sin, but rather it frees us from the power and dominion of sin. We are no longer slaves to sin because we are under grace, which empowers us to live holy lives. This freedom is not a freedom to do as we please, but a freedom to live as God intended—righteous, obedient, and full of His love.

Grace changes the way we live. It transforms our desires, our motivations, and our actions. As we continue to abide in His grace, we are continually being conformed to the image of Christ, becoming more like Him in thought, word, and deed.

Titus 2:11-15 (AKJV)“ – For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; 14Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. 15These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise you.”

Grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires. Far from being a passive experience, grace actively works in the heart of the believer, teaching them to live a life that reflects the character of Christ. As we abide in His grace, we are progressively shaped to live in a manner that pleases God, fulfilling the righteous standards He sets before us.

2.2 The Danger of Taking Grace for Granted

Romans 6:1-2 (AKJV)“ – What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? ”

It is crucial to understand that living in grace does not mean living in sin. While grace covers our sin, it does not condone it. Paul strongly warns against the abuse of grace by suggesting that we should continue in sin just because grace abounds. Grace does not give us the freedom to indulge in sinful behavior, but rather it calls us to live a transformed life, free from the power of sin.

If we truly understand the depth of grace, we will not take it for granted. Instead, we will honor Christ by living in a way that reflects His holiness. The forgiveness of Jesus is not a reason to remain in sin, but a reason to strive for holiness and righteousness, empowered by the grace of God.

2.3 The Deception of Living in Guilt and Condemnation

Romans 8:1 (AKJV)“ – There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

Abiding in the grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ means that we no longer live in guilt and condemnation. The enemy often tries to keep believers trapped in shame, reminding them of past sins. However, Scripture declares that for those who are in Christ, there is no condemnation. Christ's forgiveness is complete, and there is no longer any reason to live under the weight of past mistakes. However the Holy Spirit will still convict our hearts

of sin throughout our Christian life, not to condemn us but to deliver us from harmful evil. God's conviction is essential along with correction, edification and reproof so that we don't remaim lukewarm, hypocrical, spiritually immature but become more Christlike.

When we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive us, and He casts our sins as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). There is no longer any need to carry the burden of guilt or condemnation. Instead, we are called to live in the freedom and peace that come from knowing that we are fully forgiven in Christ.

How to Abide in the Grace and Forgiveness of Jesus Christ

3.1 Daily Reaffirm Your Identity in Christ

2 Corinthians 5:17 (AKJV)" – Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. "

Abiding in grace and forgiveness begins with understanding and embracing our new identity in Christ. When we come to faith in Jesus, we are made new creatures. The old has passed away, and the new has come. This new identity in Christ means that we are no longer defined by our past sins but by Christ's righteousness.

Each day, remind yourself of who you are in Christ. You are forgiven, accepted, and loved by God. Let this truth shape the way you live, the way you think, and the way you interact with others.

3:2 Purpose not to deliberately sin or do evil; Repent if the Holy Spirit or God's Word convicts you regarding doing or practicing a particular sin. Do not continue in it and seek God's strength, wisdom and love. His grace is sufficient in our weakness. Keep the faith in Jesus Christ is has overcome the world.

3.3 Live in Humble Gratitude for God's Grace

Hebrews 4:16 (AKJV)" – Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Abiding in grace means coming boldly before God's throne, knowing that His grace is sufficient for every need. When we are aware of the depth of God's grace, it leads to a life of humility and gratitude. We don't take grace for granted but come to God daily, thankful for His forgiveness and His continual grace to help us in our weaknesses.

3.4 Extend Grace and Forgiveness to Others

Ephesians 4:32 (AKJV)" – And be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.."

One of the greatest ways to abide in the grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ is by extending that same grace and forgiveness to others. Just as God has forgiven us, we are called to forgive those who wrong us. This is not always easy, but as we reflect on the grace God has shown us, it empowers us to forgive others.

Conclusion: Living in the Grace and Forgiveness of Jesus Christ

To abide in the grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ is to live in the knowledge that we are completely forgiven and loved by God. This grace empowers us to live righteous lives, not out of obligation, but out of gratitude for all Christ has done for us. We are called to live in the freedom of grace, knowing that our past sins are forgiven, and our future is secure in Christ.

As we daily reaffirm our identity in Christ, live in humble gratitude, and extend grace to others, we reflect the character of the One who has forgiven us. May we never take for granted the profound gift of grace and forgiveness that is ours in Jesus Christ. Instead, let us live in the joy and freedom that comes from abiding in His love.

(30) Hyper-Grace and Abusing God's Grace:

1. What is Hyper-Grace?

The term **"hyper-grace"** refers to a distorted teaching or understanding of God**'**s grace, which often emphasizes grace to such an extent that it minimizes or even dismisses the importance of repentance, holiness, and personal responsibility in the life of the believer. While grace is a central theme in the New Testament and the unmerited favor of God is a fundamental doctrine, **hyper-grace** takes this truth to an extreme, leading to an imbalanced or unbiblical view of Christian life and sanctification.

1.1 Characteristics of Hyper-Grace Teaching

1. **Excessive Emphasis on Grace**: Hyper-grace teaches that God's grace covers all sin—past, present, and future—without requiring believers to repent or change their behavior. This interpretation leads some to believe that there are no consequences for sin, because Jesus has already forgiven everything.
2. **Neglect of Repentance**: One of the key components of traditional Christian doctrine is repentance—a change of mind and heart that leads to a transformation of behavior. Hyper-grace, however, tends to minimize the need for repentance, suggesting that since Jesus' sacrifice was once and for all, there is no need for ongoing confession or turning away from sin.
3. **Unconditional Acceptance without The Eventual Ongoing Process of Transformation and Regeneration by geniune faith**: While God's initial calling anyone of us is uncmerited (while we were yet sinners) - Hyper-grace teachings sometimes suggest that believers don**'**t need to strive for holiness or spiritual growth because God**'**s grace has already secured their salvation. This creates a mindset where personal transformation and sanctification are seen as unnecessary or even irrelevant.
4. **Misunderstanding of Freedom**: Hyper-grace can misinterpret Christian freedom as freedom to live without any moral or spiritual constraints. Instead of being free from sin to live righteously, the believer may feel licensed to continue in sinful behavior, believing that God's grace will cover it.

5. **Overemphasis on God’s Love**: While God’s love is undoubtedly at times unconditional, unmerited and vast, hyper-grace often teaches that God’s love is so all-encompassing that His holiness, justice, and the necessity of repentance are overshadowed. This creates a false sense of security, where people may feel that their sin does not matter to God because of His overwhelming love and grace.

1.2 Biblical Warnings Against Hyper-Grace

Romans 6:1-2 (AKJV)“ – What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

Paul specifically addresses the idea of taking grace to an extreme. He rejects the notion that Christians should continue in sin because of God’s abundant grace. His answer is clear: **“**God forbid!” Grace does not provide a license to sin, but rather it empowers believers to live holy lives. The grace of God is not meant to enable sinful behavior, but to deliver us from it.

Jude 1:4 (AKJV)“ – For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Jude warns about false teachers who distort God’s grace by using it to justify immoral and sinful lifestyles. **“**Lasciviousness” refers to indulgence in sin, particularly sexual immorality and lewdness, which some would falsely claim is acceptable because of God’s grace. Jude warns that such teaching leads to destruction.

Titus 2:11-12 (AKJV)“ – For the grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men, 12Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.”

True grace teaches believers to turn away from sin and live in a way that reflects the holiness of God. It trains us to deny **“**ungodliness and worldly lusts,” and instead live righteously and godly. Grace does not condone sin; it empowers believers to live transformed lives in obedience to God.

2. Abusing God’s Grace

Abusing God’s grace refers to the act of taking God’s forgiveness and mercy for granted, using it as an excuse to continue in sin or to live without regard for holiness. This often results from a misunderstanding or misapplication of God’s grace, and it can lead to spiritual stagnation and even apostasy.

2.1 The Danger of Abuse

1. **Willful Sinning**: Some believers might feel they can continue sinning without consequences because God’s grace is abundant and His forgiveness is assured. This mindset reflects an abuse of grace, as it disregards the call to live a life of holiness and repentance.

Romans 6:15-16 (AKJV)“ – What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness? ”

Paul asks a rhetorical question—just because we are under grace, does that mean we should continue to sin? His answer is emphatic: **"**God forbid." When we choose to sin, we place ourselves in servitude to sin, which leads to death. Grace should lead to obedience, not continued rebellion.

2. **Exploiting God's Mercy**: Abusing grace is also seen in situations where people presume on God**'**s mercy, believing that no matter how much they sin, God will always forgive them. This attitude treats God**'**s grace as a free pass for disobedience, instead of recognizing it as a gift that should inspire gratitude and a desire to live righteously.

Romans 2:4-5 (AKJV)" – Or despise you the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? 5But after your hardness and impenitent heart treasure up to yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;"

The kindness and forbearance of God are meant to lead us to repentance, not to be despised or taken for granted. When we ignore God**'**s goodness and harden our hearts, we are storing up judgment for ourselves. Grace should never be viewed as an excuse to continue in sin, but as a call to repentance and holiness.

2.2 The True Purpose of Grace

1. **Grace Teaches Holiness**: True grace leads believers to live righteously, rejecting sin and pursuing godliness. God**'**s grace doesn**'**t give us a license to sin; it empowers us to live holy lives by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Titus 2:12 (AKJV)" – Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

Grace trains us to live in a manner worthy of our calling. It teaches us to say "no" to sin and "yes" to holiness, guiding us in our daily walk with God.

2. **Grace is Not a License to Sin**: While grace covers all sin, it is not a free ticket to indulge in sin. Grace is the power to overcome sin, not the permission to continue in it. Christians are called to live in a way that reflects the holiness of God, in obedience to His Word and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 1:14-16 (AKJV)" – As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15But as he which has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation; 16Because it is written, Be you holy; for I am holy.."

The grace of God leads us to holiness, and as we grow in our relationship with Him, we are to reflect His holy character in every area of our lives.

3. The Dangers of Hyper-Grace and Abusing Grace

3.1 False Security and Spiritual Complacency

When individuals or groups emphasize hyper-grace teachings, it can create a false sense of security. People may feel that since grace has forgiven them, they no longer need to pursue holiness or repentance. This kind of thinking leads to spiritual complacency, where people stop growing and maturing in their faith, neglecting the call to live a transformed life.

3.2 Deception Leading to Sinful Practices

The extreme teaching of hyper-grace can encourage sinful practices, such as sexual immorality, greed, or pride, because individuals believe that God's grace will cover their sins, no matter how they live. This distorted view of grace can have serious consequences, not only for the individual believer but also for the health of the wider Church.

3.3 Potential for Apostasy

Finally, embracing hyper-grace or abusing God**'**s grace can lead to apostasy—a falling away from the faith. If someone continually rejects the call to repentance and holiness, they may eventually abandon their faith altogether, believing that God**'**s grace is a permanent **"**get out of jail free card."

Conclusion: The True Meaning of Grace

While **grace** is undoubtedly the most powerful and beautiful gift of God, it is not to be abused or misunderstood. God**'**s grace is intended to lead us to repentance, to change our lives, and to live in obedience to Him. True grace empowers us to overcome sin and pursue holiness. It does not give us permission to continue in sin but calls us to live a transformed life, reflecting the love and holiness of God.

(31) Aligning with God's Heart

Aligning with God's Heart; Aspects That We Should Hate as God Does:

Proverbs 8:13 AKJV- "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the fraudulent mouth, do I hate.' As followers of God, it's not only crucial to embrace what He loves but also hate what God hates.

Aligning with God's heart means embracing His values and understanding what truly matters to Him. It's about recognizing the aspects of the world that are set against God's heart and for us to actively strive to detest them as He does. This devotion calls us to hate idolatry, injustice, pride, lies, wicked schemes, false witness, dishonesty, oppression, sexual immorality, cruelty, stirring up strife etc. just as God does. It challenges us to reject selfishness, pride, and arrogance, which stand in stark contrast to His love and compassion. As we align our hearts with God's, we develop a deep-seated aversion to anything that tarnishes our hearts, such as sin and evil or is hurtful or detrimental to others. Through prayer, reflection, and action, let us pursue a life that reflects God's heart, hating what He hates and loving what He loves.

This verse highlights the importance of aligning our hearts with God's heart by hating evil and embracing righteousness. Let's explore the aspects of evil mentioned in this verse and the significance of hating what God hates, followed by a prayer for guidance and strength in living according to God's standards.

Hating evil involves detesting and rejecting anything that is contrary to God's character and His will. It's about having a deep reverence and respect for God that compels us to turn away from sin and pursue righteousness in all areas of our lives.

The verse lists several aspects of evil that we should hate, including pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the froward mouth. These represent attitudes and behaviors that are displeasing to God and harmful to ourselves and others.

Pride is a sin that lies at the root of all other sins, leading us to exalt ourselves above God and others. Arrogance is a manifestation of pride that manifests as a haughty and self-righteous attitude. The evil way refers to a lifestyle characterized by rebellion against God's commands and a refusal to submit to His authority.

The froward mouth represents speech that is deceitful, slanderous, and divisive. It's a reflection of the condition of the heart, as Jesus taught, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). Our words have the power to build up or tear down, to bless or to curse, and we are called to use them wisely and responsibly.

Hating evil is not about harboring feelings of hatred towards individuals but about recognizing and rejecting sin in all its forms. It's about loving what is good and righteous and seeking to live lives that are pleasing to God.

Aligning our hearts with God's heart involves cultivating a deep reverence and awe for Him and His holiness. It means pursuing righteousness and holiness in all that we do and allowing His Spirit to transform us from the inside out.

(32) Water Baptism

Water Baptism is an outward proclamation of the inner working of God in a Christian's life, by a person who has already accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

When a Christian is baptized in water that individual is declaring that he wants his old sinful life to be buried and as he rises from the water, that he would likewise want to rise spiritually to the newness of life in Jesus Christ, “born again”;

It is not the act of Water Baptism that cleanses a person from any sin, but rather having a sincere faith in what Jesus Christ alone achieved at the cross, the perfect atonement and forgiveness of our sins. However Jesus Christ wants every believer to be water baptized, if possible.

God instructs us to do so, as a spiritual reminder, a declaration of dying to one's old sinful nature, a turning point, and rising again in the newness of Jesus Christ.

Even though a person may have been baptized as a baby, still that person as an adult should be baptized again, by their own choice or decision.

Whether Water Baptism is biblical part for one's walk with Jesus and salvation is a controversial among some Christian Denominations. It is essential for each believer to rightly divide God's Word in Spirit and Truth, and interpret God's Word for themselves concerning the importance of being Water Baptized, and Baptized in the Holy Spirit. Water Baptism is a divine ordinance presented by Jesus in the great Commission.

Water Baptism - Continued…

1.1 The Significance of Water Baptism in the Life of a Believer

Romans 6:3-11 (AKJV) – "Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that from now on we should not serve sin. 7For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over him. 10For in that he died, he died to sin once: but in that he lives, he lives to God. 11Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.."

Water baptism is a significant and essential step in the life of every believer. It symbolizes the believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When a person is baptized, they publicly declare their faith in Christ and their willingness to follow Him in all things. The act of immersion in water is a vivid illustration of being buried with Christ, and as they rise out of the water, it signifies their new life in Him.

Baptism is not merely a ritual or tradition, but a spiritual act that reflects a deeper transformation that has taken place in the believer's heart. Through baptism, a believer is not only cleansed from sin but also empowered to live a new life—one that is dedicated to following Christ. Just as Christ died and was resurrected, believers who are baptized experience the "old man" of sin being buried and the "new man" coming to life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 3:21 (AKJV) – "The like figure to which even baptism does also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:"

Peter emphasizes that baptism is not just about the external act of washing but is a response to God's call for a purified conscience. It is an outward expression of an inward reality—our identification with Jesus Christ and His resurrection. Baptism represents a commitment to live in the new life Christ offers, walking in obedience to His Word.

1.2 The Call to Be Baptized into the Death and Resurrection of Christ

Galatians 3:27 (AKJV) – "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Water baptism serves as a visible demonstration that believers have fully identified with Christ. It marks the moment when they publicly acknowledge that they have died to their old self and have been raised to walk in a new life with Christ. To be baptized is to "put on Christ," to be clothed with His righteousness, and to be marked as one of His disciples.

Paul speaks of baptism as a crucial step in the believer's spiritual journey—a defining act that signifies full participation in the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection. Through this act, believers signify their commitment to follow Jesus, forsaking the old ways of sin and embracing the new life that Christ offers.

Acts 2:38 (AKJV) – "Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"

Peter's words in Acts 2 remind us that baptism is closely tied to repentance. It is a public declaration that a person has repented of their sins, is turning away from their old way of life, and is beginning a new journey as a follower of Christ. Baptism is a vital part of the process of salvation, symbolizing the forgiveness of sins and the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

Neglecting or Misunderstanding Water Baptism

2.1 The Consequences of not believing in Jesus Christ and not being baptized into Christ's Death and Resurrection

Mark 16:16 (AKJV) – "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned."

Water Baptism is a clear command of Jesus Christ. While salvation is by faith alone and God's grace, baptism is the outward expression of that faith. Jesus Himself linked baptism with salvation in Mark 16:16. Those who refuse to be baptized or misunderstand its significance may be overlooking an important step in their walk of faith.

Baptism does not save us but it is a command from Jesus, and disobedience to this command could reflect a lack of full commitment to Him. The act of baptism marks the believer's obedience to the gospel, and refusing to follow through with baptism may hinder spiritual growth and maturity.

2.2 The Deception of a Spiritual Life without doing what Jesus instructed, such as baptism and continuing living a life of iniquity.

Matthew 7:21-23 (AKJV) – "Not everyone that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works? 23And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity."

The danger of living a life without doing what Jesus instructed, such as baptism is that it can create a false sense of spiritual security. In Matthew 7, Jesus warns that there will be those who don't do the will of God, and are not truly known by Him. Baptism is a vital sign of true discipleship—it is a public identification with Christ and His work on the cross. Neglecting baptism and other biblical principles can result in a disconnect from genuine inward transformation by Jesus in a person's life caused by false outward religious piety.

2.3 The Danger of Legalism in Baptism

Titus 3:5-7 (AKJV) – "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit); 6Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; 7That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

While baptism is essential, we must remember that it is not what save us. Salvation is not earned through religious rituals, including baptism, but is by God's grace alone, through

faith in Jesus Christ. We must be cautious not to fall into the trap of thinking that baptism is merely a legalistic, one time act that secures salvation. Baptism is a response to God's grace, not a means of earning it.

How to Walk in the Newness of Life Through Water Baptism

3.1 Embrace Baptism as a Public Confession of Faith

Matthew 10:32-33 (AKJV) – "Whoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33But whoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

Baptism is a public confession of faith in Jesus Christ. It is an opportunity for believers to declare to the world that they have been transformed by His grace and are committed to living for Him. Baptism is a testimony of faith, and the act of being immersed in water symbolizes the believer's identification with Christ's death and resurrection.

3.2 Walk in Newness of Life

Romans 6:4 (AKJV) – "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Water baptism signifies the believer's entrance into a new life in Christ. This newness of life is not simply a change in behavior, but a complete spiritual transformation that affects every part of a believer's existence. To walk in the newness of life is to live with the power of the resurrection at work within us, reflecting Christ's character and His holiness in our daily lives.

3.3 Live in the Power of the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:5 (AKJV) – "For John truly baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit) not many days hence."

Baptism in water is often closely associated with baptism in the Holy Spirit. As believers are baptized in water, they are also invited to receive the Holy Spirit, who empowers them to live out their new life in Christ. The Holy Spirit equips believers with the strength, wisdom, and discernment needed to live out the call of God on their lives.

Conclusion: Living a Life Transformed by Jesus Christ and our confession of faith in Him by water baptism

Water baptism is a profound and necessary step in the believer's walk with Christ even though we are not saved by water baptism, but rather by a genuine faith in Jesus and what he alone has achieved at the cross. It signifies the believer's identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and marks the beginning of a new life of obedience to God. Baptism is not just an outward act but a declaration of the inward transformation that has taken place in the life of the believer. Water Baptism marks that we are “Born Again” in Jesus, old things pass away, behold all things are made new.

As we walk in the newness of life through our belief, faith and love for Jesus Christ, we are reminded that water baptism is not all it takes to be a “Christian” but the beginning of a life committed to Christ. It is a call to live according to His Word, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and to walk in obedience to His commands and to love God and others as Jesus loved us.

May we never take this step lightly, but fully embrace the significance of baptism as a means of identifying with Christ, living out His truth, and walking in the abundant life He has promised. Let us walk boldly in the newness of life, continually surrendering to God, and bearing fruit that reflects His glory.

Key Scriptures

Matthew 28:18-20 (AKJV) And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and, see, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.

ACTS 2:37-41 (AKJV) Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brothers, what shall we do? 38Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call. 40And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls."

Romans 6:4-11 (AKJV) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that from now on we should not serve sin. 7For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over him. 10For in that he died, he died to sin once: but in that he lives, he lives to God. 11Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

WATER BAPTISM - Key Scriptures - Continued…

Colossians 2:12-15 (AKJV) Buried with Him (Jesus) in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised him from the dead. 13And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Baptism as a Symbol of Putting on Christ:

Galatians 3:26-27 draws a connection between faith, baptism, and being clothed with Christ: "for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Water Baptism and Identification with Christ's Burial and Resurrection:

Colossians 2:12 links water baptism with being buried with Christ in baptism and being raised with Him through faith in the powerful working of God: "having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead."

(33) The Church - Christian Fellowship

Scripture: Hebrews 10:24-25 (AKJV) - "And let us consider one another to provoke to love and to good works: 25Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching.."

The Christian Church are the people, not a building. temple nor a specific denomination. The true Christian Church is anyone who genuinely believes in and follows Jesus Christ, in spirit and truth according to his Word, any where in the world. These are the body of Christ, the Church, and Jesus knows who is His. As Jesus said, "My sheep hears my voice and follows Me""

Within the Church, there exists a beautiful bond and good purpose in Christian gathering, intertwined in Jesus Christ's love, and being developed into maturity within us, as we fellowship and serve together. It's a community where hearts find unity, burdens are shared, and faith thrives. In a world fractured by strife and solitude, the Church stands as a sanctuary of hope, offering solace and a sense of belonging to all who seek it. The Scriptures urge us to cherish Christian fellowship within the Church, encouraging active engagement in community life and mutual encouragement in our spiritual journeys. As members of Christ's body, we're called to ignite love and inspire good works in one another, to uplift each other in moments of trial, and to share each other's burdens.

Coming together in Christian fellowship isn't just a social gathering; it's a spiritual discipline essential for our growth and solidarity in Christ. In the embrace of fellow believers, we find strength, accountability, and inspiration to press onward in our walk with the Lord. Furthermore, the Church serves as a tangible expression of God's love to the world. Through acts of compassion, service, and unity, we mirror Christ's character and extend His invitation of grace to those in need.

In a world where pressures may tempt us to withdraw or isolate, let's remember the importance of Christian fellowship within the Church. Let's prioritize gathering with our brothers and sisters, worshipping together, delving into God's Word as one, and lifting each other in prayer.

May our gatherings be characterized by love, acceptance, and genuine care, fostering unity within the body of Christ and bearing witness to the transformative power of His love.

Reflection:

Take a moment to reflect on the ways in which you are currently engaged in Christian fellowship within your local church community. Consider how you can deepen your relationships with fellow believers and actively contribute to the growth and health of the body of Christ. Ask God to reveal areas where you may need to grow in your commitment to Christian fellowship and to empower you to live out His purposes within the church.

- **Understanding the Importance of Christian Fellowship:** The Bible teaches us that Christians are not meant to walk through life alone but are called to live in community with one another as members of the body of Christ.
- **Gathering Regularly:** Actively participate in the gatherings of the local church, whether it be for worship services, small groups, or other fellowship activities.
- **Building Relationships:** Take the time to get to know fellow believers on a deeper level, fostering genuine friendships and accountability within the church community.
- **Supporting One Another:** Be willing to lend a listening ear, offer a helping hand, and pray for one another in times of need, demonstrating Christ's love through practical acts of kindness.
- **Encouraging and Edifying:** Use your words to uplift and encourage your brothers and sisters in Christ, speaking truth and life into their situations.
- **Forgiving and Reconciling:** Practice forgiveness and reconciliation in relationships, following the example of Christ who reconciled us to God through His sacrifice on the cross.
- **Sharing Spiritual Gifts:** Identify and utilize your spiritual gifts for the edification of the body of Christ, contributing to the growth and health of the church.
- **Studying God's Word Together:** Engage in Bible study and discipleship within the church community, growing together in knowledge and understanding of God's Word.
- **Praying Together:** Pray with and for your fellow believers, lifting up their needs and concerns before the Lord in corporate prayer.
- **Serving Together:** Seek opportunities to serve alongside other members of the church, using your time, talents, and resources to advance God's kingdom together.
- **Celebrating Milestones:** Rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn, walking alongside your brothers and sisters in both times of joy and sorrow.
- **Remaining Committed:** Stay committed to your local church family, faithfully stewarding your relationships and investing in the growth and well-being of the community.

(34) Continue In The Word Of God

Jesus said " If you continue in My Word, you are truly My disciple and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free " JOHN 8:31

The Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God given to humanity. God revealed it to guide us on the way to life, to help us come to know Him, and most importantly, to teach us how to love Him and others as we should.

The Bible has the oldest and most well-preserved manuscript copies of any book from antiquity. There are over 5,400 Greek manuscripts, more than 10,000 Latin Vulgate manuscripts, and at least 9,300 copies of other early versions. In total, more than 24,000 manuscript copies or portions of the New Testament exist today. While there are some minor transcriptural errors in some parts of the Bible, the consistency and reliability of God's Word and the Gospel message holds true throughout the ages.

The Bible was written over a span of at least 1,600 years by more than 40 different authors from all walks of life. These authors came from various cultural and occupational backgrounds, including kings, fishermen, doctors, tax collectors, and others. Each one received divine inspiration from God through the Holy Spirit and recorded His words in the scriptures.

The Bible is made up of 66 books or letters, which are divided into two main sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. Within its pages, there are numerous covenants and agreements made by God. The two primary covenants are the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Additionally, the Bible contains hundreds of prophecies that were fulfilled, sometimes thousands of years after they were written.

Historical Facts About The Bible:

Summary:

1. **Oldest and Most Well-Preserved Manuscripts**: The Bible indeed has an exceptionally large number of surviving manuscripts compared to any other ancient text. This is true especially for the **New Testament**, which has a vast manuscript tradition that dates back to the early centuries of Christianity. When we compare this to other ancient texts, the New Testament has far more manuscripts and earlier manuscript evidence. The "oldest" part, referring to New Testament manuscripts, includes fragments like the **John Rylands Manuscript** (P52), dating to around 125 AD, which is one of the earliest known pieces of the Gospel of John.

2. **Over 5,400 Greek Manuscripts**: This is correct. As of recent estimates, there are indeed **over 5,800** Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, though the number can vary slightly depending on whether fragments are included. The figure of **5,400** is a conservative and often quoted estimate.

3. **More Than 10,000 Latin Vulgate Manuscripts**: This is generally accurate. The **Latin Vulgate** was the standard Bible in the Western Christian Church for centuries, and over **10,000 manuscripts** in Latin have survived, though the exact number may fluctuate with new discoveries and scholarly work.

4. **At Least 9,300 Copies of Other Early Versions**: This number is plausible but a bit variable depending on the source. There are **9,000-10,000** known manuscripts or early versions in languages like Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, and others. These

versions are crucial for textual criticism and understanding how the Bible was transmitted across various cultures and languages.

5. **Total Manuscripts (Over 24,000)**: Combining the Greek, Latin, and other early versions, the total number of New Testament manuscripts is often cited as **over 24,000**. This number includes fragments, complete manuscripts, and versions in other languages. The exact total can vary depending on how fragments are counted, but **24,000+** is a commonly accepted estimate.

6. **Prophecies** - Some scholars suggest that there are over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament that Christians believe were fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Others may count the fulfillment of prophecies regarding nations, the land of Israel, and global events, which could further increase the count. While the exact number of fulfilled prophecies is a subject of debate, many scholars and theologians consider a significant number of Biblical prophecies to have come true, particularly those related to Jesus Christ and the fate of ancient Israel and its neighbors. However, others might view some of these "fulfillments" as symbolic, or they may have different interpretations of what constitutes a "prophecy" and how it should be understood in its historical or spiritual context.

7. **Jesus is the Word of God-** The moral, life changing message of Jesus Christ in the Bible far exceeds any other religion or belief; His Word is true, defines love and brings eternal life.

Key Facts about the Dead Sea Scrolls:

1. Discovery:
   The scrolls were first discovered by a young Bedouin shepherd in 1947 in Cave 1 near Qumran. Over the next decade, additional caves were found, leading to the discovery of thousands of fragments and several complete or nearly complete scrolls. Most of the texts were found in 11 caves near the Dead Sea, though some were later discovered in other areas.

2. Date:
   The Dead Sea Scrolls date from the 3rd century BCE to the 1st century CE. This time period covers the Second Temple period of Judaism, which was a crucial era in the development of Jewish religious thought, including the formation of the Hebrew Bible.

3. Content:
   The scrolls include a wide variety of texts, with some of the most important being:

   - Biblical Manuscripts: Fragments from nearly every book of the Hebrew Bible (except the Book of Esther). The scrolls provide the earliest known Hebrew copies of many biblical books, such as Isaiah, Psalms, and Deuteronomy. The Isaiah Scroll (also called 1QIsa) is particularly famous for being nearly complete.

4. Significance:
    - Textual Variants: The scrolls have provided scholars with many ancient Hebrew Bible manuscripts that predate the earliest known manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible by over a thousand years. For example, the Great Isaiah Scroll is around 1,000 years older than the Codex Leningradensis, which is the oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible from the 11th century CE.
    - Textual Criticism: By comparing the Dead Sea Scrolls with later manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., the Septuagint, Masoretic Text, and Vulgate), scholars can identify differences in the transmission of the biblical text over time. The Dead Sea Scrolls have shed light on the evolution of the biblical text and confirmed some of its stability, while revealing textual variations in other places.

5. Theological Importance: The Dead Sea Scrolls have theological implications as well. They provide evidence of diverse Jewish beliefs and practices during the time leading up to the life of Jesus, showing that ideas found in early Christianity—such as messianism, eschatology, and the use of Hebrew scriptures—were also present in some Jewish circles. While no Christian texts were found in the scrolls, they provide crucial background for understanding the religious environment of the time.

6. Preservation and Access: The scrolls are made from a variety of materials, including leather, papyrus, and copper, and many of the fragments are fragile. Efforts to preserve and study the scrolls continue, with a number of scrolls being digitized and made available to scholars worldwide. The majority of the scrolls are now housed in the Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem, a part of the Israel Museum.

7. Significant Text Found: Some of the most famous and important Dead Sea Scrolls include:
    - The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa): A nearly complete scroll of the Book of Isaiah.

Impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls on Biblical Studies:

The Dead Sea Scrolls have revolutionized biblical studies in several ways:

- Revised Understanding of Biblical Texts: They have helped scholars refine our understanding of the Hebrew Bible and its transmission over time.
- Context for Early Christianity: The scrolls provide valuable context for understanding the Jewish background of early Christianity and the diversity of religious thought in the centuries before and after Jesus.

- Jewish Diversity: The scrolls highlight the diversity of Jewish thought during the Second Temple period, showing that not all Jews shared the same views on the Bible, the role of the temple, or the coming of the Messiah.

Conclusion:

The Dead Sea Scrolls are one of the most important discoveries for the study of ancient Jewish history and the Bible. They have shed light on the diversity of Judaism during the Second Temple period, the history of the Hebrew Bible, and the religious landscape in which early Christianity emerged, as Jesus Christ, The Son of God, The Word Of God and The Messiah fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament.

Hebrews 4:12 (AKJV) " For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Isaiah 55:11 (AKJV) So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

(35) The Word of God - Study Contents

- Forms of The Word of God;
- Symbolical Terms - Which represents the Word of God;
- How do we understand God's word ?
- The nature of God's Word
- Why should we read, listen to, study & learn God's Word ?
- Why should we meditate on, speak, proclaim, teach and preach God's Word ?
- How does God want us to relate to His Word ?
- How and what, in the word of God, should we share? How should we preach ?
- What is NOT The Word Of God?
- The Nature Of God’s Word:
- The Foundation Of The Word Of God - Jesus Christ
- God's Word as Divine Revelation: The Inspired and Authoritative Word
- Evidence of the reliability of the Bible as God's Word; Sharing your Faith
- Doctrines of men are not the Word of God
- What are the benefits of learning and doing God's Word?

Forms of The Word of God - Found in the Bible

Parable
Good News
Covenant
Blessings
Prophesies
Spiritual Songs
Instructions
Voice of God
Vision
Corrections
Counsel
Precepts
Revelation
Wisdom
Proverbs
Testimonies
Promises
Psalms
Gospel
Message
Prayer
Godly Knowledge
Reproofs
Statues
Epistle
Oracles of God
Scriptures
Commandments
Warnings
Hymns
Judgments
Truth
Dream

Exhortations

Rebukes

Doctrine of Christ

Letter

Symbolical Terms - Which represents the Word of God;

Seed - Luke 8:11-15, Isaiah 55:10,11,

Bread - John 6:35

Sword - Hebrews 4:12

Rain - Isaiah 55:10, 11

Manna - Revelation 2:17

Honey - Revelation 10:9

Rivers of Living Water - John 7:38

Grain - Matthew 13:31

Solid Food - Hebrews 5:12,14

Milk - Hebrews 5:12,13

Fountain of Life - Psalm 36:7-9

Water - Ephesians 5:25-27

Flesh - John 6:53-58

Drink - Isaiah 43:22

New Things - Isaiah 42:9

Still Small Voice - 1 Kings 19:12

Springs - Isaiah 12:3

Snow - Isaiah 55:10,11

Pool of Water - Isaiah 41:18

Tree of Life - Proverbs 3:18

Lamp - Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 6:23

Bubbling Brook - Proverbs 18:4

Light - John 8:12, John 1:1-5, Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 6:23

How Can We Understand God's Word ?

Matthew 13:19-23 And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man **who hears the word and understands it;** who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold,.some sixty, and some thirty ."

- **1) Through Prayer:**

Through Prayer -Ask God Proverbs 3:5,6 (AKJV) "Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not to your own understanding. 6 **In all your ways acknowledge him,** and he shall direct your paths.

Proverbs 2:1-6 "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find"

- **2) Through Prayer - Ask For God's Wisdom & Understanding:**

James 1:5 -8 (AKJV) " If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. 6But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.."

Ephesians 1:15-19 (AKJV)"Why I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints, 16Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,..."

- **3) Humble oneself:**

James 1:21 (AKJV) "...Why lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness (sin), and receive with meekness the (implanted) engrafted word (Word Of God) , which is able to save your souls.

- **4) By God's Holy Spirit of Truth**

John 16:13-15 (AKJV) "However, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. 14He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you. 15All things that the Father has are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it to you.."

John 14:16-27 (AKJV) "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you. 18I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. 19Yet a little while, and the world sees me no more; but you see me: because I live, you shall live also. 20At that day you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21He that has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me: and he that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.22Judas says to him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world? 23Jesus answered and said to him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our stayed with him.24He that loves me not keeps not my sayings: and the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. 25These things have I spoken to you, being yet present with you. 26But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance,

whatever I have said to you.27Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you: not as the world gives, give I to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. "

1 Corinthians 12:11, 12 (AKJV) “But all these works that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. 12For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ"

1 John 2:20 (AKJV) (But you have an anointing from the Holy One) But you have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things.

1 John 2:27 (AKJV)“But the anointing which you have received of him stays in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in him. ."

- **5) Teachers Will Equip You**

Ephesians 4:11-13 (AKJV)“ And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: ."

- **6) Listen**

Romans 10:17 "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God "

Matthew 13:19-23 (AKJV) Hear you therefore the parable of the sower. 19When any one hears the word of the kingdom, and understands it not, then comes the wicked one, and catches away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. 20But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that hears the word, and immediately with joy receives it; 21Yet has he not root in himself, but endures for a while: for when tribulation or persecution rises because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22He also that received seed among the thorns is he that hears the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23 **But he that received seed into the good ground is he that hears the word, and understands it; which also bears fruit, and brings forth, some an hundred times, some sixty, some thirty**

- **7) Study**

2 Timothy 2:15 (AKJV) **“Study to show yourself approved to God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**." We should receive the word with all readiness of mind and **search the scriptures daily. (Acts 17:11)**

- **8) Read**

Revelation 1:3 "**Blessed is he who reads** and those who hear the words of the prophecy and heed the things which are written in it: for the time is near."

- **9) Meditate on His Word**

Joshua 1:8 We should always 'declare' and speak God's word out of our 'mouth' and **meditate day and night** and observe to do all that is written. **Psalm 1:2** "And on His law he meditates day and night."

- **10) Follow Jesus**

Luke 24:32 As we walk daily with Jesus He will open our understanding

- **11) When we receive love & encouragement from other Christians**

Isaiah 35:3-6 "Strengthen you the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. 4Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. 5Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."

Why Should We Read, Listen, Study And Learn God's Word?

Why Should We Meditate On, Speak, Proclaim, Teach And Preach God's Word?

- We are 'born again' by receiving the incorruptible seed of God's word into our heart. READ 1 Peter 1:23
- We grow up into the fullness of Jesus Christ and become mature Christians by the word of God. (1 Peter 2:2)
- We will be a good minister of Jesus when we are nourished up in his word. (1 Timothy 4:5)
- We are blessed when we are a doer of the word. (James 1:25)
- God's word will be a joy and a rejoicing of our heart. (Jeremiah 15:16)
- We are blessed when we read and hear his word. (Revelation 1:3)
- So we will bear spiritual fruit within our livers and prosper in what we do. Psalm 1:1-3
- We will bear good fruit. (Matthew 13:23, Galatians 5:22)
- We will be like a wise man who built his house upon a rock. (Matthew 7:24-25, Luke 6:47-48)
- So that our joy may be full. (1 John 1:4)
- So that we will know that God has given to us eternal life and know that this life is in His Son. (1 John 5:11-13)
- We should speak and observe to do all that is written so our way will prosper and we shall have good success. (Joshua 1:8)
- We will be protected and kept from the paths of the destroyer. (Psalm 17:4)
- God's word will convert our soul.....

Makes the simple wise.

Makes our heart rejoice.

Makes our eyes enlightened.

Gives us a warning.

- Keeping God's word will give us great reward. (Psalm 19:7)

Why Should We Read, Listen, Study And Learn God's Word?

Why Should We Meditate On, Speak, Proclaim, Teach And Preach God's Word? Cont…

- None of our steps shall slide when God's word is in your heart. (Psalm 37:31)
- We receive 'faith' through hearing God's word. (Romans 10:17)
- We are sanctified and cleansed of our sinful nature by the washing of God's word.
- (Ephesians 5:26, John 17:17.
- Made clean. John 15:3)
- The word of God is our spiritual sword to overcome our daily struggles and spiritual battles. (Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12 Two edge sword.)
- We will not sin against God if we treasure up God's word in our heart. (Psalm 119:11)
- We are made wise unto salvation. (2 Timothy 3:15 By God's word.
- God's word is valuable for doctrine to guide our lives into righteousness so we may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:17)
- "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)
- For proper spiritual growth. "As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby. (1 Peter 2:2)
- So that by the promises of God we might be partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4)

Why Should We Read, Listen, Study And Learn God's Word?

Why Should We Meditate On, Speak, Proclaim, Teach And Preach God's Word? Cont…

- Spiritual Warfare: "It is written...." Matthew 4:4, 4:7, 4:10 , Ephesians 6:15
- We are able to be built up and receive an eternal inheritance by His word. Acts 20:32
- We will have everlasting life and not come into condemnation. John 5:24, John 20:31
- "But these are written so that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ the son of God and that believing we might have life through His name." John 20:31

- So that we might surely know that Jesus came out from the Father and believe that God the Father sent Jesus. John 17:8

Acts 26:18

- To open our eyes of our heart.
- To turn us from darkness to light.
- To deliver us from the power of Satan unto God.
- So that we might receive forgiveness of sins.
- So that we might receive an inheritance.
- For our learning, so that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Romans 15:4
- So that we might have obedience of faith. Romans 16:26
- For admonition. 1 Corinthians 10:11

Why Should We Read, Listen, Study And Learn God's Word?

Why Should We Meditate On, Speak, Proclaim, Teach And Preach God's Word? Cont…

- We are admonished and taught by the word of God is Psalms, Hymns, Spiritual songs. Colossians 3:16
- God's word will lead us and bring us into His presence. Psalm 43:3

Psalm 78:1-

- We should give ear and listen to God's word so that we...
- Might set our hope in God.
- Not forget the works of God but keep His commandment.
- So we won't be stubborn and rebellious.
- We will receive peace and not turn again to folly when we take to heart God's word. Psalm 85:8
- We will be healed in many ways and be delivered from destruction. Psalm 107:19-20
- We will be lead by God's word even when we sleep and when we awake His word will talk to us. Proverbs 6:22

How Does God Want Us To Relate To His Word?

- We should receive the word with all readiness of mind and search the scriptures daily. READ (Acts 17:11)

- We should rightly divide His word in spirit and in truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)
- We should always 'declare' and speak God's word out of our 'mouth' and meditate day and night and observe to do all that is written. (Joshua 1:8)
- We should be 'mindful always' and remember His covenant. 1 Chronicles 16:15
- We should 'receive' His word and lay up His word within our heart. Job 22:22
- We should esteem His word more than our own necessary (food). Job 23:12
- We should delight in God's word and meditate day and night. Psalm 1:2, 40:8
- We should hold fast to the word of life. Philippians 2:16
- We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that we have heard. Hebrews 2:1
- We should be swift to hear God's word and slow to speak of our own words. James 1:19
- We should be a doer and not just a hearer. James 1:23, Luke 11:28
- We should remember the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jude 17
- We should believe God's word. Mark 1:15
- We should praise His word and put our trust in Him. Psalm 56:4
- We should give ear to God's word. Psalm 78:1-8, 85:8
- We should hear the sayings of Jesus and do them. Matthew 7:24-25, Luke 6:47-48, Luke 11:28, Blessed
- We should not just search the scriptures and think we have life, but God's word testify of Jesus and that we should come close to Him. John 5:39,40
- We should share His word in hope that it will produce fruit. 1 Corinthians 9:10
- We should remember and be mindful of the words which are spoken before by the Holy prophets and of the commandment of the apostles of the Lord and Savior. 2 Peter 3:1
- We should remember certain things. 1 Timothy 4:5-6

How and what, in the word of God, should we share? How should we preach ?

- **Preach the cross, Christ crucified.** READ 1 Corinthians 1:17-29 Declaring unto you the testimony of God. 1 Corinthians 2:1-13

1 Thessalonians 2 : 3-12 (AKJV)“For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: 4But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the

gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which tries our hearts. 5For neither at any time used we flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness: 6Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. 7But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherishes her children: 8So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted to you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because you were dear to us. 9For you remember, brothers, our labor and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. 10You are witnesses, and God also, how piously and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you that believe: 11As you know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father does his children, 12That you would walk worthy of God, who has called you to his kingdom and glory."

Matthew 24 : 4-14 (AKJV) “And Jesus answered and said to them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. 6And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that you be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. 8All these are the beginning of sorrows.9Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and you shall be hated of all nations for my name**’**s sake. 10And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. 11And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved. **14And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come.**

- **Matthew 4:23 -** Preach the kingdom of God.
- **Matthew 4:17 -** From this time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand".

What is NOT The Word Of God?

- Doctrines the commandments of men. Matthew 15:3-9
- Tradition. Mark 7:9-13
- Preach any other gospel. Galatians 1:8-12
- To teach otherwise and consent not to the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Timothy 6:3-5
- Doctrines of devils. 1 Timothy 4:1-7
- Twisting God's word. 2 Peter 3:15-16

The Nature Of God’s Word:

- **God’s Word is Truth:**

John 1:17, Colossians 1:5, 1 Thessalonians, James 1:18

"Sanctify them through your truth your word is truth". John 17:17

"The word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Ephesians 1:13

- **God's Word is Spirit and Life**

"It is the spirit who gives life the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life." John 6:63

- **God's Word is Light**

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105

"I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." John 8:12

- **God's Word Is God**

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the word was God. John 1:1

The Word was with God and the Word is Jesus Christ. John 1:1-2, John 1:14, The word became flesh.

The Nature Of God's Word: Cont…

- God's word will stand forever. Isaiah 40:8, Mark 13:31, 1 Peter 1:24-25.
- The gospel from God is not just in word only but also in power in the Holy Spirit in much assurance. 1 Thessalonians 1:5
- All scripture is given by the inspiration of God. It is profitable for doctrine for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. 2 Timothy 3:16
- Pure, tried and a shield of protection. Proverbs 30:5, 2 Samuel 22:31, Psalm 12:6
- God's word is quick and powerful. Hebrews 4:12 God's word is incorruptible. 1 Peter 1:23 Cannot be destroyed. John 10:35
- The gospel from God is not just in word only but also in power in the Holy Spirit in much assurance. 1 Thessalonians 1:5
- The universe was created by God's word. Hebrews 11:3, Psalm 33:4, 2 Peter 3:4-6
- As rain, seed and bread, God's word will accomplish what He pleases and will prosper in the thing for which he sent it and will not return to Him void. Isaiah 55:10:11
- God's word is sure and holiness. Psalm 93:5, 111:7
- God's word - done in truth and righteousness. Psalm 111:7
- Peace. Psalm 85:8
- Prophesy. edification, exhortations and comfort. 1 Corinthians 14:1-3
- Living waters. John 7:38

- "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters.
- The God of glory thunders.
- The Lord is over many waters.
- The voice of the Lord is powerful.
- The voice of the Lord is majestic." Psalm 29:3-4
- Prophesying - 1 Thessalonians 5:20
- Words of faith and good doctrine. 1 Timothy 4:5-6
- By the Holy Spirit - no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 2 Peter 1:20-21
- God's word has the ability to cleanse us spiritually. John 15:3
- **Revelation of God's Word**

Ephesians 3:3,5

- **Manifestations of His word**

Titus 1:1-3, 1 John 1:1-2,3

The Foundation Of The Word Of God - Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is The Word Of God And The Foundation Of Our Faith:

John 1:1-5 (AKJV) “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2The same was in the beginning with God. 3All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5And the light shines in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

1.1 The Foundation of the Word of God:

John 1:1-4 (AKJV) **“ –**That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked on, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show to you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us;) 3That which we have seen and heard declare we to you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4And these things write we to you, that your joy may be full..”

The Word of God is the foundation upon which much of our Christian faith stands. In the opening verses of John**’**s Gospel, we are introduced to the Word (Logos), which is revealed to be Jesus Christ Himself. The Word is not merely a written text; The Word is a living, active divine person, the Son of God whom has existed eternally with God and

is, in fact, God. Through the Word, all things were created, and in the Word is life and light for humanity.

The Bible is the written inspired Word of God, but it points ultimately to Jesus, who is the living Word. He is the perfect revelation of God's will, character, and purpose for creation. The Word of God is the primary means by which God communicates His love, His law, His promises, and His plan of salvation for the world. The Word is both timeless and personal—just as Jesus was in the beginning with God, so His words continue to speak into our lives today.

Hebrews 4:12 (AKJV) **“ –**For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart..”

The Word is alive and active. It is not just a historical document or a book of moral teachings, but a living expression of God**’**s power that speaks directly to the heart. It has the ability to pierce through the exterior of our lives and reveal the very thoughts and motives of our hearts. As we read and meditate on the Scriptures, it becomes a mirror that shows us who we are and who God is, helping us to align our lives with His truth.

1.2 The Power of the Word to Transform and Renew

Romans 12:2 (AKJV) **“ –**And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God..”

The Word of God has the power to renew our minds and transform our lives. In a world full of distractions, confusion, and sin, the Word stands as a constant source of truth and guidance. It instructs us on how to live according to God**’**s will and aligns our thinking with His perspective. When we immerse ourselves in the Word, it shapes our desires, convictions, and actions. It frees us from the conformity of the world and equips us to live out God's purposes in a fallen world.

This transformation is not a one-time event but a continuous process. As we daily engage with the Word, it renews our minds and molds us more into the likeness of Christ. The Scriptures serve as a mirror, showing us not only who we are in our sin but also who we are becoming in Christ. Our lives are constantly being renewed, reformed, and reshaped by the truth of God**’**s Word.

James 1:22-25 (AKJV) **“ –**But be you doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like to a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. 25But whoever looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. .”

The Word is not only to be heard but applied. James gives the illustration of a person who looks into a mirror, sees his reflection, and immediately forgets what he saw. Similarly, if we only read the Word without allowing it to change our behavior, we deceive ourselves. The Word of God is a tool for transformation—it is meant to be acted upon. As we continue in the Word, it leads us into a life of blessing and fruitfulness, because it aligns us with God's perfect will.

2.1 Abiding in the Word: Living in Obedience to God’s Truth

John 8:31-32 (AKJV) **“ –**Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; 32And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free’”

Abiding in the Word means more than just occasional reading or studying—it means living in obedience to the truth revealed in Scripture. Jesus makes it clear that true discipleship involves abiding in His Word, allowing it to shape every aspect of our lives. Abiding in the Word brings freedom, not just in terms of deliverance from sin, but also in the freedom to live according to God**’**s will, which is always for our good.

The truth of God's Word has the power to break the chains of sin, fear, and confusion. When we align our lives with God**’**s Word, we experience true freedom. This freedom is not the freedom to do whatever we want, but the freedom to live as God intended us to live: in love, righteousness, and peace.

Psalm 119:11 (AKJV) **“ –**Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against you. ”

To abide in the Word requires more than reading or hearing—it requires internalizing it. The psalmist writes about hiding God's Word in his heart so that it can guide his actions and protect him from sin. Abiding in the Word is an intentional, daily practice of meditation and memorization, allowing God**’**s truth to saturate our minds and hearts. As we do so, we are empowered to live according to God**’**s standards.

2.2 The Role of the Holy Spirit in Understanding the Word

1 Corinthians 2:12-13 (AKJV) **“ –**Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ**’**s gospel, and a door was opened to me of the Lord, 13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from there into Macedonia.”

The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in helping us understand and apply the Word of God. While the Bible is written in human language, it is spiritually discerned. The Holy Spirit, who inspired the Scriptures, enables us to grasp the deep truths of God**’**s Word and applies them to our lives. He illuminates the meaning of the text, convicts us of sin, and empowers us to live according to God's will.

When we read the Bible, we must rely on the Holy Spirit to teach us and guide us into all truth. The Spirit gives us understanding, not just of the words on the page, but of their application to our lives. As we abide in the Word, the Spirit works within us to mold us into the image of Christ.

3.1 Cultivate a Daily Hunger for God's Word

Matthew 4:4 (AKJV) **" –**But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.**""**

Abiding in the Word requires a daily hunger and thirst for God**'**s truth. Just as we need physical food to sustain our bodies, we need the Word of God to sustain our spiritual lives. Jesus, quoting from Deuteronomy, reminds us that the Word of God is as essential to our lives as daily bread. We must cultivate a daily desire to read, meditate, and apply the Scriptures to our lives.

Psalm 1:2 (AKJV) **" –**But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law does he meditate day and night. "

The righteous man delights in the Word of God, meditating on it day and night. This meditation is not just about reading the Bible but reflecting on it, pondering its meaning, and allowing it to transform our thoughts and actions. By making the Word of God central to our lives, we grow in our knowledge of God and our ability to live according to His will.

3.2 Apply the Word to Your Daily Life

James 1:22-25 (AKJV) **" –**But be you doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like to a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. 25But whoever looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

Abiding in the Word is not just about intellectual understanding but about practical application. As we read and study the Word, we must ask ourselves how it applies to our lives. What is God calling us to do? What changes does He want to make in our hearts and behavior? Abiding in the Word involves taking the truth we learn and allowing it to shape our actions, relationships, and priorities.

Conclusion: Living in the Word of God

To abide in the Word of God is to allow it to become a living part of who we are. It is to embrace the truth that God's Word is not only a guide but a transforming force that shapes our hearts, minds, and lives. As we meditate on the Scriptures, depend on the Holy Spirit for understanding, and live in obedience to God**'**s commands, we experience the freedom, peace, and joy that come from knowing and living in the truth of God's Word.

May we, as followers of Christ, never take the Word of God for granted. Let us daily abide in it, knowing that through it we are shaped, renewed, and equipped to fulfill God’s purposes in our lives.

God's Word as Divine Revelation: The Inspired and Authoritative Word

1.1 The Divine Origin of Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16,17 (AKJV) “ –All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works.”

At the heart of the Christian faith lies the belief that the Bible is not merely a collection of human writings, but the divinely inspired Word of God. Paul affirms in 2 Timothy 3:16 that all Scripture is “God-breathed” — inspired by the Holy Spirit and written by human authors under His guidance. This means that the Bible carries the full weight of divine authority. It is God’s personal revelation to humanity, containing His will, His character, and His redemptive purposes.

This divine inspiration ensures that every part of Scripture is relevant and trustworthy. The Bible is not just a historical document or a moral guide; it is the living, authoritative voice of God, revealed to guide, correct, and instruct His people in truth. God's Word is unique in that it transcends time and culture, speaking to every generation with power and clarity.

1.2 The Word as Revelation of God’s Character and Will

Revelation 19:13 (AKJV) “ –And he was clothed with a clothing dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.”

The Word of God reveals who God is — His character, His holiness, His justice, His mercy, and His love. Through the Bible, we come to know God in a personal and profound way. Jesus Christ, referred to as the “Word of God” in Revelation 19:13, is the ultimate and fullest revelation of God’s will and character. Everything written in the Bible points to Him, as He is the culmination of God’s redemptive plan and divine love.

Thus, the Scriptures not only provide knowledge about God but invite us into a relationship with Him. As we read and meditate on God’s Word, we learn to align our hearts with His desires and understand His purpose for our lives and the world.

2.1 The Power of God's Word in Creation

Genesis 1:3 (AKJV) “ –And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. ”

The creation narrative in Genesis reveals that God’s Word has the power to create ex nihilo (out of nothing). In Genesis 1, every element of creation comes into being through the spoken Word of God. “Let there be…” is the repeated command that brings the

universe into existence, showcasing the authority and creative power inherent in God’s Word.

Psalm 33:6 (AKJV) “ –By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. ”

The Psalmist reiterates this, affirming that it is through God's Word that all things were created. The creative force of God’s Word continues to sustain and uphold the universe. This connection between God’s Word and creation reminds us that the same power that created the heavens and the earth is at work in our lives through the Word of God. It is not only a means of creation but also of transformation and sustenance.

2.2 God’s Word as the Source of Order and Purpose

Colossians 1:16-17 (AKJV) “ –For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

God’s Word brings not only creation but also order and purpose. Everything in creation finds its meaning and function in relation to God’s Word. All things exist for His glory, and it is through His Word that they are sustained. Just as God’s Word created the universe, the heavens and all within them, it continues to guide and govern it. In our own lives, when we submit to God's Word, we find direction, order, and purpose for our existence.

3.1 God’s Word as a Lamp and Light

Psalm 119:105 (AKJV) “ –Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path. .”

God’s Word is depicted as a light in the darkness, shining the narrow path in a world that is dark and evil, that is often deceptive and chaotic. In a world filled with confusion, God's Word serves as a clear guide, showing us how to live according to His will. It reveals what is good and right, helping us avoid the pitfalls of sin and guiding us toward truth.

This illumination is not limited to moral guidance; it extends to all aspects of life. Whether in moments of decision, during times of trial, or when navigating relationships, God's Word offers wisdom and clarity. It enables believers to discern God’s will and walk in His ways with confidence and peace.

3.2 The Word Brings Clarity and Understanding

Proverbs 2:6 (AKJV) “ –For the LORD gives wisdom: out of his mouth comes knowledge and understanding. ”

The Word of God is not just a set of commands but a source of wisdom and understanding. Through the Bible, God reveals deeper truths about Himself, the world, and our place in it. It offers profound insight into human nature, the human condition, and

God's redemptive work in history. This wisdom is available to all who seek it with humility, and it serves as a lamp for our feet, guiding us through life's complexities.

4.1 The Living and Active Nature of God's Word

Hebrews 4:12 (AKJV) **“ –**For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. .”

God's Word is not static or dead; it is alive and active, working in the hearts of those who engage with it. Unlike any other book, the Bible has the unique ability to penetrate deeply into the soul, discerning the hidden thoughts and intentions of the heart. It brings conviction, transformation, and renewal, revealing areas of our lives that need to be surrendered to God.

The Word of God also has the power to change lives. It does not merely inform the mind but transforms the heart. As we read, meditate on, and apply God**’**s Word, it shapes our attitudes, behaviors, and even our very desires. It molds us into the image of Christ, equipping us for every good work.

5.1 God’s Word as a Source of Truth

John 17:19 (AKJV) **“ –**Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth. 18As you have sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth”

In a world full of competing ideologies and voices, God**’**s Word stands as the unwavering source of truth. Jesus, in His high priestly prayer, affirms that God**’**s Word is truth. It is the standard by which all other claims to truth are measured. This truth is not just theoretical but practical, providing the foundation for how we should live, think, and interact with the world around us.

God's Word reveals the ultimate truth about who God is, who we are, and how we are to live in relationship with Him. It provides a moral compass for navigating life and offers answers to the deepest questions of existence. The truth of God**’**s Word offers freedom and peace, and it is the rock upon which believers can build their lives.

5.2 The Word of Truth in a World of Lies

Psalm 119:160 (AKJV) **“ –**Your word is true from the beginning: and every one of your righteous judgments endures for ever..”

In a world filled with deception and falsehood, God**’**s Word stands as an unchanging pillar of truth. When everything around us may seem uncertain or misleading, we can trust in the absolute truth of Scripture. It endures forever, and every promise in it can be relied upon.

6.1 God’s Word for Instruction and Correction

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (AKJV) **“ –**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works.”

God**’**s Word serves as a comprehensive guide for every Christian**’**s life. It teaches us what is true (doctrine), corrects us when we go astray (correction, reproof), and trains us in righteousness (instruction). Through the Scriptures, we are equipped to live lives that are pleasing to God, fulfilling the purpose for which He created us.

The Bible provides a complete and sufficient foundation for every aspect of our Christian walk. Through its pages, we are molded into the image of Christ, growing in grace and knowledge as we submit to its teaching and correction.

7.1 The Transformative Power of God's Word

Romans 12:2 (AKJV) **“ –**And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

God**’**s Word has the power to renew and transform our minds. As we allow the Word of God, in the Bible, to shape our thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors, we become more like Christ. This transformation is not merely external but internal, affecting the way we view the world, respond to challenges, and interact with others.

The Word of God empowers us to resist the patterns of this world and embrace the will of God. Through the continual renewal of our minds, we are equipped to live out God**’**s will in every area of our lives.

8.1 Meditating on God's Word for Prosperity and Success

Joshua 1:8 (AKJV) **“ –**This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success.”

Meditating on God**’**s Word is key to living a life that is successful in His eyes. By continually reflecting on Scripture, we internalize God**’**s truth, align our lives with His will, and receive His guidance. The prosperity and success spoken of here are not merely material but spiritual — a life of purpose, wisdom, peace, and fulfillment that comes from living in accordance with God's Word.

Conclusion: Embracing the Living Word

God’s Word is not just a book, but the powerful, living spiritual revelation of His character, will, and purpose. It has the ability to create, sustain, and transform. It offers truth, guidance, and wisdom, helping us to navigate life’s challenges and grow in our faith. As we engage with God’s Word, it shapes us into the image of Christ and equips us to live lives that bring glory to God. God’s Word is living and active…May we continue to treasure, meditate on, and apply the Word of God, allowing it to illuminate our paths and transform our hearts.

Evidence of the Reliability of the Bible as God’s Word; Sharing Your Faith

Introduction: The Bible as the Reliable Word of God

The Bible stands as the most significant and influential books in human history. For millions of believers worldwide, the Bible is not just a collection of ancient texts but the very Word of God, divinely inspired, authoritative, and reliable. This commentary addresses the evidence supporting the reliability of the Bible as God's Word, and how we are called to share our faith based on this trust in Scripture. The credibility of the Bible is not rooted in human opinion or tradition, but in its divine origin, historical accuracy, prophetic fulfillment, internal consistency, and transformative power. For every Christian, sharing the Gospel effectively begins with a deep confidence in the truth and reliability of God’s Word. Every Christian’s personal testimony of the life-changing results of receiving and following Jesus and His Word is the evidence that God’s Word is true and full of life—something no other doctrine or belief can achieve.

1. Evidence of the Reliability of the Bible as God’s Word

The Bible is often scrutinized for its authenticity and authority. However, several compelling factors point to its reliability as the Word of God:

1.1 The Inspiration of Scripture

The Bible claims to be the inspired Word of God, and this claim is foundational to its reliability. The doctrine of inspiration teaches that the Scriptures were written by human authors, but under the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit. This ensures that the Bible contains no errors or contradictions in matters of faith, practice, or truth.

2 Timothy 3:16 (AKJV): *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works."*

This verse teaches that every part of Scripture is divinely inspired. The Greek word for "inspiration" literally means "God-breathed," indicating that the words of the Bible are from God Himself, even though written by human hands.

2 Peter 1:21 (AKJV): *"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.."*

The Bible's claim of divine inspiration assures believers that God is the ultimate author, even though human writers were involved. This divine-human cooperation makes the Bible both trustworthy and authoritative.

1.2 The Historical Accuracy of the Bible

The historical reliability of the Bible is another key factor in establishing its credibility. Archaeological discoveries and historical studies have confirmed many of the events, places, and people mentioned in the Bible. From the existence of ancient cities like Jericho and Nineveh to the reign of biblical kings such as David and Solomon, the Bible's historical narrative has been verified in countless instances.

Luke 1:1-4 (AKJV): *"For as much as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 2Even as they delivered them to us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; 3It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you in order, most excellent Theophilus, 4That you might know the certainty of those things, wherein you have been instructed.."*

Luke writes with confidence in the accuracy of his narrative, referencing eyewitness testimony and careful investigation. This shows that the Bible's historical claims are rooted in real events and can be trusted as factual.

1.3 Prophetic Fulfillment

One of the most compelling evidences of the Bible's divine origin is its fulfillment of prophecy. The Old Testament contains hundreds of prophecies, many of which were fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The detailed prophecies about the Messiah in books like Isaiah, Micah, and Psalms are remarkable in their accuracy and specificity.

Isaiah 53:3-5 (AKJV): *"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was on him; and with his stripes we are healed. chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."*

This prophecy, written centuries before Jesus, vividly describes His suffering and sacrifice on the cross. The precise fulfillment of such prophecies points to the divine inspiration of Scripture and confirms its reliability as God's Word.

1.4 The Internal Consistency of the Bible

Another proof of the Bible's reliability is its internal consistency. Though written over 1,500 years by more than 40 different authors from diverse backgrounds, the Bible maintains a

remarkable coherence in its message. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible presents a unified narrative of God's plan for humanity—creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. This consistency is a strong indicator that the Bible is divinely orchestrated.

Matthew 5:17 (AKJV): *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. "*

Jesus 'affirmation of the Old Testament law and prophets demonstrates the unity of Scripture. The New Testament consistently affirms and builds upon the truths revealed in the Old Testament, showing a continuous thread of divine revelation.

1.5 The Transformative Power of the Bible

Perhaps the most profound evidence of the Bible's divine reliability is the transformative impact it has had on countless lives. The Word of God is alive and active, working in the hearts and minds of those who hear and apply it. Lives are changed, sins are forgiven, and people are brought into relationship with God through the power of Scripture.

Hebrews 4:12 (AKJV): *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

The transformative power of the Bible is a testament to its divine origin. It changes individuals from the inside out, shaping character, values, and life choices, guiding us to walk in holiness and truth.

2. Sharing Your Faith Based on the Reliability of the Bible

We are called to share the message of the Gospel with others. The reliability of the Bible as God's Word is the foundation for this mission. When we share our faith, we can confidently declare that the Scriptures are trustworthy, divinely inspired, and contain the message of eternal life.

2.1 The Importance of Scripture in Evangelism

The Bible plays a central role in evangelism. Through the Scriptures, people come to know the truth about God, sin, salvation, and Christ's redemptive work. Sharing the Bible's message is essential for leading others to faith in Jesus.

Romans 10:17 (AKJV): *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*

The proclamation of the Word is the means by which faith is birthed in the hearts of those who hear it. It is not our eloquence or persuasive arguments that bring people to Christ, but the power of God's Word.

2.2 Being Prepared to Defend the Reliability of Scripture

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to be ready to testify about Jesus—Who is the hope within us—and to answer questions about God, salvation, and the core doctrines of our Christian faith, including His love, grace, forgiveness, justice, truth, and so forth. Defending our faith in Jesus and the reliability of the Bible is not just about responding to skepticism and criticism, but more importantly, about effectively witnessing and sharing the Good News of repentance, salvation, and eternal life with the lost. When sharing our faith, it is essential to be equipped with answers to common questions regarding the Bible's authenticity, accuracy, and authority. This requires a deep understanding of both the Old and New Testaments, including the fulfilled prophecies, and other historical and archaeological evidence that confirm the Bible's trustworthiness.

1 Peter 3:15 (AKJV): "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"

Being able to share the hope in Jesus and to defend the Bible's reliability helps to strengthen our faith and witness, allowing us to engage with others in meaningful conversations about the truth of God's Word, and who Jesus (Yeshua) is. He is the Son of God, the only way that any of us to be reconciled to God the Father (YaHWeH) by believing and following Him and to have eternal life.

2.3 Living Out the Bible's Truth

One of the most powerful ways to share our faith is by living out the truth of the Bible in our daily lives. When others see the transformative power of Scripture in our behavior, relationships, and choices, they are drawn to the source of that transformation—the Word of God.

Matthew 5:16 (AKJV): *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

Our lives should reflect the truth of the Bible in such a way that others are compelled to inquire about our hope. In sharing our faith, we not only speak the truth of God's Word but live it out as a witness to its power.

Conclusion: A Life Built on the Reliability of God's Word

The Bible is a reliable, divinely inspired record of God's work in history and His plan of salvation for humanity. Through its historical accuracy, prophetic fulfillment, internal consistency, and transformative power, we can be confident that the Scriptures are truly the Word of God. As disciples of Christ, we are called not only to embrace this truth for ourselves but to share it with others, proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ based on the sure foundation of God's Word. May we be faithful in sharing the message of salvation with confidence and boldness, knowing that the Word of God is alive and active, able to change lives for eternity.

Let us be faithful stewards of this truth, living out the Word of God and sharing it with those who need to hear it.

Doctrines of Men Are Not the Word of God

Introduction: The Danger of Human Traditions

Throughout history, many religious systems and groups have introduced teachings that, regardless if they sound seemingly good or well-intentioned, these ill devised teachings are not Godly inspired nor rooted in the biblical truth of Jesus Christ within the word of God. Some doctrines of men may even mention the name Jesus Christ and use actual scripture verses out of context to convey false doctrines contrary to God's intended interpretation ,purpose and will. These are often referred to as **"**doctrines of men," and they pose a significant challenge to the faithful in Christ Jesus. The Bible warns believers against elevating human traditions, philosophies, and teachings above the Word of God. Jesus Himself confronted the religious leaders of His time who held to their traditions and interpretations above the clear command of God. In this commentary, we will explore the biblical teachings about the danger of adhering to the doctrines of men, the contrast between human traditions and divine revelation, and the call to uphold the authority of God**'**s Word.

1. The Bible Warns Against Doctrines of Men

The Scriptures are clear in pointing out the danger of human doctrines that deviate from the truth of God**'**s Word. Jesus and the apostles consistently challenged the Pharisees, the religious leaders of their time, for prioritizing human traditions over the commands of God.

1.1 Jesus Confronts the Pharisees and Their Traditions

One of the clearest teachings on the issue comes from the lips of Jesus in the Gospels. In Matthew 15:1-9, He rebukes the Pharisees for placing man-made traditions above God's commandments. Jesus emphasizes that human traditions can nullify God's Word and mislead people.

Matthew 15:6-9 (AKJV): *"And honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have you made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. 7You hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 8This people draws near to me with their mouth, and honors me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."*

In this passage, Jesus quotes Isaiah to describe the religious leaders who honored God with lip service but neglected His true commands. Their traditions had replaced the true teaching of God, leading them to worship in vain. This is a sobering reminder that when human doctrines take precedence, the heart of worship and the obedience to God are compromised.

1.2 The Apostle Paul's Warning Against False Teachings

The apostle Paul also addresses this issue extensively in his letters, particularly in his warnings about false doctrines and the teachings of men that can lead believers astray.

Colossians 2:8 (AKJV): *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."*

Paul warns the Colossians to be on guard against philosophies, empty deceit, and traditions that are not aligned with Christ. These human-made ideas, which often have the appearance of wisdom, can lead believers away from the truth of the Gospel. The traditions and teachings of men are not to be the foundation of the Christian life; rather, it is the teaching of Christ that must be upheld.

1 Timothy 1:3-4 (AKJV): *"As I sought you to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that you might charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do."*

Paul commands Timothy to prevent false teachings that lead to confusion and endless debates, instead emphasizing sound doctrine that builds up the faith. He contrasts the teachings of men, which lead to speculation, with the Word of God, which leads to godly edification.

2. The Contrast Between Doctrines of Men and the Word of God

Human doctrines are often the result of cultural influences, personal interpretations, or religious traditions that diverge from the teachings of Scripture. These doctrines can be appealing on the surface, but they are not authoritative and can lead people astray. In contrast, the Word of God is absolute, unchanging, and trustworthy.

2.1 The Word of God as the Ultimate Authority

Scripture presents itself as the final authority for faith and practice. Unlike human traditions, which can vary by culture or interpretation, God’s Word stands as an eternal, unshakable foundation. Jesus emphasizes this when He states that God’s Word is truth.

John 17:17 (AKJV): *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."*

Jesus defines truth as coming from God’s Word. While human teachings may be fallible and subject to change, God’s Word is eternal and immutable.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (AKJV): *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly established unto all good works."*

The Bible is divinely inspired and serves as the ultimate guide for living a righteous life. It is not merely a historical document or a collection of moral teachings, but the very Word of God, capable of equipping believers for every good work.

2.2 Human Doctrines vs. Sound Doctrine

Human doctrines often stem from personal opinions, social pressures, or an attempt to blend faith with worldly philosophies. These teachings may be appealing because they align with cultural values or offer easy answers, but they lack the transformative power of the Gospel. In contrast, sound doctrine, rooted in Scripture, leads to godliness, truth, and eternal life.

Titus 2:1 (AKJV): *"But speak you the things which become sound doctrine:"*

Paul encourages Titus to teach what is consistent with sound doctrine—the truth revealed in Scripture. Sound doctrine is vital for guarding the church against false teachings and ensuring that believers grow in godliness and spiritual maturity.

1 Timothy 4:6 (AKJV): *"If you put the brothers in remembrance of these things, you shall be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, to which you have attained"*

Timothy is instructed to remind the church of the truths of Scripture and sound doctrine. The teachings of men can lead to confusion, but God's Word nourishes and builds up believers in faith and good works.

3. The Call to Stand Firm in God's Word

As Christians, we are called not only to reject the doctrines of men but to stand firm on the Word of God. The Scriptures must be our foundation in all matters of faith and practice. It is only by knowing and following God's Word that we can avoid the snares of false teachings and remain faithful to Christ.

3.1 Guarding the Faith

We are entrusted with the responsibility to preserve and defend the Gospel message, which is grounded in God's Word. Just as the early church had to confront false teachers and doctrines, we too must stand guard against teachings that deviate from the truth.

Jude 1:3 (AKJV): *"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write to you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write to you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints."*

Jude encourages believers to contend for the faith, which is rooted in the teachings of Scripture. This involves rejecting false doctrines and upholding the purity of the Gospel.

3.2 Holding Fast to God's Word

In a world filled with competing voices, the believer's task is to hold fast to God's Word, allowing it to guide every area of life. By doing so, we can ensure that our faith remains anchored in truth and that our lives reflect the teachings of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 (AKJV): *"Moreover, brothers, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; 2By which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached to you, unless you have believed in vain."*

Paul reminds the Corinthians to hold fast to the gospel he preached, which is grounded in the Word of God. Only by adhering to the true Gospel can they remain steadfast in faith and secure in salvation.

Conclusion: Upholding the Truth of God's Word

The doctrines of men contain half-truths, or complete lies and may offer some pseudo temporary comfort or seem wise in human eyes, but they cannot in any way compare to the eternal truth of God's Word. Nor should any doctrines of men be a substitute for or in conjunction with the Bible, unless it consistent with God's word. That is why it is imperative to learn and rightly divide God's word in spirit and truth, so a disciple in Jesus Christ can recognize false doctrines and reject them. As Christians, we must avoid the allure of human traditions and philosophies and instead root our faith in Scripture alone. The Bible is the ultimate authority for life and doctrine, and it is only by adhering to its truth that we can live faithful, godly lives.

Let us be vigilant in protecting the purity of the Gospel and ensuring that the doctrines we follow align with the Word of God. By doing so, we honor Christ, guard against deception, and remain firmly planted in the truth that sets us free.

What are the benefits of learning and doing God's Word?

Learning, meditating on and doing God's Word brings numerous benefits to every Christian's life. It is not only a source of spiritual nourishment but also a means by which we grow in our relationship with God, develop character, and live in a way that honors Him. Below are several key benefits of learning God's Word:

1. To Understand How and Why to Love God and Others and To Have God Abide In Us

John 14:23 (AKJV) *"Jesus replied, 'Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.'"*

As we learn and follow God's Word, we begin to understand **how and why** to love God and others. Jesus teaches that true love for Him is shown by following His teachings. This obedience is not about following rules for the sake of it but about aligning our hearts with God's desires. When we love God, He draws near to us, filling our lives with His presence. Additionally, learning and applying God's Word teaches us how to love others genuinely, with patience, kindness, and selflessness (**1 Corinthians 13:4-7**). The Bible provides practical guidance on loving our neighbors, forgiving those who hurt us, and caring for the needy. In essence, the more we know and internalize the Word of God, the more we understand love from God's perspective.

2. To Receive Spiritual Nourishment and Maturity

1 Peter 2:2 (AKJV) *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby:"*

Just as infants need milk for physical growth, new believers (and all Christians) need the Word of God for spiritual growth. Learning and applying God's Word strengthens our faith and deepens our understanding of God**'**s will, leading us to maturity in Christ. As we internalize Scripture, we are transformed from spiritual immaturity to greater Christlikeness.

As we learn in God**'**s Word, we begin to understand **how and why** to love God and others in the ways that God intended.

3. Knowledge of God's Will

Romans 12:2 (AKJV) *"And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

The Bible is the primary way in which God reveals His will to us. By learning Scripture, we are better equipped to discern God**'**s purposes for our lives, make wise decisions, and avoid being led astray by the world**'**s values. A solid understanding of God's Word enables us to live in alignment with His will rather than our own or the world**'**s.

4. Strength and Comfort in Trials

Psalm 119:50 (AKJV) *"This is my comfort in my affliction: for your word has quickened me."*

God's Word serves as a source of comfort and encouragement in times of difficulty and suffering. The promises of Scripture remind us of God**'**s faithfulness, sovereignty, and love. In the midst of life**'**s challenges, the Scriptures bring peace, strengthen our hearts, and remind us that God is with us in every situation.

5. Protection from Temptation and Sin

Psalm 119:11 (AKJV) *"Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against you."*

Memorizing and meditating on Scripture is a powerful safeguard against sin. When we internalize God's Word, it becomes a filter through which we can examine our actions, thoughts, and desires. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to convict us of sin, guide us in righteousness, and help us avoid temptation.

6. Wisdom for Life

Proverbs 2:6 (AKJV) *"For the LORD gives wisdom: out of his mouth comes knowledge and understanding."*

The Bible is a treasure trove of wisdom for every area of life, including relationships, work, finances, and personal conduct. Learning and applying God's Word gives us practical guidance for navigating life's complexities. Whether dealing with difficult decisions, interpersonal issues, or moral dilemmas, the wisdom of Scripture offers clarity and insight.

7. Transformation of Character

2 Corinthians 3:18 (AKJV) *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD."*

Learning God's Word allows us to reflect His character more accurately. As we study Scripture, we begin to see God's nature and character revealed in the life of Jesus and through His commands. The Word of God, empowered by the Holy Spirit, transforms us into His likeness, helping us develop Christlike virtues such as love, patience, humility, and kindness.

8. Deepening Relationship with God

John 15:7 (AKJV) *"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you."*

The more we learn and internalize God's Word, the closer our relationship with Him becomes. Abiding in God's Word means living in constant communion with Him, listening to His voice, and allowing His truth to shape our lives. This intimacy strengthens our faith, enriches our prayers, and helps us recognize God's presence and guidance in our daily lives.

9. Equipping Us for Ministry and Service: To Do Good Works and Bear Good Fruit

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (AKJV) *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works."*

The Bible equips believers for effective service in the kingdom of God. Whether through teaching, counseling, or serving others, learning God's Word ensures that we are properly equipped to carry out the tasks God has given us. It enables us to speak truth into others' lives, provide counsel grounded in wisdom, and minister with the authority of Scripture.

10. Assurance of Salvation

1 John 5:13 (AKJV) *"These things have I written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God."*

The Bible assures believers of their salvation in Christ. By reading and meditating on Scripture, we are reminded of the promises of God, including the assurance of eternal life. This assurance helps us stand firm in our faith, especially when doubts arise. God's Word reassures us that salvation is not based on our performance but on the finished work of Christ.

11. Spiritual Victory Over the Enemy

Ephesians 6:17 (AKJV) *"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."*

The Bible is also an essential weapon in spiritual warfare. In the armor of God described in Ephesians 6, the Word of God is referred to as the **sword of the Spirit**. It is through knowing and speaking God's Word that we can stand against the attacks of the enemy, defend ourselves from temptation, and overcome the forces of darkness. Jesus Himself demonstrated this when He used Scripture to resist Satan's temptations in the wilderness (**Matthew 4:1-11**).

12. A Source of Joy and Peace

Psalm 19:8 (AKJV) *"The statutes of the Lord are right and good, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."*

Learning God's Word fills us with **joy and peace**. As we discover the truth of God's promises and His unwavering goodness, our hearts are filled with praise and worship. In times of trouble or uncertainty, God's Word offers peace that surpasses understanding. It reminds us of God's goodness, sovereignty, and unfailing love.

13. The Truth Will Make Us Free

John 8:31-32 (AKJV) *"Then Jesus said …, 'If you continue in my word, then are you truly my disciples indeed; And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'"*

God's Word is the ultimate source of truth, and it has the power to set us free from **sin, deception, and bondage**. When we abide in His Word and live according to His teachings, we experience true freedom—freedom from guilt, fear, and the lies of the enemy. Jesus Himself declared that knowing the truth leads to spiritual liberation, allowing us to walk in the fullness of His grace and purpose.

Conclusion: The Lifelong Journey of Learning God's Word

Learning, receiving and applying God's Word is not just for new believers for a brief season but rather a lifelong endeavor. it is through daily engagement with God's word that we grow in faith, maturity, and understanding. The benefits are far-reaching, influencing our personal growth, relationships, service, and our relationship with God.

As we immerse ourselves in God**’**s Word, we begin to reflect His character more fully and live out His purposes for our lives. Therefore, the call to learn and meditate on God**’**s Word is an invitation to experience the fullness of life in Christ. May we all continue to treasure His Word, allowing it to shape us and guide us on our journey of faith.

Cleaned By God’s Word:

How God's Word Purifies Us from Sinful Nature.

Jesus is the Word of God; His Word is found in the Bible. His Word has been further expounded upon through genuine followers of Jesus, including the Apostles, Christian pastors and teachers.

God’s Word is able to set us free of sin and temptation. It is imperative to continue to listen, hear, believe and respond.

In a world stained by sin and temptation, we are often burdened by the weight of our own sinful nature. Yet, in the midst of our struggles, God's Word flows as the river of life bringing hope and redemption, offering cleansing and renewal to all who receives the truth of Jesus Christ..

God's Word is powerful Hebrews 4:12 declares, **"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.**" God's Word is not merely a collection of words on a page; it is living and powerful, capable of transforming lives and renewing hearts.

Through the Scriptures, God reveals His character, His promises, and His will for our lives. As we immerse ourselves in His Word, we are confronted with the truth of who He is and who we are called to be. Romans 12:2 urges us, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

The washing away of our sinful nature, only comes and made possible through Jesus Christ. Just as water cleanses and purifies, so too does God's Word wash away our sinful nature. Ephesians 5:26 describes the sanctifying power of the Word, stating that Christ "cleanses [the church] by the washing with water through the word." Through the Scriptures, we are convicted of our sins, convicted to repentance, and empowered to live holy and righteous lives.

Ephesians 5:26 (AKJV) declares, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,". This verse metaphorically describes the relationship between Christ and the church, likening it to the sanctifying and cleansing process of water through the word. Just as water cleanses and purifies, so does the word of God cleanse and purify the church, preparing it for holiness and righteousness. It emphasizes the transformative power of God's Word in the lives of believers, leading them to spiritual renewal and growth.

Psalm 119:9 asks, "How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word." God's Word serves as a guide, lighting the way of righteousness and leading us away from the snares of sin. As we meditate on His precepts and hide His

Word in our hearts, we are strengthened to resist temptation and walk in obedience to His commands.

New Life, transformation and spiritual renewal, comes through Jesus Christ as we allow God's Word to penetrate our hearts and minds, we experience transformation and renewal from the inside out. 2 Corinthians 5:17 proclaims, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" Through the power of His Word and the work of His Spirit, we are made new, set free from the bondage of sin, and empowered to live lives that honor and glorify God.

In conclusion, God's Word is a living and active force that purifies, cleanses, and transforms us from the inside out. As we immerse ourselves in His Word, may we be washed clean of our sinful nature and renewed to live lives that reflect His love and holiness.

Applying God’s Word To Our Lives

As Christians, applying God's Word is essential, not being hearers only but doers.

James 1:22 — *"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."*

Introduction

James 1:22 provides a clear and compelling directive for us: not only should we hear God's Word, but we must also apply it to our lives. This simple yet profound truth underpins much of the New Testament teaching, calling Christians to live out their faith in tangible, transformative ways. James, the brother of Jesus and a leader in the early church, writes this epistle to encourage Christians to embody the message of the gospel rather than merely affirming it intellectually. The call is to active obedience—a theme central to the New Testament's vision of what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

The Call to Be "Doers"

"But be doers of the word"—The apostle James highlights that hearing God's Word is not enough; Christians are called to act upon it. Jesus Himself taught that those who hear His words and obey them are like wise builders who lay their foundation on the rock (Matthew 7:24-27). Similarly, James encourages us to live out our faith in practical ways that demonstrate the authenticity of our belief.

The phrase "be doers" implies a continuous, intentional action. It calls for a lifestyle of obedience that reflects the transformative power of God's Word. It is not merely about performing actions but living a life shaped by God's Word—allowing it to direct thoughts, words, and deeds.

The Danger of Mere Hearing

James warns against the deception of being "hearers only." In a culture that regards intellectual knowledge, it can be tempting to think that hearing or studying God's Word is

sufficient. However, as James points out, merely hearing without applying it leads to self-deception. A person who hears God's commands but does not obey them may feel righteous or spiritually secure without truly being so.

This danger is also addressed in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1-23), where some hear the Word, but it does not take root in their lives. Without the application of God's truth, it is easy to forget what we have heard and continue living unchanged. James' message echoes this same theme: it is not enough to know the truth of Scripture; one must live by it.

Deception and Self-Deception

James emphasizes that those who are hearers only are "deceiving yourselves." This self-deception occurs when a person believes that hearing the Word alone is enough to ensure a right standing before God, even though their life does not reflect the obedience God commands. This is a form of spiritual blindness, where the truth is heard but not applied, leading to a life disconnected from God's will.

Jesus also warned about the danger of deception in Matthew 7:21-23, where He says, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."* In these verses, Jesus underscores that the mere profession of faith or acknowledgment of His Lordship is insufficient. Genuine discipleship involves both belief and action, the application of God's Word in daily life.

Application of God’s Word: A Lifelong Process

Being a doer of the Word is not about occasional acts of obedience but about a consistent, ongoing lifestyle of applying Scripture to every area of life. Jesus provides the ultimate example of this in His own life, as He was always obedient to the Father’s will. He taught His followers to take up their cross daily (Luke 9:23) and to live according to the principles of the Kingdom of God.

When Christians apply God’s Word, it leads to transformation—both inwardly and outwardly. The Apostle Paul speaks to this transformation in Romans 12:2: **“***Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”* The Word of God renews our minds, reshapes our desires, and motivates us to live in a way that honors God.

Living Out the Word

Application is not just limited to avoiding sin or fulfilling ministry duties; it also encompasses loving others, serving the poor, and living out the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). As Christians, we are called to apply God's Word in every facet of life: our relationships, work, finances, attitudes, and even our leisure activities. The Word should shape our character, influence our decision-making, and guide our interactions with others.

James emphasizes the importance of both hearing and doing in other sections of his letter. In James 2:14-26, he famously argues that faith without works is dead, showing that genuine faith is always accompanied by action. This aligns with Jesus' teaching that faith, if it is real, will naturally result in the fruit of good works (Matthew 7:16-20).

The Role of the Holy Spirit

Christians are not left to rely on their own strength to live out God's Word. The Holy Spirit is given to believers to empower them to apply God's truth. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would teach, guide, and convict (John 14:26; 16:13), and this ongoing work of the Spirit enables believers to live in a way that pleases God.

Thus, applying God's Word is not merely about human effort but also about yielding to the Holy Spirit's transformative power. As believers, we must invite the Spirit to lead us, trusting that He will equip us to obey God's commands and to live as true disciples of Christ.

Conclusion

In James 1:22, the apostle urges Christians to move beyond passive hearing and to embrace the active obedience that reflects a true relationship with God. Being "doers of the Word" is essential to living out the Christian faith, as it ensures that the Word takes root and produces fruit in our lives. This life of obedience is not about legalism or trying to earn God's favor, but about responding to God's love and grace by living according to His will. True discipleship involves both listening to God's Word and applying it to every area of life, empowered by the Holy Spirit. Only in this way can we demonstrate that God's Word is not just true, but that it is alive, transformative, and capable of leading us to eternal life.

Application for Today

- **Self-examination**: Reflect on whether your life aligns with the Word of God. Are you simply hearing the Word or actively applying it in your daily life?
- **Obedience**: Commit to obeying God's commands, not out of obligation, but as a response to His love and grace. Seek areas in your life where God is calling you to take action.
- **Empowerment**: Rely on the Holy Spirit for the strength and wisdom to live out God's Word, knowing that transformation is a process enabled by His power.

As you seek to be a doer of the Word, remember that obedience to God's commands is not about perfection but about faithful, ongoing growth in Christlikeness.

(36) Clean Heart:

From Spiritual Emptiness, corrupted heart by sin to Renewal

Psalm 51:10 (AKJV) - "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

John 15:3 (AKJV)

"You are already clean because of the Word that I have spoken to you."

At times, we may find ourselves feeling spiritually empty, distant from God, and in need of renewal. Whether it's due to sin, busyness, or life's challenges, God offers us the promise of renewal and restoration. Let's explore how we can move from spiritual emptiness to renewal in Him.

In the depths of our souls, there exists a longing for something more, a recognition of a spiritual emptiness that cannot be filled by the things of this world. Psalm 51:10 calls us to acknowledge this emptiness before God, to lay bare our hearts and admit our need for renewal. It is in this acknowledgment that our journey of transformation begins.

The first step for God to create a clean heart within us is to recognize certain sins in our lives being revealed in our hearts. and approach God in prayer; then desire and ask Him to cleanse our hearts through Jesus Christ, through His atoning grace, along with sincere repentance and confession on our part.

We must repent and turn away from our sins, acknowledging the ways in which we have fallen short, and turn towards God in repentance. In 1 John 1:9, we are assured that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It is through this humble confession that we open ourselves to God's transformative power.

Surrendering to God is essential in this process. Romans 12:1 urges us to present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, as an act of worship. Surrendering our lives, our will, and our desires to God allows Him to work in us and through us, bringing about true renewal.

Prayer becomes our lifeline to a renewed heart by God. Jeremiah 29:13 assures us that when we seek God with all our hearts, we will find Him. Through prayer, we pour out our hearts to God, seeking His presence and guidance. It is in the stillness of prayer that we hear His voice and find the strength to persevere.

Immersing ourselves in God’s word is vital for renewal. Psalm 119:105 reminds us that God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. As we continue in God’s word, we gain wisdom, guidance, and truth to guide us on our journey. The Word of God penetrates our hearts, transforming our thoughts and actions.

Fellowship with fellow Christians provides encouragement and support along the way. Hebrews 10:24-25 exhorts us to spur one another on toward love and good deeds, meeting together to encourage one another. In the company of other followers of Jesus, we find strength to press on and bear each other's burdens.

Worship becomes the overflow of our hearts as we acknowledge God's sovereignty and goodness. Psalm 95:1-2 calls us to come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song. In worship, we express our love and adoration for the One who is worthy of all praise.

Gratitude shifts our perspective as we count our blessings and acknowledge God's faithfulness. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 reminds us to give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for us. As we cultivate a spirit of gratitude, we find joy in the midst of trials and renewal in every season.

Service becomes a natural outpouring of our transformed hearts. Mark 10:45 teaches us that even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. As we serve others selflessly, we reflect the heart of God and find fulfillment in making a difference in the lives of those around us.

In embracing God's promises, we anchor our faith in His unchanging character. Hebrews 10:23 encourages us to hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. Regardless of our circumstances, we find strength and assurance in the promises of God's Word.

Renewing our minds is an ongoing process as we reject negative thought patterns and align our thinking with God's truth. Romans 12:2 instructs us not to conform to the pattern of this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. As we meditate on what is true, noble, pure, and praiseworthy, we experience a renewed perspective on life.

Walking in faith requires trust and obedience, even when the path ahead seems uncertain. 2 Corinthians 5:7 reminds us to walk by faith, not by sight, trusting that God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine. As we step out in faith, we experience God's power and provision in ways we never thought possible.

In conclusion, the transformation from spiritual darkness, uncleanness because of sin to clean heart and renewal, is the refinement work of God’s Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ, He washes us clean. It also comes from our cooperative response to the will of God. By confessing our sins, repenting, surrender to God, prayer, interaction with God’s Word, , the atoning grace of Jesus, cleanses us from all unrighteousness. It is a walk marked by God's faithfulness and transformative power, leading us into deeper intimacy with Him and a life filled with purpose and joy. May we embark on this life within the narrow path with courage and perseverance, trusting that He who began a good work in us will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6).

(37) Wisdom, The Fear Of The Lord:

WISDOM - Spiritual Wisdom

Contents

- What Or Who Is Spiritual Wisdom ?
- Who Can & Will Receive & Bring Forth Wisdom ?
- Why Should We Receive & Obtain Wisdom ?
- How Do We Acquire Godly Wisdom ?
- How To Retain & Increase In Wisdom ?

- What Hindrances Will Cause A Person To Not Acquire Or Increase In Wisdom Till That Person Overcomes Those Hindrances Daily, through Jesus Christ?
- The Fear of God

Wisdom INTRODUCTION

(Paraphrased overview compiled from scripture)

The wisdom of the Lord is full of life and is Spirit beyond measure and does not originate within man, but is a gift ordained by God before the foundations of this earth, before the ages, to glorify God the Father YaHWeH.

Jesus Christ is the Wisdom of God, for in Christ are hid all the treasures of Wisdom and knowledge.

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all of your getting, get understanding.

For happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding; for Wisdom's proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and the gain better than fine gold. Wisdom is more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with Wisdom. Riches and honor are with wisdom, enduring spiritual riches and righteousness. The fruit of Wisdom is better than gold, yes more than fine gold. The honeycomb is sweet to your taste; so shall the knowledge of wisdom be to your soul; if you have found it, there is a prospect and your hope will not be cut off.

Wisdom has the inherent ability to enlighten the eyes of your heart, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and to know what is the exceeding greatness of His power towards us who believe.

While your eyes are being enlightened, you will receive true discernment in order to know how to walk in the Spirit, so that when you walk, your steps will not be hindered, and when you run, you will not stumble.

As you grow in spiritual wisdom, anything that once caused you distress, robbed you of peace, induced fear, or led you into sin will no longer hinder you. Wisdom provides divine insight on how to relate to and overcome any challenge you face. It becomes a shield for those who walk uprightly, guarding the paths of justice and preserving the way of His saints. Through wisdom, you will come to understand righteousness, justice, equity, and every good path.

Wisdom will give you counsel and understanding to react correctly towards all circumstances without uncertainty or insincerity, and further to know God's time and ways.

The Spirit of Wisdom is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy, full of good fruits... such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and self-control.Another characteristic of wisdom is that it equips you with spiritual strength to complete or overcome a particular situation properly and to have good success.

It will add persuasiveness and judiciousness to your words so you may speak noble things, and utter the truth. The beginning of wisdom is "to fear the Lord," which is an awesome reverence of God. To reverence God is to hate evil, pride, arrogance, the evil

way and the perverse mouth. And to depart from evil is true understanding. Wisdom has the ability to deliver you from immorality and to keep you holy.

By wisdom you can continue to abide in agape Love and the Grace of Christ without being deceived by Satan or principalities.

Wisdom is a fountain of life, to turn you away from the snares of death. By the Wisdom, in Christ Jesus, your salvation comes, to have the WAY OF LIFE going upward for you, so that you may turn away from hell below, inherit glory, and live forever in the love and goodness of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Scripture: James 1:5-8 (AKJV) "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. 6But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

In a world filled with uncertainties and complexities, the need for wisdom is paramount. James 1:5 reminds us that when we lack wisdom, we can turn to God, who generously gives it to those who ask. As followers of Christ, our quest for wisdom begins with seeking Him and His Word.

True wisdom is not merely knowledge or intellectual prowess but the ability to discern God's will and apply His truth to our lives. It is rooted in a reverent fear of the Lord and a humble acknowledgment of our dependence on Him for guidance and direction.

Jesus Christ is the embodiment of wisdom, and in Him, we find the answers to life's most pressing questions. Through His teachings and example, we gain insight into God's character and His purposes for our lives. As we walk in communion with Him, His Spirit imparts wisdom to us, enabling us to navigate life's challenges with clarity and discernment.

Seeking God's wisdom requires humility and a willingness to submit our own understanding to His. It involves prayerfully consulting His Word and seeking counsel from mature believers who walk in wisdom. As we align our hearts with His will and seek His wisdom above all else, He promises to guide us on the path of righteousness and lead us into all truth.

May we, therefore, approach the throne of grace with confidence, knowing that our Heavenly Father delights in giving wisdom to His children. Let us seek His wisdom in Jesus Christ, the source of all knowledge and understanding, and trust in His provision for our every need.

What Or Who Is Spiritual Wisdom ?

1 Corinthians 1:24-25 (AKJV) "But to them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Jesus Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.** 25Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

1 Corinthians1:30-31 (AKJV) But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord.

James 3:17 (AKJV) - "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits*, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" *(Galatians 5:22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (and self-control.)

Isaiah 11:1-3 (AKJV)"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: 2And the spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; 3And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears."

Scriptures on Who or What is Wisdom

NOTE : Always refer to the complete scripture in your Bible when using this study guide ...

Ephesians. 1:17 - Wisdom is Spirit and a Gift

1 Corinthians 12:8 - Wisdom is Spirit and a Gift

1 Kings 4:29 - It is beyond measure

Romans 11:33 - It is beyond measure

1 Corinthians 2:7 - It is secret and hide

Colossians 2:2 - It is in Christ

Proverbs 13:14 - It is the fountain of life

Proverbs 8:14 - Counsel, soundness, insight, strength

Proverbs 8:30 - It is the delight of the Lord

Psalm 111:10 - The fear of the Lord

Proverbs 10:31 - The righteous (by faith)

Proverbs 11:2 - The humble, those who have meekness in mind & heart

Proverbs 13:10 - The well-advised person

Proverbs 12:15 - He who heeds counsel

Proverbs 14:29 - He who is slow to wrath, not impulsive

Proverbs 17:24 - He who has understanding

Proverbs 11:30 - He who wins souls is wise

Proverbs 14:16 - He who fears the Lord and departs from evil

Who Can Receive And Bring Forth Wisdom ?

Any Christian can and will receive wisdom from God, if you abide properly in the Grace of Christ. This means to sincerely confess your sins to God each day. Repent, turn away from those sins, as God shows and gives you strength to do so, and to forgive others.

Your present degree of coming into perfection and maturity is not the deciding factor in order to receive wisdom from God.

God knows your imperfections and wants to work progressively with you to overcome your sins and problems.

God will continually give you wisdom as you pray and ask Him.

Why Should We Obtain Wisdom ?

Biblical Commentary: Why Should We Obtain God's Wisdom?

The pursuit of God's wisdom is repeatedly emphasized throughout Scripture as essential for a righteous and fulfilled life. Proverbs 4:7 declares, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." This verse elevates divine wisdom above all other attainments, suggesting that it is not merely helpful but foundational. God's wisdom offers more than intellectual knowledge—it is deeply moral, spiritual, and practical, guiding believers in how to live in a way that honors God and brings peace and blessing. Unlike human wisdom, which is often limited and tainted by self-interest or pride (James 3:15), God's wisdom is pure, peace-loving, gentle, and full of mercy (James 3:17). It reflects the very character of God and enables believers to navigate life's complexities with discernment and righteousness.

Obtaining God's wisdom is crucial because it leads to a life that aligns with His will and results in lasting fruitfulness. In Proverbs 3:5–6, the believer is urged to trust in the Lord with all their heart and not lean on their own understanding. This reliance on divine guidance promises that God will "direct your paths." Human reasoning, apart from God, is often short-sighted and fallible. But God's wisdom is omniscient and eternal. His perspective spans past, present, and future, and His counsel is always right (Isaiah 55:8–9). By seeking His wisdom, we avoid the pitfalls of foolishness, pride, and moral compromise. It provides clarity in confusion, stability in crisis, and direction when the way forward is unclear. Moreover, it transforms our character to reflect the likeness of Christ, the embodiment of God's wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30).

Furthermore, God's wisdom is essential for making godly decisions and stewarding our lives faithfully. The book of James encourages believers who lack wisdom to ask God, "who gives generously to all without finding fault" (James 1:5). This promise reveals God's eagerness to equip His children with the insight needed to live well. Whether in personal relationships, career choices, ministry, or moral dilemmas, divine wisdom brings clarity and peace. Solomon, when given the chance to request anything from God, asked for wisdom (1 Kings 3:9)—a request that pleased God and led to extraordinary leadership. This narrative illustrates that wisdom is not only a blessing from God but a request that honors Him, demonstrating humility and dependence. When we ask for wisdom in faith

and obedience, we receive more than knowledge—we receive guidance shaped by God's truth and grace.

Lastly, the pursuit of God's wisdom is ultimately an invitation into deeper communion with Him. Wisdom in the biblical sense is not simply a tool for successful living; it is relational and covenantal. Proverbs 9:10 states, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." Reverence for God is the gateway to wisdom because it places Him at the center of our worldview. The more we grow in our understanding of who God is—His holiness, justice, love, and sovereignty—the more we become wise. This kind of wisdom fosters humility, integrity, and spiritual maturity. It leads us to live in awe of God, to love what He loves, and to walk in His truth. Therefore, obtaining God's wisdom is not merely about gaining answers but about being transformed in our relationship with Him, walking in step with His Spirit, and shining as lights in a world darkened by folly.

Ephesians 1:17-19

- To know God by revelation
- To have the eyes of your heart enlightened
- To know the hope to which you've been called
- To know what are the riches of His glorious inheritance
- To know what is the immeasurable greatness of His power

Proverbs 3:17 - To have pleasantness, To have peace

Ecclesiastics 7:19 - Wisdom gives strength to you

Proverbs 24:5 - Wisdom gives strength to you

Ecclesiastics 10:10 - To have good success

Joshua 1:7 - To have good success

Proverbs 16:21 - To give your heart discernment

Proverbs 14:8 - To give your heart discernment

Proverbs 23:15 - So your heart will be glad

Proverbs 27:11 - So your heart will be glad

2 Chronicle 1:7-12 - To have knowledge to judge and to discern righteously

Proverbs 3:18 - To be happy and joyful

Proverbs 8:32 - To be happy and joyful

Proverbs 7:4 - To keep you chaste

Ecclesiastics 7:12 - To preserve and add years to your life

Proverbs 8:35 - Finds Life and obtains favor the Lord

Ecclesiastics 8:1 - Wisdom makes your face shine and the hardness of your countenance is changed

Proverbs 4:12 - When you walk your steps will not be hindered, and when you run, you will not stumble

Why Should We Obtain Wisdom ?

Proverbs 4:11 - You'll be led in the right paths

Proverbs 4:8, 9 - You'll receive honor, grace and a crown of glory

Proverbs 3:22 - Life to your soul and you'll receive grace

Proverbs 3:24 - When you lie down you will not be afraid; your sleep will be sweet

Proverbs 2:7 - To have a shield of protection

Proverbs 2:8 - To insure justice

Proverbs 2:8 - So the way of the saints will be preserved

Proverbs 2:9 - To understand righteousness, justice, equity and every good path

Proverbs 2:11 - "When wisdom enters your heart and knowledge is pleasant to your soul, then discretion will preserve you, then understanding will keep you."

Proverbs 2:12 - To deliver you from the way of evil

Proverbs 2:12 - To deliver from the man who speaks perverse things

Proverbs 2:16 - To deliver you from the immoral woman

Proverbs 7:5 - To deliver you from the immoral woman

Proverbs 2:20 - So you may walk in the ways of goodness and keep to the paths of righteousness

Proverbs 3:14 - Wisdom's proceeds are better than the profits of silver and wisdom's gain than fine gold.

Proverbs 3:15 - Wisdom is more precious than rubies

Proverbs 3:15 - Because all the things you may desire cannot compare with wisdom

Proverbs 4:22 - To have life and health

Proverbs 12:18 - To have life and health

Proverbs 8:15 - To decree justice

Why Should We Obtain Wisdom ?

Proverbs 8:18 - Riches and honor are with wisdom enduring riches and righteousness

Proverbs 8:19 - Wisdom's fruit is better than gold, and wisdom's revenue than choice silver

Proverbs 8:10 - Receive wisdom's instruction and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold

Proverbs 8:35 - Because whoever finds wisdom finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord

Proverbs 19:8 - To find good

Proverbs 16:23 - To make your speech judicious

To add persuasiveness to your lips and words

Proverbs 24:6 - To overcome your adversaries

Proverbs 21:22

Luke 21:13

1 Corinthians 2:12 - To understand the gifts bestowed on us

Revelation 13:18 - To understand revelation

Proverbs 27:17 - To teach others

Proverbs 24:3, 14 To build the temple of God within you

Ecclesiastics 8:5 - To know God's time and ways

Proverbs 28:26 - To be delivered

Proverbs 14:3 - To be preserved and protected

Proverbs 8:6-8 - To speak forth & receive excellent things, right things, truth and righteousness

Proverbs 4:13 - Keep wisdom, she is your life

Proverbs 4:20-22

Proverbs 3:35 - The wise shall inherit glory

Proverbs 4:7 - Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom and in all your getting get understanding

Why Should We Obtain Wisdom ?

Proverbs 13:14 - To have a fountain of life; to turn you away from the snares of death

Proverbs 15:24 - To have the way of life going upward for you so you may turn away from Hell below

Proverbs 21:22 - To be an overcomer

Proverbs 22:21 - So that wisdom may make you know the certainty of the words of truth; that you may answer with words of truth

Proverbs 22:19 - So that your trust may be in the Lord

Proverbs 24:13,14 - Because the knowledge of wisdom will be sweet to your soul and your hope will not be cut off

Ecclesiastics 7:12 - Because wisdom is a defense as money is a defense, but the excellence of the knowledge is that wisdom gives life to those who have it

Proverbs 16:6 - In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; and by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil

James 1:5 - Ask God in prayer

Ask in faith

With no doubting

Proverbs 2:1-6 - Receive God's Word

Treasure up his commandments

Make your ear attentive

Incline your heart to understanding

Cry out for insight (Pray to God for Wisdom)

Raise your voice for understanding

Seek it, search for it

Ephesians 1:17-19 - By the prayer intercessions for others to receive wisdom

Why Should We Obtain Wisdom ?

Colossians 1:9-13 (AKJV) “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10**That you might walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, to all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness;** 12Giving thanks to the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"

Deuteronomy 4:6 - Keep and do God's statutes (His Word); that will be your wisdom.

Proverbs 27:17 - One man sharpens another

Proverbs 15:31 - By giving heed to the wholesome admonitions that we hear, and do what is right

Ephesians 3:17 - By faith, That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith As you are rooted and grounded in love

Proverbs 10:14 - Wise people store up knowledge

Proverbs 22:17 - Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to God's knowledge

Proverbs 25:1 - Search out a matter (study the Word of God)

Proverbs 29:15 - The rod & reproof give wisdom

Proverbs 13:1 - Heed your Father's instruction

Proverbs 13:20 - Walk with wise men and you'll be wise

Proverbs 18:15 - The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge

Proverbs 21:11 - "When the scoffer is punished the simple is made wise but when the wise is instructed he receives knowledge."

Job 33:31-33 - "Give ear, Job, listen to me. Hold your peace, and I will speak. If you have anything to say, answer me; for I desire to justify you. If not, listen to me; hold your peace, and I will teach you wisdom."

2 Chronicles 1:11 - Hope & desire for wisdom "Because this was in your heart"

Proverbs 8:34 - "Blessed is the man who LISTENS to me. WATCHING daily at my gates. WAITING at the posts of my doors.

Colossians 2:2 - As our hearts are knit together in love, to have all the assured understanding and knowledge of God's mystery of Christ, in whom are hid all treasures of wisdom and knowledge

Deuteronomy 34:9 - By the laying on of hands Full of the Spirit of Wisdom for Moses had laid his hands upon him. (Joshua)

Proverbs 8:17 - Those who seek Me diligently, find me (Wisdom - Christ)

Proverbs 8:33 - Hear instruction

Proverbs 8:21 - Endowing with wealth those who love me (Wisdom - Christ)

Proverbs 17:10 - By reproof

Proverbs 15:33 - The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom

Proverbs 19:20 - Listen to counsel and receive instruction

Proverbs 15:33 - The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom, and before honor is humility

How Do We Acquire Godly Wisdom ?

- **Ask God in prayer**
- **Ask in faith**
- **With no doubting**

James 1:5-8 (AKJV) "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. 6But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

- **By the intercessions of prayer for others to receive Wisdom**

Ephesians 1:15-23 (AKJV) Why I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints, 16Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20Which he worked in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in

that which is to come: 22And has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23Which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all."

Colossians 1:9-14 (AKJV) - "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10That you might walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, to all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; 12Giving thanks to the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:"

- **Pray to God and ask for Wisdom and Knowledge -**

2 Chronicles 1:6-12 (AKJV) "And Solomon went up thither to the brazen altar before the LORD, which was at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.7In that night did God appear to Solomon, and said to him, Ask what I shall give you. 8And Solomon said to God, You have showed great mercy to David my father, and have made me to reign in his stead. 9Now, O LORD God, let your promise to David my father be established: for you have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. **10Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this your people, that is so great? 11And God said to Solomon, Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches, wealth, or honor, nor the life of your enemies, neither yet have asked long life; but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge my people, over whom I have made you king: 12Wisdom and knowledge is granted to you; and I will give you riches, and wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings have had that have been before you, neither shall there any after you have the like."**

- **God gave Wisdom to Daniel and others, after ten days of eating simple food and drink;**

Daniel 1:12-20 (AKJV) "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Jerusalem, and besieged it. 2And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god. 3And the king spoke to Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king**'**s seed, and of the princes; 4Children in whom was no blemish, but well favored, and skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king**'**s palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. 5And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king**'**s meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. 6Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: 7To whom the prince of the eunuchs

gave names: for he gave to Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. 10And the prince of the eunuchs said to Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall you make me endanger my head to the king. 11Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12Prove your servants, I beseech you, ten days; and let them give us vegetables to eat, and water to drink. 13Then let our countenances be looked on before you, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as you see, deal with your servants. 14So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. 15And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. 16Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them vegetables.

As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. 18Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. **19And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. 20And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.**

Do we need to cherish the Wisdom of Jesus Christ, and keep from drifting away from God's Wisdom and understanding ?

YES -

Proverbs 3:20-24; (AKJV) - He that handles a matter wisely shall find good: and whoever trusts in the LORD, happy is he.21The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increases learning.22Understanding is a wellspring of life to him that has it: but the instruction of fools is folly.23The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips.24Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

Proverbs 29:15- (AKJV) The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame.

How to retain Wisdom and increase in Wisdom ?

- **Ask God for Wisdom and do not doubt**

James 1:5:(AKJV)**“** If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. 6But let him ask in faith, nothing

wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

- **Seek Wisdom Diligently**

Proverbs 2:3-5: (AKJV)**“**Yes, if you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding; 4If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures; 5Then shall you understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God..”

- **Study the Scriptures Regularly**

2 Timothy 3:16-17: **“**All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

- **Fear the Lord**

Proverbs 9:10: **“**The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.”

- **Meditate on God's Word**

Psalm 1:2: **“**But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.”

Psalm 49:3 - Meditate on God's Word day and night

- **Apply Wisdom in Daily Life**

Proverbs 4:7: **“**The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. And whatever you get, get insight.”

- **Surround Yourself with Wise Counsel**

Proverbs 13:20: **“**Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”

- **Avoid Pride and Humble Yourself**

Proverbs 11:2: **“**When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.”

- **Practice Obedience**

Deuteronomy 4:6: **“**Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, **‘**Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’”

- **Increase in knowledge and Understanding through Prayer**

Philippians 1:9-10: **“**And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10That you may approve things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ. 11Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”

Jeremiah 33:2,3 - (AKJV) **“**Thus says the LORD the maker thereof, the LORD that formed it, to establish it; the LORD is his name; 3Call to me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you know not..**’**

James 1:5 - By prayer

- **Learn from Trials and Experience**

James 1:2-4: **“**Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

- **Hear the Word of Jesus Christ and Do His instruction**

Matthew 7:24: **“**Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

- By being Prudent, showing care and thought of doing the will of God, and the future.

Proverbs 16:21 (AKJV) - The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increases learning.

- **Through other Christians sharing God’s word and reasoning together**

Proverbs 27:17 - One man sharpens countenance of another

Proverbs 16:23 - The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips

Colossians 2:2 - By our hearts being knit together by love

Luke 2:52 - And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men

Proverbs 9:9 -(AKJV) -Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

Joshua 1:6 -9 (AKJV) “Be strong and of a good courage: for to this people shall you divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7Only be you strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded you: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success. 9Have not I commanded you? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be you dismayed: for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

WHAT HINDRANCES will cause a person Not to acquire or increase in Wisdom, till that person overcomes those hindrances and any other hindrance daily, through Jesus Christ ?

Hindrance - False Assumptions, Human Reasoning, Limited Earthy Knowledge, and or Unperceived Sin;

- **Solutions -**

- **Lean not to your own understanding , in all your ways acknowledge God and He'll direct your path.** Acknowledge God and Pray to Him to show you any unperceived sin that you are doing.Continue in God's Word, Listen and Receive Instruction and Counsel, from Christian Pastors,Teachers, Prophets, Evangelists, and other mature Christians, who truly follow God.

Hindrance - Unconfessed Sin

- **Solution -** We must confess our sins to God daily in prayer., as God's Holy Spirit reveals and convicts not condemns our hearts. Come boldly before the throne of Grace and cast your cares upon Him, for He cares for you.

Hinderance - Unrepented Sin

- **Solution -** After you have confessed your sins to God they are forgiven, but you now must turn completely away from any sin that has revealed to you. Pray for strength from God's Holy Spirit to deliver from doing whatever sin again.

Hindrance - Unforgiveness

- **Solution -** You must forgive everyone; That doesn't mean that you have to condone what they have done wrong.

Hindrances - Envy, Covetousness, Selfish Ambition, Cares of this world, and /or Riches &Pleasures of the World.

Matthew 13:22 As for what was sown among thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the delight in riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

- **Solutions - Repent of those things, Resist temptation, Take your thoughts captive;** Even though, you may have humbled yourself and received the word or God into your heart, it can be of made useless; If you envy and desire after the cares and riches of the world, the Word of God, will be choked out, and Wisdom will not grow into maturity.
- Be Thankful, Be content with food and clothing, then you'll have Wisdom as you grow in Jesus Christ

Hindrance - Non Prayer

- **Solution -** You have not (Wisdom) because you ask not, therefore ask God for Wisdom in every situation. Pray to God for Wisdom.Ask and it will be given to you.

Hindrance - Doubt - Little or No Faith

- **Solution** - Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God; Therefore LISTEN to the Word of God taught to you in Spirit and Truth, by sincere Pastors, Teachers, and other seasoned Christians. Have the assurance for Wisdom and spiritual things that you hope for in nature Jesus Christ.

Hindrance - Double Mindedness

- **Solution -** You should constantly and willingly choose to set your mind on the ways of God, on spiritual things, whatever things are true, noble, just, pure, love, of good report, any virtue, anything praiseworthy;

- To meditate on God’s word is essential in order for you to have victory. You should sincerely walk in the spirit, and not after fleshly and carnal desires. Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ; Never be Lukewarm; Follow the pattern of Jesus. Vain imaginations grow into evil and sin, therefore think on things above, which are life and do that which is good.
- Trust God the Father and Jesus Christ and Do Not Doubt God’s Love, Timing, and Abilities,Then He give you Wisdom and Understanding

Hindrance - Pride

- **Solution** - Pride is one of the most devastating hinderances in a person’s life, to keep him from receiving God’s Wisdom, because the Word of God will not enter a person’s heart and become life as long as or when pride remains. Therefore HUMBLE yourself, in lowliness of mind, so God’s word will go beyond your mind into your heart.

Wisdom - Some other Related Scriptures

Ecclesiastics 9:13-18 "This wisdom I have also seen under the sun, and it seemed great to me; there was a little city with few men in it, and a great king came against it, besieged it, and built great snares around it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that same poor man. Then I said,'Wisdom is better than strength.' Nevertheless, the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. Words of the wise, spoken quietly, should be heard rather than the shout of a ruler of fools. Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good."

Psalm 51:6 "Behold, you desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden, You will make me to know wisdom."

Wisdom From Above James 3:17 "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."

Although wisdom is used to accomplish various tasks, such as to have insight, discernment, understanding and direction from God; Still the primary purpose for obtaining Wisdom and knowledge from God is to be used to know How to Love God and others correctly and to bear much spiritual fruit.

Daniel 12:2-3 - Some to everlasting life. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever & ever.

Luke 21:14 - For I will give you a mouth of wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.

Psalm 119:17,18,34 - Deal bountifully with your servant that I may live and keep your word. Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from your law... give me understanding, and I shall keep your law, indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

(38) The Fear Of The Lord:

Humility, Wisdom, Insruction, Respect God, Hate Evil:

Proverbs 9:10 - “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.”

The " Fear Of God " means to have and demonstrate great respect and reverence towards God.

" Fearing " God in the biblical sense of the word is not being terrified of God, nor is it being afraid that God is going to destroy you because of your sinful nature. While it is true that one day God will destroy the wicked, God does not purpose to frighten people but rather God wants people to overcome their sinful nature and all their fears, that is why God Loves and comforts us, so that we might have new life. However we still should have a measure of respectful fear and the wisdom of God, to avoid evil, and especially when we purposely do the things that God hates in complete rebellion, abusing His love and grace, so that we will understand that there are grave consequences and repent.

Every Christian should purpose in their mind and heart to be reverent towards God. By fearing God, we show respect and reverence to God, by loving the things that God loves, and hating the things that God hates.

Proverbs 8:13 " The Fear of the Lord is to hate evil. Pride and arrogance and the evil way. And the perverted mouth, I hate.

As we fear God and have respect towards wanting to do His will, God will then enlighten our lives with His wisdom, and insight so that we can discern right from wrong, and have good success in all that we do.

God has not given us the spirit of fear, but power, love and a sound mind.

What Is The Fear Of The Lord ?

KEY SCRIPTURES :

Proverbs 15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honor is humility.

Proverbs 8:13 -(AKJV) The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the fraudulent mouth, do I hate. 14Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength

Psalm 34:11-18 - (AKJV) Come, you children, listen to me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD. 12What man is he that desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? 13Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking guile. 14Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. 15The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry. 16The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. 17The righteous cry, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. 18The LORD is near to them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a contrite spirit.

Psalm 89:7 - 8 (AKJV) God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like to you? or to your faithfulness round about you? . .

Proverbs 22:4 - Humility is the fear of the Lord; its wages are riches and honor and life.

Proverbs 14:2 - Whoever fears the Lord walks uprightly, but those who despise him are devious in their ways.

Psalm 96:4-9;-(AKJV) For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. 5For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens. 6Honor and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. 7Give to the LORD, O you kindreds of the people, give to the LORD glory and strength. 8Give to the LORD the glory due to his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. 9O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

Psalm 103:11- 18;- (AKJV) For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 12As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. 13Like as a father pities his children, so the LORD pities them that fear him. 14For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. 15As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. 16For the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. 17But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on them that fear him, and his righteousness to children**'**s children; 18To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

Psalm 111:2-10 - (AKJV) The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. 3His work is honorable and glorious: and his righteousness endures for ever. 4He has made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion. 5He has given meat to them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant. 6He has showed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen. 7The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. 8They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. 9He sent redemption to his people: he has commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name. 10The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endures for ever.

How Can We " Understand " What Is The Fear Of The Lord ?

Proverbs 2:1-5 (AKJV)

So that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; 3Yes, if you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding; 4If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures; 5Then shall you understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

Proverbs 1:1-7:- (AKJV) The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; 2To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; 3To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; 4To give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. 5A wise man will hear, and will increase

learning; and a man of understanding shall attain to wise counsels: 6To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.7The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Job 28:28 (AKJV)**-** And to man he said, Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Proverbs 14:26, 27 - (AKJV) In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.27The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

Proverbs 19:23 - (AKJV) The fear of the LORD tends to life: and he that has it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.

(39) Believe In Jesus Christ and Be Saved

In this world we can clearly see the good and evil that has been done throughout history and anywhere we go today. It also becomes quite evident that we all have sinned and done some sort of evil and wrongful act through our own words or actions.

God is a perfect and holy, but our sin has caused us to be spiritually separated from God.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and is the only one who lived without sinning, and by His love He paid the penalty for the sins that we have done, so that we can be forgiven and receive new life.

Jesus Christ is only mediator and the way for any one of us to be spiritually restored and abide in God’s love, goodness and presence.

Believing in Jesus Christ is essential for reconciliation with God the Father, salvation, and the promise of eternal life. According to God’s word. In the Bible, all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23), creating a chasm between humanity and God. This separation leads to spiritual death and an inability to achieve righteousness on our own. However, through Jesus **’**sacrificial death and resurrection, the pathway to reconciliation is opened. Jesus Himself proclaimed, **“**I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). This assertion emphasizes the truth that faith in Jesus is not just one option among many but the exclusive means by which we can restore our relationship with God.

To " Believe " in Jesus Christ in order to be saved, in biblical context, means that a person truly believes that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior by faith, repents from their sins receiving His grace and follows Jesus Christ in spirit and truth, loving God and others as Jesus Christ loved us, producing good works of God towards others;

Simply believing that Jesus is the Christ does not save a person, because even the demons believe that Jesus is the Christ and are not saved. (James 2:14-26)

Salvation through Christ is intricately tied to God’s grace. We acquire God’s grace and forgiveness by sincerely believing in Jesus Christ and what He alone accomplished at the cross. Ephesians 2:8-9 emphasizes that salvation is a gift from God, received through faith, not something we can earn through our own efforts. This grace is made

possible by Jesus ’atoning sacrifice, where He took upon Himself the punishment for our sins. The cross symbolizes not only the depth of God’s love but also the seriousness of sin and the cost of our redemption. By placing our faith in Jesus, we acknowledge our need for His grace and accept the forgiveness He offers. This act of belief is transformative, leading to a new identity as children of God, as described in John 1:12: “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

Eternal life is another fundamental aspect of believing in Jesus Christ. In John 3:16, it is stated, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” This promise of eternal life is not just a future hope but begins in the present—believers experience a spiritual rebirth and a new relationship with God through faith in Jesus. This new life is characterized by intimacy with God, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the transformation of the believer’s heart and mind.

Moreover, the assurance of eternal life provides comfort and hope in the face of life’s challenges and uncertainties. Believing in Jesus offers a profound sense of purpose and direction, as we are called to live out our faith in a way that reflects Christ’s love and truth in the world.

Believing that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior is central to our Christian faith, and this conviction is grounded in both historical , Biblical evidence and our own transformative personal experiences. We come to understand, believe and testify that Jesus Christ is our Savior, King and Lord because we recognize that absolutely no one could fill the void in our hearts and save us.At the heart of this belief is the person of Jesus himself, He is alive—His life, teachings, and sacrificial death and His resurrection, we are born again and rise with Him to a new life. . The Gospels provide accounts of Jesus' ministry, illustrating His authority through miracles, profound teachings, and His unique relationship with God the Father. Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, which positions Him not merely as a prophet or moral teacher but as divine. His resurrection from the dead serves as a pivotal event that validates His claims. The resurrection is not just a foundational doctrine; it is the cornerstone of our Christian faith. It demonstrates His power over sin and death and affirms the hope of eternal life for those who believe in Him.

Moreover, the historical evidence supporting Jesus' resurrection is more than compelling. Numerous eyewitnesses reported seeing Him alive after His crucifixion, and these accounts were recorded in the New Testament within a generation of the events themselves. Early Christians were willing to face persecution and death rather than recant their belief in the risen Christ, suggesting that they genuinely believed in what they had witnessed. This conviction led to the rapid growth of Christianity, which spread throughout the Roman Empire and beyond, transforming lives and cultures. The existence of the church today, throughout the world, is a testament to the enduring impact of Jesus' life and the message of salvation and demonstration of divine love and goodness. Those of us who choose to believe and faith in Him, have a hope and future of eternal life in heaven saved from an eternality in hell that we all deserve. Thank God He provided The Way for us to be saved.

Anyone can be saved from the penalty of their sinful nature by believing in Jesus Christ, receiving His free gift of grace and forgiveness for all their sins and by sincerely following Jesus Christ by Faith as their Lord and Savior, which results in good spiritual fruit, abundant life now and forever. That person is saved from spiritual death in eternal Hell by solely the grace of Jesus Christ, by faith, not by good works, but good works will be evident in that person's life as the evidence of genuine faith in Jesus Christ. We who believe receive imperishable blessings that will never pass away.

Some Key Scriptures:

Acts 16:31;(AKJV) And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house.

Mark 16:16; (AKJV) He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned. “ (shall be condemned.)

Acts 15:11; (AKJV) But we believe that through the grace of the LORD Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Romans 10:9-15 (AKJV) ; That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. 10For with the heart man believes to righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made to salvation. 11For the scripture says, Whoever believes on him shall not be ashamed. 12For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich to all that call on him. 13For whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.14How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things”

Saved by Believing that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God;

1 John 1-4 (AKJV) That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked on, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show to you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us;) 3That which we have seen and heard declare we to you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4And these things write we to you, that your joy may be full.

1 John 5:10-13 (AKJV) He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself: he that believes not God has made him a liar; because he believes not the record that God gave of his Son. 11And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life. 13These things have I written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God..

Saved by belief in the Truth of Jesus Christ -

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brothers beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

Believe in Jesus for Salvation:

In John 3:16, the foundational message of belief in Jesus for salvation is succinctly expressed, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." This verse emphasizes the centrality of faith in Jesus as the means to receive eternal life.

Salvation Through Faith in Christ:

Ephesians 2:8-9 underscores the role of faith in obtaining salvation through Jesus Christ, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." This passage highlights that salvation is a gift received through faith in Christ, not by human works.

Confessing and Believing for Salvation:

Romans 10:9-10 outlines the confession of Jesus as Lord and belief in His resurrection as the path to salvation, "because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved." This passage emphasizes the integral relationship between confession and belief in securing salvation.

Believe and Have Everlasting Life:

John 6:47 conveys the simplicity of believing in Jesus for the assurance of eternal life, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life." This verse emphasizes the immediate and certain nature of eternal life for those who believe in Jesus.

Salvation Through Faith, Not Works:

Romans 4:5 emphasizes the contrast between faith and works in the context of salvation, "And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness." This verse underscores that salvation is granted to the one who believes, not through personal efforts.

Believe in the Lord Jesus and Be Saved:

Acts 16:31 offers a straightforward invitation to believe in the Lord Jesus for salvation, "And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'" This verse highlights the inclusive nature of salvation through faith in Jesus.

Salvation Through Faith in Christ's Blood:

Romans 3:25 emphasizes faith in Christ's blood as the means of justification and salvation, "whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins." This verse underscores the redemptive power of Christ's blood for those who believe.

Believing for Justification:

Romans 5:1 speaks of justification through faith in Jesus, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This verse highlights that justification, a key aspect of salvation, comes through faith in Jesus.

Salvation by Grace Through Faith:

Titus 3:5 emphasizes the role of God's grace and faith in salvation, "he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit." This verse underscores that salvation is a result of God's mercy, not human merit.

Believe in Jesus, the Source of Living Water:

In John 7:38, Jesus invites believers to come to Him and believe for the promise of living water, symbolizing the Holy Spirit and the eternal life He offers: "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

These scriptural references convey the central theme of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. They emphasize believing in Jesus for eternal life, the role of confession, the contrast between faith and works, the invitation to believe for salvation, the redemptive power of Christ's blood, justification through faith, and the saving grace accessed through belief. The consistent message is that faith in Jesus is the gateway to salvation and eternal life.

Believe and Receive the Free Gift of God: Living Water

In John 4:10, Jesus speaks of the gift of God and the importance of belief: "Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.'" This verse introduces the concept of the gift of God tied to belief in Jesus.

Faith in Christ's Atoning Sacrifice:

Hebrews 10:10 emphasizes the role of faith in Christ's sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins, "And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." This verse highlights the redemptive work of Christ and the necessity of faith in His sacrifice for salvation.

Believing in the Resurrected Christ:

In 1 Corinthians 15:17, the resurrection of Christ is linked to the importance of faith for salvation: "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins." This verse underscores the significance of believing in the resurrection for the efficacy of faith in salvation.

Faith in Christ's Finished Work:

In John 19:30, Jesus declares the completion of His work on the cross, and faith in this finished work is essential for salvation: "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." Belief in the finished work of Christ is foundational for salvation.

Believing in the Name of Jesus:

Acts 10:43 emphasizes the power of God’s authority and his unmerited gift of love and salvation by believing in the name of Jesus: "To him all the prophets bear witness that

everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." This verse highlights the significance of faith in the person and name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins.

Faith as the Means of Receiving Righteousness:

In Romans 3:22, faith is presented as the means by which righteousness is obtained: "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction." This verse underscores that faith in Jesus is the channel through which God's righteousness is received.

Believing for the Assurance of Salvation:

1 John 5:13 assures believers that eternal life is accessible through faith in the Son of God: "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life." This verse emphasizes the assurance of salvation through belief in Jesus.

Faith in Christ, the Author of Eternal Salvation:

Hebrews 5:9 depicts Jesus as the source of eternal salvation for those who obey Him: "And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him." This verse highlights the connection between faith in Christ and the reception of eternal salvation.

Believe in Jesus, the Way to the Father:

In John 14:6, Jesus declares Himself as the way, truth, and life, emphasizing the exclusive role of belief in Him for access to the Father: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" This verse underscores the exclusive nature of salvation through faith in Jesus.

Faith in Christ's Intercession:

Hebrews 7:25 highlights Jesus' intercessory role for those who come to God through Him: "Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." This verse emphasizes the ongoing work of Jesus in saving those who place their faith in Him.

These additional scriptural references further emphasize the crucial role of belief in Jesus for salvation. These scriptures found in the Word of God declare specific truths such as the gift of salvation from God is directly tied to belief, faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice, the resurrection, the finished work of Christ, belief in the name of Jesus, obtaining righteousness through faith, assurance of salvation, Jesus as the source of eternal salvation, the exclusivity of salvation through Jesus, and the intercessory role of Christ for believers.

(40) Humility, Humbleness

Hebrew Words (Old Testament)

1. **עָנָו(ʿānāw)** – Humble, meek, lowly

- Root: עָנָה(*ʿānāh*) – to be bowed down, afflicted.
- Often used to describe someone who is meek or submits to God under pressure or suffering.
- Example: “The meek (ʿānāw) shall inherit the land...” – Psalm 37:11

2. **עָנִי(ʿānî)** – Poor, afflicted, humble
   - Describes a person who is materially or socially low, leading to spiritual dependence on God.
   - Example: “This is the one I esteem: he who is humble (ʿānî) and contrite in spirit...” – Isaiah 66:2
3. **שָׁפֵל(shāphel)** – To be low, to be humbled
   - Can describe a state of being brought low or humbled, often by God's action.
   - Example: “He brings low those who dwell on high...” – Isaiah 26:5

Greek Words (New Testament)

1. **ταπεινός (tapeinos)** – Lowly, humble in position or spirit
   - Describes modesty, humility, or a low social position.
   - Example: “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (tapeinos).” – James 4:6
2. ταπεινοφροσύνη (tapeinophrosynē) – *Humility, lowliness of mind*
   - A compound of *tapeinos* (low) and *phroneō* (to think). Refers to a mindset of selflessness and putting others above oneself.
   - Example: “Clothe yourselves with humility (tapeinophrosynē)...” – 1 Peter 5:5
3. **ταπεινόω (tapeinoō)** – To humble, to bring low
   - Verb form; can refer to humbling oneself or being humbled by God or circumstances.
   - Example: “Whoever humbles (tapeinoō) himself like this child...” – Matthew 18:4

Be Humble and Have A Contrite Heart

Micah 6:8 (AKJV) "He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?."

In the book of Micah, we are given a profound insight into what God desires from us: to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Him. The call to humility is not merely a suggestion but a divine mandate, a foundational principle upon which our relationship with God and others is built. Walking humbly is not about self-deprecation or shrinking into insignificance; rather, it is about recognizing our place in the grand narrative

of creation. It is about acknowledging our strengths and weaknesses, our successes and failures, with a heart attuned to the voice of God’s Holy Spirit.

A man or woman who is humble and walks with humility is sincerely loving God and others without having pride “an excessively high opinion of oneself or one's own importance” (defined by Merriam-Webster) nor being self-centered, boastful, obnoxious or self-righteous .

Being humble at heart and mind is not a sign of weakness but rather a good character trait and strength of a mature person.

Humility encompasses meekness, gentleness, patience, consideration of others, without having vanity, a haughty spirit, nor displaying a loud self-attention behavior. Humility is modest and a person who is humble will not dress or act overly provocative nor flamboyant.

Humility compels us to extend grace and mercy to others, knowing that we ourselves stand in constant need of forgiveness and redemption. A contrite heart, softened by humility, becomes a vessel through which the transformative power of God's love flows, bringing healing and reconciliation to a broken world.

Let us heed the prophet's call to walk humbly with our God, for in humility, we find true strength. Let us approach each day with a spirit of gentleness and compassion, seeking to emulate the humility of Christ who, though divine, took on the form of a servant. May our lives be a testament to the transformative power of humility, drawing others closer to the heart of God. And as we walk this journey of faith, may our prayer be one of surrender, echoing the words of the psalmist: "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

God's people need to become humble in their daily attitude; This is not just an outward appearance of false humility, but rather is a genuine choice of heart not to exalt ones self.

A person who is humble does not take the glory from God nor does he look for self- recognition for the work that he has done or for anything given.

- Being humble is just presenting yourself as you really are in the eyes of God; Being transparent and having a contrite spirit;
- Being humble is not being prideful, not having selfish ambition, not being boastful, not being arrogant nor full of conceit but having a lowly spirit.
- Being humble is allowing others to be first, in the appropriate time and way.
- A person is humble when they forgive another person and not take into account a wrong suffered by them.
- A person who is humble is always open to learn any spiritual truth, and objectively considers anything a person has to offer.
- We receive the implanted Word of God by the spirit of meekness.
- A person who is humble, chooses not to multiply his words;
- A person who is humble, does not pray long prayers just to appear more spiritual.

- A person who is humble, does not put his own self interests first, but rather is more considered towards others, and esteems others more highly.
- Being humble is not thinking your always right or insisting to have your own way.

HUMBLE Ourselves

KEY SCRIPTURES

Matthew 23:11-12 (AKJV) And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. 10Neither be you called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. 11But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12And whoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

Mark 10:14,15 (AKJV) But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said to them, Suffer the little children to come to me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. 15Truly I say to you, Whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein

Matthew 18:3,4 (AKJV) And said, Truly I say to you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4Whoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5And whoever shall receive one such little child in my name receives me. 6But whoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

1 Peter 5:5,6 (AKJV) **"**…Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves to the elder. Yes, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. 6Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"

Philippines 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7But made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death of the cross.

The Essence of Humility:

The Source of Humility: God's Example

Humility is not merely a moral virtue; it is a reflection of the divine character of Jesus. In Philippians 2:5-8, we are urged to have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, who, though being in very nature God, humbled himself to the point of taking on human form and submitting to death on the cross. True humility begins by acknowledging our dependence on God and aligning our attitudes with the selfless nature of Christ.

The Call to Humility in Relationship with God

Proverbs 22:4 states that humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth, honor, and life. This verse highlights the interconnectedness of humility and reverence for God. Humility is the posture of the heart that recognizes God's sovereignty and submits to His will. In prayer and worship, we should express our humility by acknowledging our dependence on God's grace and seeking His guidance.

Humility in Interpersonal Relationships

Numerous scriptures emphasize the importance of humility in our dealings with others. James 4:6 reminds us that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. This underlines the need for humility in human relationships, as it fosters unity, reconciliation, and a spirit of service. Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet in John 13 serves as a powerful illustration of humble service and sets an example for us to follow in their interactions with one another.

Developing a Humble Spirit

The Bible encourages us to actively put on a humble spirit. Colossians 3:12 exhorts us to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. This metaphorical clothing represents intentional actions and attitudes that Christians are to adopt in their daily lives. Through prayer, self-reflection with God’s Word, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Christians can nurture and develop a humble heart.

Humility and Exaltation

A recurring theme in Scripture is the promise that those who humble themselves will be exalted by God. Matthew 23:12 declares, "For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." This principle highlights the divine response to humility—a lifting up that comes not from self-promotion but from God's gracious hand.

Humility in Times of Adversity

The true test of humility often comes during times of adversity and trials. Job, a biblical figure known for his perseverance through immense suffering, provides an exemplary model of humility. Despite facing profound loss and physical affliction, Job maintained his humility by acknowledging God's sovereignty and refraining from charging God with wrongdoing. Job's story teaches us that humility is not contingent upon our circumstances but is a steadfast commitment to trust in God's wisdom and goodness, even when faced with the inexplicable.

The Role of Humility in Repentance

Humility is intricately linked to repentance. In 2 Chronicles 7:14, God promises to heal the land if His people humble themselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways. This verse underscores the pivotal role of humility in the process of repentance. Recognizing our need for forgiveness and turning away from sinful ways requires a humble acknowledgment of our own shortcomings and a willingness to submit to God's transformative work in our lives.

Guarding Against False Humility

While the Bible extols the virtues of humility, it also warns against false humility or hypocrisy. In Colossians 2:18-23, Paul cautions against self-imposed piety that lacks true

humility. True humility is marked by sincerity, genuine love, and a desire to serve, not by outward displays meant to draw attention to oneself. We are encouraged to examine our motives, ensuring that our expressions of humility are rooted in genuine love for God and others.

Humility as a Pathway to Wisdom

Proverbs 11:2 asserts that with humility comes wisdom. Humble individuals are teachable, open to correction, and receptive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As we humble ourselves before God, acknowledging our need for His wisdom, He graciously imparts understanding and insight. The journey of faith is marked by a continual posture of learning and growing, and humility serves as the gateway to the treasures of God's wisdom.

The Ultimate Reward of Humility: Eternal Life

In the teachings of Jesus, humility is closely tied to the kingdom of God. In Matthew 18:3-4, Jesus says, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Humility is not only a virtue for earthly living but is also a passport to the eternal kingdom. Those who humble themselves before God will experience the fullness of His kingdom and enjoy everlasting life in His presence.

Humility in Leadership

Biblical leaders provide profound examples of humility in positions of authority. Moses, described as the humblest man on the earth (Numbers 12:3), led the Israelites with a servant's heart, seeking God's guidance and interceding for the people. Jesus, the ultimate example of leadership, washed His disciples' feet, challenging conventional notions of authority and power. Christian leaders are called to emulate this humble leadership, recognizing that true greatness lies in serving others and stewarding their responsibilities with humility.

Humility and Forgiveness

Humility plays a pivotal role in forgiveness. Ephesians 4:32 encourages believers to be kind and compassionate, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave them. Forgiveness requires humility because it involves letting go of our pride, extending grace to others, and acknowledging our own need for forgiveness. The parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18 illustrates the importance of a humble heart in extending mercy to others.

Learning from Jesus' Humility

Jesus, the embodiment of humility, provides the ultimate example for us to follow. In Matthew 11:29, He invites us to take His yoke upon us, describing Himself as gentle and humble in heart. Jesus not only taught about humility but demonstrated it in every aspect of His life, from His birth in a humble manger to His sacrificial death on the cross. By studying Jesus' life, we gain a profound understanding of humility as a transformative and sacrificial way of living.

Humility and Contentment

Contentment is closely linked to humility. Philippians 4:11-13, in which Paul expresses contentment in all circumstances, highlights the connection between humility and satisfaction. A humble heart recognizes that true fulfillment comes from reliance on God rather than external circumstances. Seeking humility leads to contentment as Christians trust in God's provision and sovereignty.

Humility in The Church and In The Community

Humility is essential for fostering unity and harmony within the lives of other fellow Christians. Philippians 2:3-4 urges us to do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit but to consider others better than themselves. This mindset fosters a Church and community where individuals serve one another, bear each other's burdens, and create an environment where God's love is manifested through humble, selfless relationships.

Conclusion:

Humility is not a sign of weakness but a mark of spiritual strength. As believers, we are called to embody humility in our relationship with God and with one another. By following the example of Christ, actively taken on a humble spirit through being responsive to God's Holy Spirit, and recognizing the transformative power of God's grace, we can live out the profound truth that "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6). May humility be a defining characteristic of our Christian journey, reflecting the image of the One who humbled Himself for our sake.

(41) Meek, Meekness

Hebrew Words (Old Testament)

1. **עָנָו(ʿānāw)** – Meek, humble, gentle, lowly
    - Root: עָנָה(ʿ*ānāh*) – to afflict, to humble
    - Describes someone who is gentle, not self-assertive, and reliant on God, especially in the face of oppression.
    - Example:
      "Now the man Moses was very meek (ʿānāw), more than all people who were on the face of the earth." – Numbers 12:3" The meek (ʿānāw) shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace." – Psalm 37:11

Greek Words (New Testament)

1. **πραΰς (praÿs)** – Meek, gentle, mild
    - Often misunderstood as weakness, this word reflects strength under control—gentleness combined with power and restraint.
    - Used to describe a person who submits to God's will without rebellion or resentment.

- Example:
  “Blessed are the meek (praÿs), for they shall inherit the earth.” – Matthew 5:5“ Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble (praÿs), and mounted on a donkey.’” – Matthew 21:5

2. **πραΰτης (praÿtēs)** – Meekness, gentleness, mildness of spirit
   - A noun form indicating the quality of meekness. Often listed as a virtue of the Spirit-filled life.
   - Example:
     “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace... gentleness (praÿtēs), self-control...” – Galatians 5:22–23“ With all humility and meekness (praÿtēs), with patience, bearing with one another in love.” – Ephesians 4:2

Summary Distinction

- **Meek (adjective):** Describes the character of a person—gentle, not harsh, controlled under provocation (ʿānāw / praÿs).
- **Meekness (noun):** The virtue or attitude of humility and gentleness, especially in dealing with others (praÿtēs).

Matthew 5:5 (AKJV) “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. “

Meekness VS Humility

In the Bible, meekness and humility are often mentioned as virtues, but they are distinct character traits with some subtle differences.

Meekness is a biblical virtue characterized by gentle strength, a patient, humble submission to God**’**s will, and a willingness to endure hardship or criticism without retaliating, and trusting in God’s timing and his ways (Matthew 5:5; 1 Peter 3:4).

Humility, on the other hand, is a heart posture of recognizing one**’**s dependence on God, valuing others above oneself, and acknowledging one**’**s limitations and need for God**’**s grace (Philippians 2:3-8; James 4:6).

Meekness:

Meekness is often associated with gentleness, patience, and the ability to endure hardships without resentment or anger.

The Greek word often translated as "meek" in the New Testament is "praus," which can also be translated as gentle or humble.

Meekness involves a controlled strength, where a person willingly submits their will to God and others, without being overly assertive or aggressive.

An example of meekness is found in Matthew 5:5, where Jesus says, "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”

Humility:

Humility, on the other hand, is a broader concept that involves a proper understanding of one's position in relation to God and others.Humility is about recognizing one's limitations, acknowledging dependence on God, and having a modest view of oneself.

The Greek word often translated as "humility" in the New Testament is "tapeinophrosyne," which denotes a lowliness of mind or a humble attitude.

Philippians 2:3 is an example where humility is emphasized: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves."

In summary, meekness emphasizes a controlled strength and patient endurance, while humility encompasses a broader perspective of recognizing one's place in relation to God and others. Both virtues are valued in Christian teachings and are seen as essential components of a virtuous and Christ-like character.

The Essence of Meekness:

As Christians, we should develop a spirit of meekness, a profound virtue that is frequently misunderstood as weakness. Meekness, rooted in a heart of humility, reflects our gentle and submissive spirit that willingly yields to God's will. In this commentary, we will explore the significance of meekness as presented in various scriptures, understanding its transformative power in our lives as disciples of Christ.

Defining Meekness: Following Christ's Example

Our foundational understanding of meekness comes from Jesus Himself, who declared, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:29). For us, meekness, as demonstrated by Christ, is not passivity but a deliberate choice to submit to God's will with a spirit of gentleness and humility.

Meekness and Humility: Kindred Virtues

Meekness and humility are closely intertwined in our walk as believers. In Galatians 5:22-23, the fruit of the Spirit includes gentleness, a quality synonymous with meekness. Our meekness is an expression of humility in action—a gentle strength that arises from hearts surrendered to God. As we cultivate humility, meekness naturally flows as an outworking of our surrendered spirit.

Meekness in the Face of Opposition

Meekness becomes especially evident in how we respond to opposition and adversity. Like Jesus, who, when reviled and persecuted, did not retaliate but remained meek (1 Peter 2:23), we are called to respond with gentleness. The biblical narrative teaches us that meekness is a powerful force in overcoming evil, as it refuses to repay evil with evil but seeks reconciliation and forgiveness.

Meekness in Leadership

As disciples of Christ, meekness is a quality expected of us in leadership within the Christian community. In 2 Timothy 2:24-25, Paul instructs that the Lord's servant must be kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, and correcting opponents with

gentleness. Meek leaders exemplify Christ's servant-hearted leadership, prioritizing the needs of others and leading with a gentle, humble spirit.

Meekness and Wisdom

Meekness is intrinsically linked to wisdom in our journey of faith. James 3:13 highlights that true wisdom is demonstrated by meekness. We, as meek individuals, are receptive to divine wisdom, recognizing our need for guidance and understanding. In a world that often values assertiveness and self-promotion, our meekness stands as a counter-cultural testament to the wisdom found in yielding to God's ways.

Meekness in Relationships

For us, meekness is foundational to healthy and harmonious relationships. Colossians 3:12 encourages us to clothe ourselves with meekness as we bear with one another and forgive grievances. Our meekness fosters an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation, promoting unity and understanding in our interpersonal dynamics.

Meekness and Contentment

Similar to humility, our meekness is linked to contentment. Psalm 37:11 declares, "But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace." As meek individuals, we find contentment not in asserting our own desires but in trusting God's provision and resting in His promises.

Meekness and Forgiveness

Meekness plays a crucial role in our process of forgiveness. Ephesians 4:31-32 encourages us to put away bitterness, wrath, anger, and slander, and instead to be kind and tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave us. Our meekness allows us to release the desire for revenge, extending grace and forgiveness even when it is undeserved.

The Fruit of Meekness in the Beatitudes

In the Beatitudes, Jesus declares, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). For us, this elevates meekness as a characteristic of those who are truly blessed. Meekness is not a passive resignation but an active trust in God's ultimate justice. The promise of inheriting the earth speaks to the eternal rewards reserved for us as we embody meekness in our earthly walk with God.

Meekness in Speech

The Bible emphasizes the importance of meekness in our communication. Proverbs 15:1 states, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." For us, meekness in speech involves choosing our words with care, avoiding unnecessary strife, and promoting understanding. As meek individuals, we are slow to anger, quick to listen, and deliberate in our responses.

Meekness and Humble Service

As Christians, we understand that meekness finds practical expression in our humble service to others. In Galatians 5:13, Paul encourages us to serve one another in love. Meek individuals willingly take on the role of servants, considering others as more

important than themselves. We find joy and fulfillment in acts of kindness and selfless service, reflecting Christ's love in our communities.

Meekness in Admitting Fault

A meek spirit enables us to admit our own faults and shortcomings. Psalm 34:18 reminds us that God is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Our meekness allows us to approach God with contrite hearts, acknowledging our need for His mercy and forgiveness. It fosters humility that opens the door to reconciliation and restoration within our relationships.

Meekness and Patience

Meekness is closely associated with patience, as Paul urges us in Colossians 3:12-13 to put on compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving as the Lord forgave us. Our meekness enables us to endure difficulties and persevere with a calm spirit, trusting in God's perfect timing.

Meekness in Seeking Guidance

We demonstrate meekness in the way we seek guidance from God. Psalm 25:9 declares, "He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way." As meek individuals, we recognize our need for divine guidance, submitting our plans and decisions to God and allowing His wisdom to direct our paths.

Meekness and Transformation

Meekness is not a static attribute but a transformative force that shapes our character as believers. Romans 12:2 encourages us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, leading to discernment of God's will. A meek heart is receptive to the transformative work of the Holy Spirit, allowing God to mold and renew our inner being.

Meekness in Overcoming Anger

Meekness serves as a powerful antidote to anger. Proverbs 16:32 states, "Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city." As meek individuals, we exercise self-control over our emotions, particularly anger, choosing the path of patience and peace. Through meekness, we can navigate conflicts with a spirit of understanding rather than reacting impulsively.

Meekness in Evangelism

In the context of sharing the gospel, meekness is a compelling quality. 1 Peter 3:15 encourages us to "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." Our meekness in evangelism involves sharing the truth with humility, respect, and a compassionate spirit, allowing the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of those who hear.

Meekness and Trusting God's Timing

Meekness involves trusting in God's timing and sovereignty. Psalm 37:7-9 encourages us to be still before the Lord, wait patiently for Him, and refrain from fretting over evildoers. We understand that God's plans unfold in His perfect timing, and our waiting on Him demonstrates reliance on His wisdom and goodness.

Meekness and Joyful Submission

We express meekness joyfully in our submission to authority. Titus 3:1 encourages us to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, and to be ready for every good work. Our willingness to submit to God-ordained authority structures is not a sign of weakness but a reflection of our trust in God's design for order and authority.

Meekness in Perseverance

Meekness is closely tied to our perseverance in the face of trials. James 1:21 encourages us to receive the Word with meekness, which has the power to save our souls. Our meekness in adversity involves a humble acceptance of God's Word, allowing it to shape our perspective and endurance during challenging times.

Meekness in Receiving Correction

A meek spirit enables us to receive correction with humility and openness. Proverbs 15:31-32 states, "Whoever heeds life-giving correction will be at home among the wise." Meekness allows us to learn and grow through correction, recognizing the value of wisdom gained through humble acceptance of guidance.

Meekness and Empathy

As disciples of Christ, we are characterized by empathy and compassion. Colossians 3:12 encourages us to put on compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Our meekness fosters hearts that are sensitive to the needs and struggles of others, leading to acts of compassion and a willingness to bear one another's burdens.

Meekness as a Mark of Spiritual Maturity

Finally, meekness is a sign of our spiritual maturity. Galatians 6:1 instructs us to restore a brother or sister caught in sin with a spirit of gentleness, considering ourselves lest we also be tempted. Our meekness in restoration involves humility, a recognition of our own vulnerabilities, and a commitment to help others grow in Christlikeness.

Conclusion:

Meekness, like humility, is a virtue that flows from a heart surrendered to God. As we cultivate meekness, we participate in the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, allowing God to shape our character, responses, and relationships. Meekness is not a surrender to weakness but a powerful demonstration of strength under control—a reflection of the character of Christ. May the pursuit of meekness be a transformative journey that brings us closer to the likeness of our gentle and humble Savior, Jesus Christ.

(42) Faith and Faith In Jesus:

As a new believer and throughout our lives, we need to have faith in Jesus Christ, in all that He has already accomplished for us and Faith in all that He able to still do for us.

True Biblical Faith is being fully persuaded that, Jesus is the Christ and our Lord. Our faith should believe in the power and grace of Jesus Christ to save us from evil and destruction, moreover to establish us in His love and to give us eternal life.

We become fully persuaded as we listen objectively to the truth of Jesus Christ, and seek God with a sincere heart; Faith comes by hearing the word of God taught and preached to us by other dedicated Christians, and primarily through God's Holy Spirit leading us to all Truth.

True Biblical ' Faith ' is also to be fully persuaded to acquire, and to walk in, the spiritual truths of God's Word so that we may inherit God's promises which we had hoped for, and that are unseen.

Hebrews 11:1 " Now Faith is the assurance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen.

Some SUB TOPICS OF " FAITH " COVERED IN THIS BIBLE STUDY

- What is FAITH ?
- In WHOM should we have FAITH and HOPE ?
- WHAT are some Biblical examples, of What we should or can have FAITH for ?
- HOW do we RECEIVE Faith ?
- Should we GROW in Faith?
- HOW do we GROW in Faith ?
- WHAT will HINDER our FAITH from GROWING?
- WHY should we have Faith ?
- How should our FAITH be; And How our FAITH be demonstrated ?
- HOW should our FAITH, NOT Be ?
- Are some Christians weak in the Faith, or lack Faith?
- Will God be FAITHFUL even when we are faithless?
- Will some Christians depart from the FAITH ?
- Will our Faith be TESTED?
- Should we examine ourselves to see if we are continuing in the Faith ?
- Do we need to supplement our Faith with anything?
- Should Christians come into UNITY of the FAITH?
- What are some Biblical examples of Faith ?

WHAT is FAITH ?

Hebrews 11:1-40 (AKJV)— Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2For by it the elders obtained a good report. 3Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. 4By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaks. 5By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for

before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. 7By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. 8By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went. 9By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. 12Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. 13These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from where they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: why God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he has prepared for them a city. 17By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall your seed be called: 19Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from where also he received him in a figure. 20By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. 21By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff. 22By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

23By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment. 24By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; 25Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect to the recompense of the reward. 27By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. 28Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. 29By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

30By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. 31By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

32And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33Who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. 34Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of

weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yes, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Ephesians 4:4,5-(AKJV) There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; 5One Lord, one faith, one baptism

Ephesians 2:8- (AKJV) 8For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9Not of works, lest any man should boast.

In WHOM should we have FAITH and HOPE ?

We should have Faith and Hope in God and Jesus Christ and not in ourselves and our abilities.

Galatians 2:16 -(AKJV) Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Galatians 2:20 -(AKJV) I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by the faith of the Son of God,** who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Galatians 3:22 -29 (AKJV) But the scripture has concluded all under sin, **that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.** 23But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up to the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24Why t**he law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.** 25But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26**For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.** 27For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29And if you be Christ**'**s, then are you Abraham**'**s seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Acts 26:16-18- (AKJV) But rise, and stand on your feet: for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of these things which you have seen, and of those things in the which I will appear to you; 17Delivering you from the people, and from the Gentiles, to whom now I send you, 18To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.**'(Jesus Christ)**

Philippines 3:8-11- (AKJV) Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; 11If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead."

Psalm 71:5 - For you are my HOPE, O Lord God, You are my trust from my youth, by you I have been upheld from my youth

Psalm 77:7 - That they may set their HOPE in God and not forget the works of God Lord from this time forth and forever

Psalm 146:5- Happy is he who has the God of Jabob for his help, whose HOPE is in the Lord his God

Psalm 131:3 - O Israel, HOPE in the Lord from this time forth and forever

WHAT are some Biblical examples, of Who we should have Faith in ? and What we should or can have FAITH for ?

- We should have FAITH in Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our Faith (Hebrews 12:2)
- (*See also Hebrews 11)
- Faith to be established in God's Love
- Faith to love others as God desires
- Faith to fulfill the things that God has called us to do
- Faith to overcome temptation and sin
- Our Salvation and Eternal Life from God through Jesus Christ;Faith to be justified by God
- The Promises of God found in the Bible;
- Faith for Blessing others
- Physical healings;
- Spiritual deliverance
- Protection by God
- Providing our needs

HOW do we RECEIVE Faith?

Hebrews 12:1,2- Why seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, **2Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;** who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Romans 10:17 " Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God " What this means is that we need to listen continually to God's word, so that our faith would be strengthened, or built up to fully trust Jesus Christ to fulfill all that He promised.

Romans 12:3-8 (AKJV) - For I say, through the grace given to me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith. 4For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teaches, on teaching; 8Or he that exhorts, on exhortation: he that gives, let him do it with simplicity; he that rules, with diligence; he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Should we GROW in Faith?

YES>

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4 (AKJV) We are bound to thank God always for you, brothers, as it is meet, because that your faith grows exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other abounds; 4So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure: .

Colossians 2:6,7- (AKJV) As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in him: 7Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Colossians 2:18,19 -(AKJV) Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increases with the increase of God.

HOW do we GROW in FAITH ?

Hebrews 12:1,2-(AKJV) Why seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2**Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith**; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Romans 10:17 " Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God "

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Ephesians 4:11-13- (AKJV) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

Romans 12:3 - (AKJV) For I say, through the grace given to me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith.

1 Timothy 4:6 -(AKJV) If you put the brothers in remembrance of these things, you shall be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, to which you have attained.

Galatians 1:23 -(AKJV) But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preaches the faith which once he destroyed. .

1 Thessalonians 3:10 - as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith

Luke 22:31,32-(AKJV) "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32But I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not: and when you are converted, strengthen your brothers.."

2 Thessalonians 1:11,12-(AKJV) Why also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: 12That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ..

WHAT will HINDER our FAITH from GROWING?

There are several things that can hinder a person's faith from growing, including unbelief, continuing to practice sin, unconfessed sin, failing to remain in God's Word, and hardening one's heart against what the Holy Spirit is revealing. Additionally, the cares and pleasures of the world can choke out the Word of God. Since Faith comes by hearing the Word, if a person doesn't attend church or fellowship with other mature Christian believers and teachers—where God's Word is taught and testified to—that person may become weak in the faith.

Matthew 13:18-30 - (AKJV) "Hear you therefore the parable of the sower. 19When any one hears the word of the kingdom, and understands it not, then comes the wicked one, and catches away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. 20But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that hears the word, and immediately with joy receives it; 21Yet has he not root in himself, but endures for a while: for when tribulation or persecution rises because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22He also that received seed among the thorns is he that hears the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23But he that received seed into the good ground is he that hears the word, and understands it; which also bears fruit, and brings forth, some an hundred times, some sixty, some thirty. 24Another parable put he forth to them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27So the servants of the householder came and said to him, Sir, did not you sow good seed in your field? from where then has it tares? 28He said to them, An enemy has done this. The servants said to him, Will you then that we go and gather them up? 29But he said, No; lest while you gather up the tares, you root up also the wheat with them. 30Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather you

together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

WHY should we have FAITH?

We should have Faith in Jesus Christ; Faith to obtain His righteousness and to be justified, and forgiven before God. Without Faith in Jesus Christ, it's impossible to please God. Jesus Christ is the Author and Finisher of our Faith.

Faith in what Jesus has accomplished at the cross; Faith in His ability to spiritually bring us salvation from sin. Faith to overcome our sinful nature through a living relationship with Jesus Christ by His Grace. Faith to be made free by the Word of God. Faith to endure any suffering or hardship for the sake of the good news of Jesus Christ.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Hebrews 11:6 -(AKJV) But **without faith it is impossible to please him (God)**: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Hebrews 10:19-25 -(AKJV) Having therefore, brothers, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20By a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21And having an high priest over the house of God; 22Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24And let us consider one another to provoke to love and to good works: 25Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching.

We need to have faith in Jesus so that we can lay aside sin and run the spiritual race with endurance.

Hebrews 12:1,2-(AKJV) Why seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2**Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith**; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

WHY should we have FAITH ?

- Because w**e are saved by Faith in Jesus Christ:**

Ephesians 2:8-9 - (AKJV) For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9Not of works, lest any man should boast."

1 Peter 1:3- 9; (AKJV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4**To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5Who are kept by**

the power of God through faith to salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8Whom having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9**Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.**

- **To Fight The Good Fight and To Receive Eternal Life:**

1 Timothy 6:10 -12 (AKJV) For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11But you, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 12Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you are also called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.

- **Faith to acquire all of the promises of God.**

Hebrews 6:12 (AKJV) That you be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Romans 4:19 -22 (AKJV) And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah**'**s womb: 20He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.Faith in Jesus to be justified before God "

Romans 5:1-2(AKJV) Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 3:26 (AKJV)To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus.

Romans 3:28 - For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

- **Faith to receive the righteousness of God**

Philippines 3:8-11 (AKJV) Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; 11If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.

Galatians 5:5-6 (AKJV) - For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love.

- **Faith to believe that God is able to do anything through you which is according to His will.**

Matthew 17:20 (AKJV) And Jesus said to them, Because of your unbelief: for truly I say to you, If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you. 21However, this kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting.

Matthew 21:21-22(AKJV) Jesus answered and said to them, Truly I say to you, If you have faith, and doubt not, you shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if you shall say to this mountain, Be you removed, and be you cast into the sea; it shall be done. 22And all things, whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.

- **We should have Faith for protection, to quench the accusations and attacks of satan and his evil ones**

Ephesians 6:16 -(AKJV) Above all, taking the shield of faith, with which you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked

- **We should have FAITH in Jesus Christ for our healing**

Luke 8:48- (AKJV) And he said to her, Daughter, be of good comfort: your faith has made you whole; go in peace.

Acts 14:9 -10 (AKJV) The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 10Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on your feet. And he leaped and walked.

Matthew 17:14-20 (AKJV)-And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, 15Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for often he falls into the fire, and oft into the water. 16And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not cure him. 17Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him here to me. 18And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. 19Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? 2**0And Jesus said to them, Because of your unbelief: for truly I say to you, If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain**, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you. 21However, this kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting.

Luke 7:1-10 - (AKJV) Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.2And a certain centurion**'**s servant, who was dear to him, was sick, and ready to die. 3And when he heard of Jesus, he sent to him the elders

of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. 4And when they came to Jesus, they sought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: 5For he loves our nation, and he has built us a synagogue. 6Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying to him, Lord, trouble not yourself: for I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof: 7Why neither thought I myself worthy to come to you: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. 8For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say to one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it. 9When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned him about, and said to the people that followed him, I say to you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. 10And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

- **We should have FAITH in Jesus Christ to FORGIVE our sins and heal us**

Luke 5:20-24-25 (AKJV) And when he (Jesus) saw their faith, he said to him, Man, your sins are forgiven you. 21And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? 22But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said to them, What reason you in your hearts? 23Whether is easier, to say, Your sins be forgiven you; or to say, Rise up and walk? 24But that you may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins, (he said to the sick of the palsy,) I say to you, Arise, and take up your couch, and go into your house. 25And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that where on he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

- **We should be a Faithful Servant, which pleases God**

Matthew 25:21- 23-(AKJV)**“** His lord said to him, Well done, you good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter you into the joy of your lord. 22He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, you delivered to me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. 23His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter you into the joy of your lord.!**’**

WHY should we have FAITH ?

- **To overcome spiritual hindrances, To accomplish the calling and will of God**

Luke 17:6 - (AKJV) And the Lord said, If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you might say to this sycamine tree, Be you plucked up by the root, and be you planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

To witness and testify of Jesus Christ to others

Acts 20:21 (AKJV) Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

Colossians 1:22-23 (AKJV) And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled 22In the body of his flesh through death, **to present you holy and blameless and unreproveable in his sight: 23If you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel**, which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Acts 14:22 (AKJV) Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to **continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God"**

- **To walk in the narrow path that leads to life with Jesus Christ through the darkness of this world**

2 Corinthians 5:7 - For we walk by faith not by sight

How should our FAITH be; And How our FAITH be demonstrated ?

- **Faith should be Sincere**

2 Timothy 1:3 -7 (AKJV) " I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of you in my prayers night and day; 4Greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy; 5When I call to remembrance **the unfeigned (sincere, genuine) faith** that is in you, which dwelled first in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in you also. 6Why I put you in remembrance that you stir up the gift of God, which is in you by the putting on of my hands. 7For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5-(AKJV) And I, brothers, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. 2For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man**'**s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5**That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.**

- **We should continue steadfast in Faith**

Colossians 1:21-23 (AKJV) And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled 22In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and blameless and unreproveable in his sight: 23**If you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel,** which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

- **We should have faith in what we believe and speak out accordingly**

2 Corinthians 4:13 -15;-(AKJV) We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; 14Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and

shall present us with you. 15For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

HOW should our FAITH, NOT Be ?

- **Our FAITH should NOT be without Love for God or others**

1 Corinthians 13:2 - (AKJV) And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity,(Love) I am nothing.

- **Our FAITH in God should NOT be without good works**

James 2:14-26-(AKJV) What does it profit, my brothers, though a man say he has faith, and have not works? can faith save him? 15If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16And one of you say to them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful to the body; what does it profit? 17Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone. 18Yes, a man may say, You have faith, and I have works: show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19You believe that there is one God; you do well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20But will you know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22See you how faith worked with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23And the scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. 24You see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. 25Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? 26For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

18 But someone will say, **“**You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. 19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder. 20 Do you want to be shown, you senseless person, that faith apart from works is barren? 21 Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works. 23 Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, **“**Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God. 24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25 Likewise, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another road?26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, **so faith without works is also dead.**

- **Our FAITH should NOT Doubt -**

Matthew 14:31 - O you of little Faith, why do you doubt?

- **Our FAITH should NOT Worry, about what we should eat, drink or wear**

Matthew 6:30-34 -(AKJV) Why, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O you of little

faith? 31Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. 33But seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. 34Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof.

- **Our FAITH should NOT be, wavering, back slidden, or shrink back, stray from the faith into worldliness,**

Hebrews 10:23 - Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:38, 39

“in a very little while,

the one who is coming will come and will not delay;

38 but my righteous one will live by faith.

My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back.”39 But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved.

- **Our faith should not covet or love money:**

1 Timothy 6:10 -12 (AKJV) For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11But you, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 12Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you are also called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.

- **Anything not of FAITH is sin**

Romans 14:23 - Whatever is not of Faith is sin

- **Faith from God should NOT be in Wisdom of men**

1 Corinthians 2:1-5- (AKJV) And I, brothers, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. 2For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man**’**s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: **5That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.**

- **Some will be disapproved concerning the Faith, they will progress no further, if they don't repent.**

2 Timothy 3:1-9 - (AKJV) This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3Without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5Having a form of godliness,

but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 6For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, 7Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, **so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.** 9But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest to all men, as theirs also was.

- **Knowing God's Word without uniting it with Faith**

Hebrews 4:1-3 -(AKJV) Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 2For to us was the gospel preached, as well as to them: **but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.** 3For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

"As I swore in My wrath,

They shall not enter My rest,"

- **Our Faith in Jesus should not be little to Heal**

Matthew 17:15-21- (AKJV) Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for often he falls into the fire, and oft into the water. 16And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not cure him. 17Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him here to me. 18And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. 19Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? 20And Jesus said to them, Because of your unbelief: for truly I say to you, If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you. 21However, this kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting.

Are some Christians weak in the Faith, or lack Faith?

YES >

Matthew 6:30 - (AKJV) "Why, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Matthew 8:26 -27 (AKJV) And he says to them, Why are you fearful, O you of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. 27But the men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" **Matthew 14:31-33** (AKJV) - And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said to him, O you of little faith, why did you doubt? 32And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. 33Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth you are the Son of God.

Luke 8:25 -(AKJV) And he said to them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commands even the winds and water, and they obey him.

Luke 12:28 (AKJV) If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith?

Romans 14:1- 3 (AKJV) **"**Him that is weak in the faith receive you, but not to doubtful disputations. 2For one believes that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eats herbs. 3Let not him that eats despise him that eats not; and let not him which eats not judge him that eats: for God has received him. 4Who are you that judge another man**'**s servant? to his own master he stands or falls. Yes, he shall be held up: for God is able to make him stand.

(As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions.)

Matthew 13:58 (AKJV) -And he (Jesus) did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.(because of their lack of faith.)

Will God be FAITHFUL, even when we faithless ?

YES, God will be faithful to save the weak and faithless Christians, but we must not harden our heart, ignore the leading Holy Spirit and reject Jesus Christ, and depart from the faith, without repenting. Even though God will be Faithful, when we are faithless, He still won't force anyone to follow Him.

- **2 Timothy 2:12-13** - For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; 13 I**f we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.**
- **2 Thessalonians 3:1-5 (AKJV) -** Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: 2And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith. **3But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil. 4And we have confidence in the Lord touching you,** that you both do and will do the things which we command you. 5And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.
- **1 Corinthians 1:8,9** (AKJV) Who shall also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9God is faithful, by whom you were called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
- **1 John 1:9,10**-(AKJV) If we confess our sins, **he (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,** and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.
- **1 Corinthians 10:13** (AKJV) -There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: **but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able**; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:24** - (AKJV) And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24Faithful is he that calls you, who also will do it.**

Will some Christians choose to stray and depart from the FAITH ?

YES -

1 Timothy 4:1 -(AKJV) Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of (demons)devils;

1 Timothy 1:18-20 -(AKJV) This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on you, that you by them might war a good warfare; 19Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: 20Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

1 Timothy 6:9,10 (AKJV) But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

1 Timothy 6:20-21 (AKJV) **"**O Timothy, keep that which is committed to your trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: 21Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen**."**

Jude 1:3-4 -(AKJV) "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write to you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write to you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. 4For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Matthew 24:9-14; (AKJV) "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and you shall be hated of all nations for my name**'**s sake. 10And then shall many be offended, (At that time many will turn away from the faith) and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. 11And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved. 14And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come.

Will our FAITH in Jesus Christ be TESTED ?

1 Peter 1:6-9 - (AKJV) Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7**That the trial (test) of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire,** might be found to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8Whom having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Luke 22:31-33 (AKJV) **"**And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32**But I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not:** and when you are converted, strengthen your brothers. 33And he said to him, Lord, I am ready to go with you, both into prison, and to death. 34And he said, I tell you,

Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that you shall thrice deny that you know me."

James 1:2-4-(AKJV) "My brothers, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; **3Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience.** 4But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.5If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. 6But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." **1 Thessalonians 3:5**- (AKJV) For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labor be in vain.

Should we examine ourselves to see if we are continuing in the Faith ?

YES >

2 Corinthians 13:5-7 (AKJV) Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates? 6But I trust that you shall know that we are not reprobates. 7Now I pray to God that you do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that you should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

Do we need to supplement our Faith, with anything?

…So as to ensure that we escape from, temptation and the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature ?

YES >

2 Peter 1:3-11-

According as his divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue: 4Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.**5And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.** 8For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9But he that lacks these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 10Why the rather, brothers, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, you shall never fall: 11For so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Should Christians come into UNITY of the FAITH?

YES > Christians who truly follow Jesus Christ and His Word, should come into unity of the Faith between each other, by submitting to the direction and power of the Holy Spirit

into Truth. However, This does not mean that sincere believers and followers of Jesus Christ should accept or unite with individuals who follow other religions, nor should we unite in Faith with false christians who hold fast to doctrines contrary to Christ found in the Bible.

Ephesians 4:11-16-(AKJV) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, **for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:** 14That we from now on be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love.

Philippines 1:27 -(AKJV) Only let your conversation be as it becomes the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

What are some Biblical examples of Faith ?

Hebrews 11:1-40 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2For by it the elders obtained a good report. 3Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

The Examples of Abel, Enoch, and Noah

4By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaks. 5By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. 7By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

The Faith of Abraham

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went. 9By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. 12Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the

sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. 13These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from where they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: why God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he has prepared for them a city. 17By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall your seed be called: 19Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from where also he received him in a figure

The Faith of Isaac

20By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

The Faith of Jacob

21By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff

The Faith of Joseph

22By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

The Faith of Moses

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king**'**s commandment. 24By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh**'**s daughter; 25Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect to the recompense of the reward. 27By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. 28Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. 29By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

The Faith of Other Israelite Heroes

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. 31By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

The Faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets

And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33Who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. 34Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not

accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yes, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Love for God is a natural outflow of genuine faith:

In Matthew 22:37-38, Jesus identifies the greatest commandment: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment." Love for God is a natural outflow of genuine faith. It involves a wholehearted devotion, a deepening intimacy, and a commitment to align one's will with God's. This love for God becomes a driving force in the process of spiritual growth.

Love for Others:

Building upon the foundation of love for God, Jesus emphasizes the second greatest commandment in Matthew 22:39: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Faith in Christ is expressed tangibly through love for others. This love extends beyond mere words to encompass acts of kindness, compassion, and sacrificial service. Loving others becomes both an evidence of genuine faith and a catalyst for further spiritual maturation.

Faith, Love, and Obedience:

In John 14:15, Jesus articulates the connection between faith, love, and obedience: "If you love me, keep my commands." Faith in Jesus naturally leads to love for Him, and this love finds expression in obedience to His teachings. Obedience, then, becomes a practical demonstration of faith and love, contributing significantly to the believer's spiritual growth.

Faith in Jesus Christ and Abiding in the Vine:

The metaphor of the vine and branches, presented by Jesus in John 15:1-8, provides profound insights into spiritual growth. Jesus declares, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me, you can do nothing." This metaphor underscores the vital connection between faith in Jesus Christ and the continual abiding in Him as the source of spiritual sustenance.

Faith and Relationship with God:

Faith is the cornerstone of a thriving relationship with God. In Hebrews 11:6 , we learn that "without faith, it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." As faith deepens, the intimacy of our relationship with God grows, leading to a more profound spiritual journey.

Faith and God's Promises:

Throughout Scripture, we encounter numerous instances where individuals experienced spiritual growth by holding onto God's promises through faith. Abraham and Sarah, for example, patiently waited for the fulfillment of God's pledge to make them parents of

nations (Hebrews 11:11). Their unwavering faith in God's promise contributed to the eventual birth of Isaac, demonstrating the transformative power of faith in the context of divine assurances.

Faith and the Word of God:

The Bible itself (Jesus is the Truth and the Word) becomes a source and sustainer of faith. Romans 10:17 declares, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ." Engaging with the Scriptures, meditating on God's Word, and internalizing its truths contribute to the strengthening of faith, fostering spiritual growth.

Conclusion:

Central to our Christian beliefs and faith is the acknowledgment that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of humanity. In John 14:6, Jesus declares, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Our faith in Jesus, is 'the assurance of things hoped for' such as salvation and eternal life 'the evidence of things not seen' and our total trust and commitment to love and follow him.

Faith in Jesus Christ as the cornerstone of salvation is not just an aspect of spiritual growth—it is the very essence. Accepting Him as Lord and Savior initiates a transformative journey that impacts every facet of one's life, our mind, body, spirit, and soul, so that we can be reconciled to God, taking on the righteousness of Jesus Christ and abiding in Him forever.

In summary, having faith in Jesus Christ is not merely a doctrinal affirmation but the foundation of a transformative walk on the narrow path through the trials of this world unto eternal life with God. This journey is characterized by a deep and abiding love for God and a corresponding love for others. The interaction and relationship between faith in Jesus, love, and obedience to God's word, forms the narrow way of a new life and spiritual growth, resulting in a life that reflects the character of Christ and bears the fruit of the Spirit. As we continue to develop a deeper faith in Jesus, embracing His love and extending it to others, we participate in a continuous process of spiritual maturation that brings glory to God.

Unbiblical HYPER FAITH beliefs

1. The Prosperity Gospel ("Name It and Claim It")

- **Belief:** Faith guarantees wealth, health, and success. If you're struggling, it's due to a lack of faith.

- **Biblical Issue:** While God does bless His people, Scripture warns against greed and teaches that trials are part of Christian growth (1 Timothy 6:9-10, James 1:2-4). Jesus Himself was not wealthy, and Paul often faced hardships (2 Corinthians 11:23-27).

2. Hyper Faith in Healing (God Must Heal Every Time)

- **Belief:** God is always obligated to heal physical sickness if we have enough faith.

- **Biblical Issue:** While God does heal (James 5:14-16), healing is ultimately subject to His sovereign will (2 Corinthians 12:7-10, where Paul was not healed). Faith is important, but it does not force God's hand.

3. Faith Alone Without Works ("Easy Believism")

- **Belief:** Just believe in Jesus, and that's all that matters—no need to do good works or obey God's commands.

- **Biblical Issue:** While we are saved by faith, true faith produces works (James 2:17, Ephesians 2:10). Jesus calls His followers to obedience (John 14:15) and active discipleship (Luke 9:23).

4. Hyper Grace (No Need for Repentance or Overcoming Sin)

- **Belief:** Once saved, we don't need to repent of sin or strive for holiness because God's grace covers everything.

- **Biblical Issue:** While salvation is by grace, believers are called to repentance and transformation (Romans 6:1-2, Hebrews 12:14, 1 John 3:9). Jesus told sinners to "go and sin no more" (John 8:11).

5. Faith That Ignores God's Sovereign Will

- **Belief:** If we pray and believe, God must grant our requests, and we should never accept suffering or unanswered prayers.

- **Biblical Issue:** Jesus prayed, "Not my will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42). Paul accepted God's refusal to remove his "thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Faith trusts God even when He says "no."

6. Hyper Faith in Confession ("Word of Faith" / "Positive Confession")

- **Belief:** If you speak something in faith, it will happen. Your words create reality—so never confess anything negative.

- **Biblical Issue:** While words are powerful (Proverbs 18:21), they do not have the same creative power as God's. Faith does not manipulate reality, but trusts in God's will (Matthew 6:10, James 4:13-15).

7. Hyper Faith in Spiritual Gifts ("Manifestation Over Sound Doctrine")

- **Belief:** The Christian life must be filled with constant supernatural manifestations (prophecy, tongues, miracles), and if you lack these, you lack faith.

- **Biblical Issue:** Spiritual gifts are real (1 Corinthians 12:7-11), but they are distributed by the Holy Spirit **as He wills**, not on demand (1 Corinthians 12:11). A mature Christian life is rooted in faith, love, and obedience, not just experiences (Matthew 7:22-23).

8. Hyper Faith in End-Times Predictions ("Date-Setting and Fear-Based Faith")

- **Belief:** Some claim they have special revelation about when Jesus will return, and everyone must prepare in extreme ways.

- **Biblical Issue:** Jesus said, **"No one knows the day or the hour"** (Matthew 24:36). We should always be spiritually ready, but not obsessed with predictions (Luke 12:40).

9. Hyper Faith in Leadership ("Spiritual Elitism" or "Touch Not the Lord's Anointed")

- **Belief:** Certain preachers, apostles, or prophets are above correction, and questioning them shows a lack of faith.

- **Biblical Issue:** Even Paul was held accountable (Galatians 2:11), and leaders must be tested by Scripture (1 John 4:1, Acts 17:11). No one is beyond correction (2 Timothy 3:16).

10. Hyper Faith in Religious Rituals ("Legalism Over Relationship")

- **Belief:** Following strict religious rules (e.g., tithing exactly 10%, fasting on specific days, praying a certain way) guarantees blessings.

- **Biblical Issue:** Obedience is important, but rituals do not earn salvation (Romans 3:28, Matthew 23:23). God desires **a relationship** with us, not just outward actions (Hosea 6:6).

11. Hyper Faith in Self ("You Are a Little God")

- **Belief:** Since we are made in God's image, we have divine power and can control reality like God.

- **Biblical Issue:** Humans reflect God's image (Genesis 1:27), but we are **not** divine. God alone is sovereign (Isaiah 46:9-10). The desire to "be like God" was Satan's original deception (Genesis 3:5).

12. Hyper Faith in Tradition ("Religious Superstition")

- **Belief:** Certain traditions or objects (holy water, prayer cloths, anointing oil) guarantee blessings or protection.

- **Biblical Issue:** While God can use objects symbolically (e.g., Paul**'**s handkerchief in Acts 19:11-12), faith must be in **God, not the object** (Jeremiah 7:4, John 4:23-24).

13. Hyper Faith in Angels and Supernatural Encounters

- **Belief:** Some people claim constant angelic visitations, out-of-body experiences, or divine encounters and insist that true faith requires these supernatural events.

- **Biblical Issue:** While angels and visions occur in Scripture, they are not the foundation of faith (Colossians 2:18). Even Paul warned against relying on angelic revelations (Galatians 1:8). True faith is based on God's Word, not personal experiences (2 Peter 1:19).

14. Hyper Faith That Ignores Suffering ("Suffering Means Lack of Faith")

- **Belief:** If you are sick, poor, or facing hardship, it's because you lack faith. A true believer should always live in victory.

- **Biblical Issue:** Jesus promised we would have trouble (John 16:33), and Paul suffered greatly despite his strong faith (2 Corinthians 11:23-30). God uses trials to refine our faith (1 Peter 1:6-7).

15. Hyper Faith in Church Growth ("Bigger Is Always Better")

- **Belief:** If a church is growing fast, it must be because of great faith. A small church means a lack of faith.

- **Biblical Issue:** While church growth is good, Jesus focused on making **disciples, not just big crowds** (Matthew 28:19-20). Many biblical prophets and leaders had small followings (Jeremiah, Elijah, even Jesus at times—John 6:66). Faithfulness, not size, is what matters.

16. Hyper Faith in Emotion ("Feelings Over Truth")

- **Belief:** If I don't **feel** God's presence, something is wrong. True faith is always accompanied by strong emotions.

- **Biblical Issue:** Faith is trusting God's promises **regardless of feelings** (2 Corinthians 5:7). Jesus felt forsaken on the cross (Matthew 27:46), but He still trusted the Father. Faith is not based on emotions but on truth (Romans 10:17).

17. Hyper Faith in Self-Appointed "Prophets"

- **Belief:** Some people claim direct revelation from God that overrides Scripture or normal biblical authority.

- **Biblical Issue:** While prophecy exists, it must be tested by Scripture (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21). Many false prophets arise (Matthew 24:24), and no revelation should contradict the Bible (Deuteronomy 13:1-3).

18. Hyper Faith That Ignores Wisdom ("Faith Over Common Sense")

- **Belief:** If you have faith, you don't need doctors, safety measures, or wise planning—just trust God blindly.

- **Biblical Issue:** God calls us to use wisdom (Proverbs 4:7). Paul advised Timothy to take medicine (1 Timothy 5:23), and Jesus told Satan that testing God was wrong (Matthew 4:5-7). True faith includes wisdom and responsibility.

19. Hyper Faith That Claims We Can Be "Sinless" on Earth

- **Belief:** Some believe that after salvation, a Christian can reach a point where they never sin again.

- **Biblical Issue:** Even Paul acknowledged struggling with sin (Romans 7:15-25). While we should pursue holiness (1 Peter 1:16), **sinless perfection** will only be achieved in heaven (1 John 1:8-10).

20. Hyper Faith in Politics ("Christian Nationalism")

- **Belief:** Some believe that if a nation is truly faithful, it will become a **Christian government**, and God's blessings depend on this.

- **Biblical Issue:** While Christians should influence society (Matthew 5:13-16), Jesus said His kingdom is **not of this world** (John 18:36). Our hope is in Christ, not politics (Philippians 3:20).

21. Hyper Faith That Dismisses Theology ("Theology Kills the Spirit")

- **Belief:** Studying doctrine and theology is unnecessary—just "love Jesus" and avoid deep study.

- **Biblical Issue:** We are commanded to grow in knowledge (2 Peter 3:18). The Bereans were praised for studying Scripture (Acts 17:11). Faith is strengthened by understanding truth (Hosea 4:6).

22. Hyper Faith That Focuses Only on "Revival Fire"

- **Belief:** True faith is all about constant **revival, signs, and fresh movements**—if we aren't in a "revival" season, we're missing out.

- **Biblical Issue:** Revival is good, but **daily faithfulness matters more** (Luke 16:10). Some seek **spiritual highs** instead of true discipleship (Luke 9:23).

23. Hyper Faith in Dreams and Visions ("God Speaks to Me Directly About Everything")

- **Belief:** Every dream or vision is a direct message from God, and personal revelations override Scripture.

- **Biblical Issue:** While God can speak through dreams (Joel 2:28, Matthew 1:20), not every dream is from Him (Jeremiah 23:25-28). Scripture is the ultimate authority (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

24. Hyper Faith That Rejects Medical Help ("Faith Healing Only")

- **Belief:** Taking medicine or seeing a doctor shows a lack of faith in God**’**s healing power.

- **Biblical Issue:** God can heal miraculously, but He also uses **doctors and medicine** (Luke 10:34, 1 Timothy 5:23). Jesus said the sick **need a physician** (Mark 2:17). Faith and medicine are not opposites.

25. Hyper Faith That Seeks Special Anointing ("You Need a Special Man of God to Lay Hands on You")

- **Belief:** Only a special preacher, prophet, or "anointed" leader can release God's power into your life. Laying on hands is biblical, however we should be still careful who lays their hands on us in prayer if they are not living acccording to God’s word. Any sincere Christian who truly follows Jesus can lay hands on someome and pray for for them.

- **Biblical Issue:** Every believer has access to God through Christ (Hebrews 4:16). The Holy Spirit works in all true Christians in various ways, not just a select few (Romans 8:9, 1 John 2:27).

26. Hyper Faith in Fasting ("Extreme Fasting for Miracles")

- **Belief:** If you fast long enough (e.g., 40 days), God will give you anything you ask.

- **Biblical Issue:** Fasting is about seeking God, not forcing His hand (Isaiah 58:6-9). Jesus fasted, but He never used it as a tool to manipulate God (Matthew 4:1-11).

27. Hyper Faith That Declares "No More Judgment" ("God is Only Love, No Wrath")

- **Belief:** God no longer judges sin—He is only about love and grace. Hell and judgment are outdated teachings.

- **Biblical Issue:** While God is love (1 John 4:8), He is also holy and just (Hebrews 12:29). Jesus Himself spoke about judgment and hell (Matthew 10:28, John 5:22).

28. Hyper Faith That Says "The Bible is Not Enough" ("We Need More Revelation")

- **Belief:** The Bible is good, but **we need new revelations, books, and prophetic words** to really understand God.

- **Biblical Issue:** The Bible is **complete and sufficient** (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Adding new revelations can lead to deception (Revelation 22:18-19). However some Bibles studies and biblical references are good and always are in conjunction with and consistanr with the Bible. Along with Bible, God's word and Holy Spirit we are led into all truth.

29. Hyper Faith in Giving ("Sow a Seed to Get Rich")

- **Belief:** If you give money (to a pastor, church, or ministry), God is obligated to make you rich.

- **Biblical Issue:** While giving is biblical (2 Corinthians 9:7), God does not guarantee financial prosperity in return. Jesus warned against greed (Luke 12:15). True blessings are spiritual (Ephesians 1:3).

30. Hyper Faith in Personal Prophecies ("The Prophet Said It, So It Must Happen")

- **Belief:** If a prophet speaks a word over your life, it must come true no matter what.

- **Biblical Issue:** Prophecy must be tested (1 John 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21). False prophets exist (Matthew 7:15). Even true prophecies are **conditional** on obedience (Jeremiah 18:7-10).

31. Hyper Faith That Focuses Only on Miracles ("Christian Life Should Always Be Spectacular")

- **Belief:** A true Christian life is filled with **daily miracles, supernatural encounters, and power displays**—if you**'**re not seeing this, something is wrong.

- **Biblical Issue:** While miracles happen, the Christian walk is **often about daily faithfulness, not constant miracles** (Luke 16:10, 1 Corinthians 4:2). Even Jesus refused to perform miracles just to prove Himself (Matthew 12:38-39).

32. Hyper Faith That Ignores Persecution ("Christians Should Always Live in Peace")

- **Belief:** If you have faith, people will love and accept you—you won**'**t face persecution or opposition.

- **Biblical Issue:** Jesus said His followers **will** face persecution (John 15:18-20, 2 Timothy 3:12). The apostles suffered greatly despite their strong faith (Acts 5:40-41).

33. Hyper Faith That Denies Free Will ("God Controls Everything, We Do Nothing")

- **Belief:** Since God is sovereign, humans have no real responsibility—everything is predetermined.
- **Biblical Issue:** While God is sovereign (Isaiah 46:9-10), He also calls us to **repent, obey, and make choices** (Joshua 24:15, Romans 10:9-10). Faith does not mean passivity.

34. Hyper Faith That Expects Instant Results ("God Works on My Timeline")

- **Belief:** If I pray or step out in faith, I should see **immediate** answers—waiting means I lack faith.
- **Biblical Issue:** Many of God**'**s promises require patience (Hebrews 6:12, Isaiah 40:31). Abraham waited 25 years for Isaac (Genesis 21:5), and Joseph endured years of trials before his dreams came true (Genesis 50:20).

35. Hyper Faith That Denies Spiritual Warfare ("The Devil Has No Power At All")

- **Belief:** Since Jesus defeated Satan, Christians never need to engage in spiritual warfare.
- **Biblical Issue:** Jesus won the victory (Colossians 2:15), but we are still called to **resist the devil** (James 4:7), **put on the armor of God** (Ephesians 6:10-18), and be aware of his schemes (1 Peter 5:8).

36. Hyper Faith That Says "Just Follow Your Heart"

- **Belief:** If you follow your heart, God will always guide you in the right direction.
- **Biblical Issue:** The Bible warns that the heart is **deceitful** (Jeremiah 17:9). We must follow **God's Word, not our emotions** (Psalm 119:105).

38. Hyper Faith That Seeks Power Over Humility ("More Power, More Anointing")

- **Belief:** The goal of faith is to receive **more spiritual power, authority, and anointing** rather than humility and servanthood.
- **Biblical Issue:** Jesus taught that **true greatness is in serving** (Matthew 23:11-12). The apostles sought power, but Jesus corrected them (Mark 10:35-45).

39. Hyper Faith That Overemphasizes Angels and Demons ("Everything Is Spiritual Warfare")

- **Belief:** Every problem in life is caused by demons, and every blessing is from angelic intervention—everything is a supernatural battle.

- **Biblical Issue:** While spiritual warfare is real (Ephesians 6:12), not every issue is demonic. Sometimes, problems arise from personal choices (Galatians 6:7-8) or natural causes (Ecclesiastes 9:11).

40. Hyper Faith That Avoids the Old Testament ("We Only Follow Jesus' Teachings")

- **Belief:** The Old Testament is outdated and irrelevant—only Jesus **'**words in the New Testament matter.

- **Biblical Issue:** Jesus Himself affirmed the Old Testament (Matthew 5:17-18). Paul wrote that **all Scripture** (including the Old Testament) is useful for teaching (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

41. Hyper Faith That Focuses Only on Worship Experiences ("Worship Over the Word")

- **Belief:** The deeper the worship experience (music, emotions, atmosphere), the more spiritual a person is.

- **Biblical Issue:** Worship is important (John 4:24), but faith must be **rooted in God's Word** (Romans 10:17). Emotions can be deceptive (Jeremiah 17:9). True worship includes obedience (1 Samuel 15:22).

42. Hyper Faith That Rejects All Traditions ("Everything Old Is Religious and Legalistic")

- **Belief:** Any tradition—whether in church, family, or culture—is automatically bad and must be rejected.

- **Biblical Issue:** While Jesus opposed **man-made traditions that contradict Scripture** (Mark 7:8), some traditions are good (2 Thessalonians 2:15, 1 Corinthians 11:2). The key is whether a tradition aligns with God**'**s Word.

43. Hyper Faith That Promotes Isolation ("I Don't Need Church, Just Jesus")

- **Belief:** If I have faith in Jesus, I don**'**t need to go to church or be accountable to a local body of believers.

- **Biblical Issue:** God designed the church for **fellowship, teaching, and spiritual growth** (Hebrews 10:25, Acts 2:42). Even Jesus participated in synagogue gatherings (Luke 4:16).

44. Hyper Faith That Emphasizes Perfectionism ("A Real Christian Never Struggles")

- **Belief:** If you truly have faith, you will never struggle with doubts, temptations, or weaknesses.

- **Biblical Issue:** Even strong believers like **John the Baptist (Matthew 11:2-3)** and **Paul (Romans 7:15-25)** had struggles. Faith is about perseverance, not perfection (Philippians 3:12-14).

45. Hyper Faith That Creates "Super Apostles" ("Certain Leaders Have More Access to God")

- **Belief:** Some pastors, prophets, or apostles have **a higher level of access to God** than normal believers.

- **Biblical Issue:** While leaders have important roles (Ephesians 4:11-12), **every believer has direct access to God** (Hebrews 4:16, 1 Peter 2:9). There are no **“**elite” Christians.

46. Hyper Faith That Relies on Objects ("Prayer Cloths, Holy Water, and Oil Have Power")

- **Belief:** Certain physical objects (like anointed oil, special water, or a preacher**’**s handkerchief) contain supernatural power.

- **Biblical Issue:** While God can use objects (Acts 19:11-12), **faith should be in God, not things** (Jeremiah 7:4, Matthew 9:20-22). Idolatry is when we put trust in objects instead of God (Exodus 20:3-5).

47. Hyper Faith That Over-Spiritualizes Everything ("God Told Me What Color Shirt to Wear")

- **Belief:** God speaks about **every** little decision (e.g., what to eat, what to wear, what route to take).

- **Biblical Issue:** God gives wisdom for decision-making (James 1:5), but not every choice requires a supernatural sign. Paul made plans **without always hearing a direct word from God** (Acts 16:6-10).

48. Hyper Faith That Believes God's Will Is Always Clear ("God Will Speak Clearly Every Time")

- **Belief:** If I have faith, I will always **know exactly what God wants me to do**—there is no uncertainty.

- **Biblical Issue:** Even strong believers sometimes had to **wait** or make decisions based on wisdom (1 Corinthians 16:12, 2 Corinthians 2:12-13). God**'**s guidance isn**'**t always instant (Psalm 37:23).

49. Hyper Faith That Believes "Praying Once Is Enough" ("Repeating Prayers Shows Doubt")

- **Belief:** If you really have faith, you only need to pray once—praying multiple times shows unbelief.

- **Biblical Issue:** Jesus taught **persistent prayer** (Luke 18:1-8). Paul prayed repeatedly for his thorn to be removed (2 Corinthians 12:8). Jesus Himself prayed multiple times in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:44).

50. Hyper Faith That Creates "Christian Superstitions" ("Don't Say Certain Words, or Bad Things Will Happen")

- **Belief:** If you speak something negative, you invite bad things into your life; if you say something positive, blessings come.

- **Biblical Issue:** While words matter (Proverbs 18:21), **faith is not magic**—God is sovereign, and words don**'**t control reality (Isaiah 46:9-10). True faith trusts God, not superstitions (Psalm 115:3).

51. Hyper Faith in God's Grace That Allows Deliberate Sinning ("Grace Covers Everything, So I Can Live However I Want")

Belief:

- Some people believe that once they are saved, **they can sin freely without consequence** because God**'**s grace will always cover them.

- They misuse **Romans 6:14** ("you are not under the law but under grace") to justify **deliberate sin**.

- They reject repentance, saying, **"**God forgives me no matter what, so I don**'**t need to change."

Final Thoughts:

Hyper Faith:

- Hyper Faith often takes a **biblical truth to an extreme** where it **no longer aligns with Scripture**.

- Hyper faith often replaces **biblical truth with extreme, unbalanced unbiblical interpetations of God's word, half truths, worldly non-christian beliefs**. True faith

is about **trusting God’s promises, submitting to His will, and living in obedience to His Word**.

- **Hyper faith often tries to control God, distort grace, or replace biblical truth with human ideas.**

True Faith:

- True faith is in Jesus, folowing His example and in His love
- Rightly divides God’s word in spirit and truth;
- True Faith relies on God’s Holy Spirit for discernment and understanding of God’s word and will, always taking into consideration the consistantcy of the whole word of God in the Bible
- Focus and Trust in Jesus, not personal gain (Colossians 2:6-7 **Trusts in God’s promises** (Hebrews 11:1) **Submits to His will** (Luke 22:42) **Is balanced with wisdom** (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- **True faith is grounded in God’s Word, balanced with humility, and always submitted to God's sovereign will.**

(43) Take on the Righteousness of Jesus by Faith:

By Believing and Having Faith In Jesus and What He Alone has done

Philippines 3:9-11 AKJV “And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; 11If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.”

Introduction

The importance of receiving the righteousness of Jesus by faith is central to the gospel message. As sinners, humans are incapable of achieving righteousness on their own. However, through faith in Jesus Christ, believers are declared righteous by God, not because of any merit of their own, but because of the perfect righteousness of Christ. This great exchange—the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer—is one of the most profound truths of the Christian faith. It is by faith alone that we receive this righteousness, and it is through faith that we are justified before God. This commentary will explore the biblical teaching on receiving the righteousness of Christ by faith, the significance of this truth, and how it impacts the life of a believer.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Righteousness by Faith

The concept of righteousness by faith is rooted in the Old Testament but comes to full clarity in the New Testament through the life and work of Jesus Christ.

1.1 The Old Testament Foundation: The Righteousness of God

Genesis 15:6 (AKJV)— *"And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.."*
In the story of Abraham, God credited Abraham**'**s faith as righteousness. This passage is foundational because it establishes the principle that righteousness comes through faith, even before the death and resurrection of Jesus. Abraham**'**s faith in God was the means by which he was justified, and his example foreshadows the righteousness that would come through faith in Christ.

Habakkuk 2:4 (AKJV)— *"Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith."* The righteous live by faith, not by works or by the law. This principle, which is emphasized by the prophet Habakkuk, is later quoted by Paul in the New Testament and underscores the ongoing importance of faith in the believer's life. The righteousness that comes through faith is not a new concept but one rooted in the Scriptures.

1.2 Righteousness Through Faith in Christ: The New Testament Revelation

Romans 3:22 (AKJV)— *"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ to all and on all them that believe: for there is no difference: ."* Paul teaches that the righteousness of God is available to all people, but it is only received through faith in Jesus Christ. This righteousness is not earned by human effort but is a gift from God to those who trust in Jesus for salvation.

Romans 5:1 (AKJV)— *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"* Justification, or being declared righteous before God, is by faith alone. This verse shows that when we trust in Jesus Christ, we are immediately justified by God. This justification results in peace with God, as our sins are forgiven, and we are reconciled to Him.

Philippians 3:9 (AKJV)— *"“And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:."* Paul makes it clear that righteousness cannot be obtained through legalistic adherence to the law, but rather it comes through faith in Jesus Christ. The righteousness believers receive is not their own but is a gift from God, imputed to them by faith in Christ.

2. The Great Exchange: Our Sin for Christ’s Righteousness

The heart of the gospel is the great exchange: Jesus takes on our sin, and we take on His righteousness. This exchange is central to understanding how believers are justified before God.

2.1 Christ’s Righteousness Imputed to Us

2 Corinthians 5:21 (AKJV)— *"For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* This verse beautifully summarizes the great exchange. Jesus, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, taking upon Himself the penalty for our sin. In return, through faith in Him, we are made the righteousness of God. This imputation of Christ**'**s righteousness is a key aspect of salvation, as it is not based on our own righteousness but on the perfection of Jesus.

Romans 4:5 (AKJV)— *"But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."* Salvation and righteousness come not through works but through faith. When we believe in Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross, God counts our faith as righteousness. It is a transaction in which our sins are forgiven, and we are credited with Christ's righteousness.

2.2 The Absence of Condemnation

Romans 8:1 (AKJV)— *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"* When believers take on the righteousness of Christ through faith, they are no longer condemned. The penalty for sin has been paid, and God no longer holds the believer's sins against them. This freedom from condemnation is the result of being clothed with the righteousness of Jesus, not through our own merit but through faith in His finished work.

3. The Significance of Righteousness by Faith

Understanding righteousness by faith transforms how a believer lives and interacts with God, themselves, and others.

3.1 The Assurance of Salvation

Romans 3:28 (AKJV)— *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."* The righteousness that comes through faith gives believers the assurance of salvation. It is not based on personal performance or adherence to the law but on the completed work of Jesus Christ. This assures the believer that they are forever secure in their standing before God.

Ephesians 2:8-10 (AKJV)— *"*For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.*"* Salvation is by grace through faith, a gift from God, not something that can be earned. This assurance frees the believer from striving for righteousness through works and leads them to rest in the sufficiency of Christ's work on their behalf.

3.2 Transformation of the Believer's Life

Romans 6:13 (AKJV)— *"Neither yield you your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin: but yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God"* Righteousness by faith does not simply declare the believer righteous but also transforms the believer's life. As one who has received the righteousness of Christ, the believer is now called to live in a way that reflects this new identity. The righteousness they have been given by faith should be expressed in their actions, living in obedience to God.

Philippians 3:8-9 (AKJV)— *"Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"* Paul, in these verses, expresses the surpassing worth of knowing Christ and being found in Him. For Paul, the righteousness that comes by faith in Jesus surpasses any attempt at self-righteousness

through the law. This righteousness leads to a transformed life, one that is dedicated to knowing Christ more deeply and living for Him.

3.3 The Call to Live by Faith

Galatians 2:20 (AKJV)— *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."* Living by faith means allowing Christ's righteousness to govern every area of life. The believer's identity is now found in Christ, and their life is lived in faith, depending on Him for strength, guidance, and righteousness. Faith is not just the means of receiving righteousness; it is the way of living out that righteousness daily.

4.Taking on the Righteousness of Jesus by Faith

Receiving the righteousness of Christ by faith is both a one-time act and a daily practice. Here are key steps in taking on Christ's righteousness by faith:

4.1 Believe in Jesus Christ

John 3:16,17 (AKJV)— *"*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*"* Faith begins with believing in Jesus Christ—trusting in His work on the cross as the means of salvation. This belief is not simply intellectual but involves a deep trust in Christ as the Savior.

4.2 Confess Your Need for His Righteousness

Romans 10:9 (AKJV)— *"That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved."* Confession is an outward expression of inward faith. Believers confess that Jesus is Lord and trust in His righteousness for salvation. This is an essential step in taking on the righteousness of Jesus.

4.3 Live in the Power of the Holy Spirit

Romans 8:4 (AKJV)— *"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."* Living by the Spirit enables the believer to walk in righteousness. The Holy Spirit empowers believers to live in accordance with God's will, reflecting the righteousness they have received by faith.

5. Conclusion: Righteousness by Faith—A Gift to Be Received and Lived

The righteousness of Jesus Christ, received by faith, is a gift that God imparts to those who sincerely believe in Him and transforms our spiritual nature, assurance, and newness of life. It is through faith that we are justified before God, clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and empowered to live in obedience to Him. This righteousness is not earned by works but given freely to all who trust in Jesus Christ. As we take on the righteousness of Christ by faith, we are called to live out that righteousness in every area of our lives, reflecting the transformation that faith in Christ brings.

Righteousness Which Is Of God By Faith - Continued…

Philippines 3:9-11 AKJV “And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; 11If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.”

In the continuation of his epistle to the Philippians, the apostle Paul delves deeper into the heart of Christian faith, declaring in Philippians 3:9-11, "And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, “…

Here, Paul unveils the profound truth that true righteousness—a righteousness that is acceptable to God—is not attained through human effort or adherence to religious rituals, but is instead received as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ. It is a righteousness that originates from God Himself and is made available to all who place their trust in Christ's finished work on the cross. This radical shift in perspective dismantles any notion of self-righteousness and highlights the all-sufficiency of Christ's atoning sacrifice.

To be found in Christ and clothed in His righteousness is to experience a radical transformation at the core of our being. It is to exchange our futile attempts at self-justification for the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed to us by faith. This righteousness not only covers our sinfulness but also empowers us to live lives that are pleasing to God, as we are enabled by His Spirit to walk in obedience and holiness.

Furthermore, Paul's desire to know Christ intimately goes beyond mere intellectual knowledge; it encompasses a deep, experiential understanding of the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. It is a walk of identification with Christ, sharing in His triumphs and His sufferings, and ultimately being conformed to His image. This transformative process, though marked by challenges and trials, ultimately leads to the glorious promise of resurrection from the dead—a hope that sustains us in the midst of life's trials and uncertainties.

As we meditate on these profound truths, may we be reminded of the immeasurable value and necessity of the righteousness of Jesus that comes from God by faith. May we embrace Jesus and his righteousness by faith with gratitude and humility, recognizing our utter dependence on Christ for our salvation and sanctification. And may our hearts be stirred to pursue an intimate relationship with Him, knowing that in Him alone do we find true righteousness, true power, and true fellowship.

(44) Communion - The Last Supper

The Significance of Communion: Remembering Christ's Sacrifice

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:23-30 (AKJV) “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered to you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24And when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood:

this do you, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of me. 26For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till he come. 27Why whoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.."

Communion,, holds deep significance for disciples and followers of Jesus Christ. It is a important act of remembrance of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, and the sacrificial love that He gave to us, by laying down His life that we could be redeemed and saved.

In 1 Corinthians 11, the Apostle Paul recounts the words of Jesus spoken during the Last Supper, where He instituted the practice of communion. As Jesus broke bread and shared the cup with His disciples, He instructed them to do this in remembrance of Him. In this act, Jesus symbolically represented His body, broken for us, and His blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins.

Communion serves as a powerful reminder of Christ's sacrificial love and the redemption we have received through His death and resurrection. As we partake of the bread and the cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again. It is very special time and act, as we reflect on the incredible gift of salvation made possible through Christ's sacrifice. Beyond its significance as a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice, communion also serves to unite believers as one body. As we partake together, we participate in the communion of saints, recognizing our shared identity as members of the body of Christ. It is a time of fellowship, worship, and spiritual growth, as we commune with God and with one another. We are reminded of the magnitude of the sacrificial love that Jesus Christ has given us.

Additionally, communion anticipates the future hope of Christ's return. As we look forward to the fulfillment of God's kingdom, communion serves as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet that awaits us. It is a celebration of the victory won for us through Christ's death and resurrection and a declaration of our faith in His promised return.

In conclusion, communion holds deep significance for all of us as believers and followers of Jesus Christ, serving as a important remembrance of Christ's sacrifice, a symbol of our unity as the body of Christ, and a proclamation of our hope in His return. May we approach the time of communion and fellowship with other Christians with reverence and gratitude, remembering the words of Jesus: "Do this in remembrance of me."

(45) Total Commitment to Jesus Christ:

Without Lukewarmness or double mindedness

Scripture Reading: Revelation 3:15-16, James 1:8, Luke 9:62

Reflection:

God has instructed and call us to have total commitment to Jesus Christ , and that becomes ever more and more vital for our own well being and as well as for those around us. Revelation 3:15-16 (AKJV) challenges us with a striking image: **“**I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I would you were cold or hot. 16So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth” This passage emphasizes that a half-hearted approach to faith is unacceptable. Jesus desires our full devotion, urging us to take a stand for Him in every aspect of our lives.

James 1:8 tells us that "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." When we waver between following Christ and pursuing worldly desires, we hinder our ability to grow in faith and clarity. Total commitment means aligning our thoughts, actions, and desires with the teachings of Christ, allowing His truth to guide us unreservedly.

Jesus illustrates this commitment in Luke 9:62, stating, **“**No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.” Here, He calls us to move forward in faith without hesitation or doubt. Total commitment requires us to leave behind the past—our fears, regrets, and old ways of living—and fully embrace the new life He offers.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Help me to examine my heart and reveal any areas where I may be lukewarm or double-minded. Grant me the strength and resolve to fully commit my life to You. Teach me to focus on Your ways and not look back, trusting that Your plans for me are good. Fill me with the Holy Spirit so I can serve You wholeheartedly and reflect Your love to those around me. In Jesus **’** name, I pray. Amen.

Application:

1. **Evaluate Your Commitment:** Take time this week to reflect on your relationship with Jesus. Are there areas where you feel lukewarm? Write them down and pray for guidance and strength to fully commit those areas to Him.
2. **Set Clear Intentions:** Identify one specific action you can take this week to demonstrate your commitment to Christ—whether it**’**s serving others, sharing your faith, or dedicating time for prayer and study of Scripture.
3. **Surround Yourself with Support:** Connect with fellow believers who encourage you in your walk with Christ. Share your commitment journey with them, and seek accountability and prayer support.

Remember, total commitment to Jesus is a daily choice. Let**’**s strive to be steadfast in our faith, fully devoted, and unwavering in our love for Him.

(46) Total Commitment to Jesus:

Surrendering All to Follow Him:

Scripture: **Luke 9:23-26** (AKJV) “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24For whoever will save his life shall lose it: but whoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? 26For whoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels. .”

Jesus's call to discipleship is one of total commitment—surrendering our entire lives to follow Him. It's not merely about adding Jesus to our lives; it's about giving Him complete control over every aspect of who we are.

Total commitment to Jesus means denying ourselves—putting aside our own desires, ambitions, and agendas—and submitting to His lordship. It involves taking up our cross daily—embracing the sacrificial life of discipleship, with all its challenges and trials. And it requires following Him wholeheartedly—walking in His footsteps, obeying His teachings, and aligning our lives with His will.

This level of commitment goes beyond mere intellectual assent or occasional religious activity; it's a radical reorientation of our priorities, values, and goals. It's about making Jesus the center of our lives, above everything and everyone else.

Total commitment to Jesus affects every area of our lives—our relationships, our careers, our finances, our time—all are submitted to His authority and used for His purposes. It's a lifelong journey of transformation, as we continually surrender to His leading and allow Him to shape us into His image.

But total commitment to Jesus also brings unparalleled blessings and rewards. It leads to a life of purpose, fulfillment, and eternal significance. It deepens our intimacy with God, strengthens our faith, and empowers us to make a difference in the world around us.

As we consider what it means to be totally committed to Jesus, let's reflect on His own words: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24,). May we embrace the call to discipleship with wholehearted devotion, trusting that in surrendering all to Jesus, we find true freedom, joy, and life abundantly.

Total Commitment to Jesus: Surrendering All to Follow Him - Continued…

Text: Luke 9:23 (AKJV): *“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

Introduction: The Call to Total Commitment

In Luke 9:23, Jesus presents a clear and direct call to discipleship. This call involves a total commitment to follow Him, surrendering every aspect of our lives in obedience to His will. The concept of following Jesus is not just a passive acknowledgment of His teachings but an active, daily decision to abandon our own desires and to choose His path. It is a radical call to forsake self-centeredness and to embrace a life of sacrifice, trust, and obedience.

This commentary will delve into the biblical understanding of total commitment to Jesus. It will explore the foundational aspects of surrendering all to follow Him, the cost of discipleship, and the rewards of a life fully devoted to Christ. In doing so, we will examine how true commitment to Jesus transforms not only our relationship with Him but our entire outlook on life and our role in His kingdom.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Total Commitment to God the Father (YaHWeH), Jesus (Yeshua) and the Holy Spirit

The call to follow God with total commitment is not a new instruction introduced by Jesus in the Gospels, but one that has deep roots in the entire biblical narrative. From the Old Testament to the New, God calls His people to wholehearted devotion and obedience.

1.1 Old Testament Precedents of Commitment

In the Old Testament, God calls His people to a covenantal relationship that requires total dedication and allegiance to Him alone. This call for exclusivity and loyalty is seen in the lives of figures like Abraham, Moses, and the prophets.

Abraham's Faith and Obedience Scripture Reference: Genesis 12:1-4 God's call to Abraham to leave his homeland and family was an invitation to total surrender. Abraham's willingness to follow God's command without knowing the full details of the journey reflects the kind of total commitment that Jesus calls His disciples to. Quote: *"Now the LORD had said to Abram, Get you out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you:"* (Genesis 12:1 AKJV))

Abraham's story illustrates a radical obedience, marked by his trust in God's promises and his willingness to follow wherever God led, even when the outcome was uncertain.

1.2 Jesus 'Call to Radical Discipleship

In the New Testament, Jesus intensifies the call to commitment, urging His followers to give up everything in order to follow Him. His call is not for mere acknowledgment but for a life-changing, sacrificial devotion.

The Rich Young Ruler Scripture Reference: Matthew 19:16-30 The encounter between Jesus and the rich young ruler is a powerful illustration of the cost of discipleship. Jesus challenges the ruler to sell his possessions, give to the poor, and follow Him, showing that attachment to wealth and self-sufficiency can hinder one's ability to follow Jesus wholeheartedly. Quote: *"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."* (Matthew 19:22)

In this story, Jesus highlights the difficulty of true commitment, pointing out that anything that competes with our allegiance to Him must be forsaken.

1.3 The Disciples 'Example of Commitment

The twelve disciples provide a model of what it looks like to surrender everything to follow Jesus. In Matthew 4:19-20, Jesus calls Peter and Andrew, and immediately they leave their nets and follow Him. The immediacy of their response demonstrates the depth of their commitment. Quote: *"And they straightway left their nets, and followed him."* (Matthew 4:20)

This act of leaving their livelihood and security to follow Jesus serves as a powerful example of the kind of total commitment required to be His disciple.

2. The Cost of Discipleship: Denying Self and Taking Up the Cross

In Luke 9:23, Jesus outlines the cost of discipleship through three commands: deny oneself, take up the cross daily, and follow Him. These actions are the core of what it means to be fully committed to Jesus.

2.1 Denying Self: A Call to Reprioritize Our Desires

To "deny oneself" means to reject the natural inclination to live for personal comfort, pleasure, and security. It involves putting God's will above our own desires, making His kingdom our priority. This is a daily decision to surrender our personal ambitions and embrace God's purpose for our lives.

2.2 Taking Up the Cross: Embracing Sacrifice and Suffering

The cross symbolizes the ultimate sacrifice, and to "take up the cross" means to be willing to endure hardship, persecution, and even death for the sake of Christ. Jesus **'**own sacrifice on the cross serves as the ultimate example of what it means to give everything in obedience to God.

In **Mark 8:34-37**(AKJV) , Jesus tells the crowd, **"**And when he had called the people to him with his disciples also, he said to them, Whoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 35For whoever will save his life shall lose it; but whoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel**'**s, the same shall save it. 36For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 38Whoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels..*"* This command challenges us as Christians to embrace the discomfort and opposition that often come with faithful discipleship.

2.3 Following Jesus: A Life of Continuous Obedience

Following Jesus is not a one-time decision but a continuous, lifelong pursuit of His will. It involves not only believing in Him but also acting on His teachings and living as He lived. It is a daily walk of obedience, surrender, and dependence on the Holy Spirit to empower us.

3. The Rewards of Total Commitment

While the cost of discipleship is high, Jesus also promises great rewards for those who are fully committed to Him.

3.1 Eternal Life and Reward

Jesus assures His followers that their sacrifice will not go unnoticed. In **Matthew 19:29-30** (AKJV), He says, **"***And every one that has forsaken houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name***'***s sake, shall receive an hundred times, and shall inherit everlasting life. 30But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first."*

The reward of eternal life is the ultimate promise for those who surrender all to follow Christ. This eternal perspective gives believers the strength to endure trials and hardships on earth, knowing that their commitment to Jesus will be richly rewarded in the life to come.

3.2 The Presence of Jesus and His Peace

In addition to the promise of eternal life, total commitment to Jesus brings the joy and peace of walking in close fellowship with Him. Philippians 4:7 reminds us that the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

4. How Christians Can Develop Total Commitment to Jesus

Total commitment to Jesus is not something we can achieve through our own strength but is a result of the Holy Spirit's work within us. Here are ways to develop this commitment:

4.1 Through Prayer and Surrender

Total commitment begins with daily surrender in prayer. It is through prayer that we align our hearts with God's will, submit our desires to His, and ask for His strength to follow Him wholeheartedly. This entails putting of our old sinful ways and surrendering our self-will to willfully choosing to do God's will.

4.2 Through Bible Study and Obedience

The Scriptures reveal God**'**s will and provide the guidance necessary to live a committed life. Regular study of the Word and obedience to its commands is essential in strengthening our resolve to follow Jesus.

4.3 Through Community and Accountability

Being part of a Christian church or fellowship helps to reinforce our commitment to Christ. Fellow believers can encourage, challenge, and pray for us as we pursue total commitment to Jesus. Accountability within the body of Christ is vital for maintaining a faithful walk.

Conclusion: Living a Life Fully Surrendered to Christ

Total commitment to Jesus is the highest calling of a disciple. It requires us to deny ourselves, embrace sacrifice, and follow Him wherever He leads. While the cost is great, the rewards are eternal and far surpass any earthly sacrifices. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to surrender all to follow Him, knowing that He is worthy of our full devotion. Through prayer, obedience, and the power of the Holy Spirit, may we live lives marked by total commitment to Jesus, bringing glory to God and drawing others to His saving grace.

(47) Fulfilling God's Calling And Will:

Key Scriptures: Jeremiah 29:11, Ephesians 2:10, Romans 12:2

Reflection:

Each of us is uniquely designed with a purpose, intricately placed into God**'**s master plan. Jeremiah 29:11 reassures us, saying, **"**For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, **"**plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." God**'**s calling is not just an abstract idea; it is a personalized invitation to join Him in His work, filled with hope and direction. Recognizing that we are part of a divine plan can inspire us to seek and fulfill our unique purpose.

Ephesians 2:10 reminds us, **"**For we are God**'**s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Understanding that we are crafted by God for a specific purpose emphasizes the importance of being proactive in discovering and fulfilling that calling. Each **"**good work" is a stepping stone towards His will, and embracing this role helps us understand our significance in His kingdom.

Moreover, Romans 12:2 encourages us to **"**not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." This transformation is crucial for discerning God**'**s will for our lives. As we immerse ourselves in His Word and cultivate a prayerful relationship, we gain clarity on how to align our actions and decisions with His desires.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank You for the purpose You have placed in my life. Help me to recognize and embrace the calling that You have for me. Help us to be faithful and good servants, and complete all that you have called every fellow Christian and myself to do. Help us to be good stewards of the spiritual gifts and provisions that you have given to each of us. Guide our hearts and minds as we seek to fulfill Your will, and grant us the wisdom to discern the path You**'**ve laid before us. May we be open to Your leading and faithful in our actions, trusting that Your plans are for our good. In Jesus **'**name, I pray. Amen.

Application:

1. **Seek Clarity:** Spend time in prayer and meditation this week, asking God to reveal His calling or callings for your life. Write down any insights or direction that God's Holy Spirit reveals and directs you to do. Ask God for His wisdom, without doubting.

2. **Various Callings:** There are various general callings mentioned in the Bible that all Christians are to follow and do, then there are specific callings and spiritual talents that God gives to certain individuals.
3. **Explore Your Gifts:** Identify your spiritual gifts and talents. How can you use them to serve others and fulfill God**'**s purpose? Consider volunteering in your church or community based on these strengths. Make a decision and commitment to sincerely minister and serve the needs of others with the love of Jesus Christ along with the resources God blesses you with.
4. **Ministry, Evangelism,Discipleship:** Go and serve as the Lord leads you either by yourself or with another Christian. Possibly also find a small group or ministry where you can connect with others seeking to fulfill God**'**s calling. Sharing your journey with like-minded individuals can provide encouragement, strength, insight and good fruit.

Fulfilling God**'**s calling requires intentionality and a willingness to step out in faith. As we seek His guidance and embrace the unique roles He has for us, we contribute to His kingdom in powerful ways. Let**'**s commit to pursuing His will wholeheartedly, trusting that His plans are always for our good.

Different Types of God's Will:

Sovereign Will (also known as the **Will of Decree**): This refers to God's complete authority to do anything and whenever He so desires and intends, although it wiil always be consistant with His very nature, of divine love, justice, his word, morality, goodness and truth. His sovereign will and control encompasses everything that happens in the universe, heaven and beyond, throughout eternity.

Moral Will (or **Will of Command**): This refers to the moral guidelines and commands God gives to humanity, revealed through scripture. It includes the principles of right and wrong, such as the Ten Commandments, and how people are to live according to God's desires.

Permissive Will: This refers to the aspects of God's will that allow human choices and free will. While God is sovereign and has ultimate control, He allows humans to make choices, even if those choices are not aligned with His desired or intended will, purpose or calling. This type of will permits us to say and do certain things even though they may be contrary to his perfect plan for our lives, or the very best our lives but still allowable.

Prescriptive Will: This refers to God's will as outlined in His Word (the Bible), which provides instructions for living in accordance with His desires. It is the expression of what God commands or desires His followers to do.

Providential Will: This is the way God orchestrates and sustains all of creation, guiding events and circumstances to fulfill His divine purposes. It reflects God**'**s ongoing care and guidance in the world and in individual lives.

Dispositional Will (or Will of Desire): This refers to how God sometimes chooses to react to our flawed, imperfect human nature and fallen state because of sin. It pertains to

when He desires, wants, intends, or expects His creation to respond or act in a certain way but is not always fulfilled by us due to our lack of knowledge, faith, understanding, or wisdom, as well as human weaknesses, limited abilities, immaturity, poor choices, decisions, and faults or mistakes. His 'dispositional will' reflects more about His affections and attitudes toward us regarding what we do or have done, rather than His specific desires for what He wants or intended us to do, but for some reason, we failed to do so. For example, God still demonstrates grace, mercy, compassion, forgiveness, kindness, love, and faithfulness toward us under such and similar circumstances, even though we didn't deserve it. His dispositional will is closely associated with His permissive will.

Ultimate Will (or **Will of Glory**): This refers to God's final and complete will, which will be fully realized in the end times when God's purposes are fully accomplished, and His glory is revealed. It is the fulfillment of His eternal plan for humanity and creation.

Fulfilling God's Calling and Will - Continued…

1. **What is Fulfilling God's Calling and Will?**

Fulfilling God's calling and will is the process by which we seek to live in alignment with God's purpose for our lives, as revealed through God's word, prayer, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. God's calling refers to the specific tasks or life purpose that He has ordained for each individual, while His will encompasses the divine purpose, plan, or intention that God has for creation, for humanity and for every Christian. It encompasses all that God desires, commands, or allows to happen, and is ultimately aimed at fulfilling His sovereign plan and bringing about His love being magnified, multitudes being saved and us receiving eternal life, to God be the glory. God's will can be understood in different ways: To fulfill God's calling and will is to live in a way that glorifies Him, serves and loves others, and brings about the expansion of His Kingdom on earth.

1.1 **Characteristics of Fulfilling God's Calling and Will**

- **Obedience to God's Word**: Fulfilling God's calling involves obeying His commands as revealed in Scripture. This includes loving God with all one's heart, soul, mind, and strength, as well as loving others as oneself (Matthew 22:37-39).

- **Submission to the Holy Spirit's Guidance**: The Holy Spirit plays a vital role in guiding us to fulfill God's will. Through the Spirit, God empowers Christians to live according to His plan, equipping us with spiritual gifts, wisdom, and strength for the tasks He sets before them (Romans 8:14; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

- **Living with Purpose**: Fulfilling God's will involves recognizing that life has divine purpose, and that every action—whether small or large—has significance in God's plan. This perspective helps us to see our work, relationships, and daily choices as opportunities to honor God and reflect His character (Colossians 3:17).

- **Endurance in Faith**: The path to fulfilling God's will is not always easy; it requires perseverance, especially in the face of trials, opposition, or confusion. God's calling often involves challenges that test faith and character, but we must endure,

trusting that God is faithful to complete the good work He has begun (Philippians 1:6).

- **Seeking God's Glory**: The ultimate goal of fulfilling God**'**s will is not personal success or self-advancement but bringing glory to God. This mindset aligns believers with God**'**s greater purpose in the world: to make His name known and to fulfill His redemptive plan (1 Corinthians 10:31; Matthew 5:16).

1.2 **Biblical Examples of Fulfilling God's Calling and Will**

- **Abraham's Faith and Obedience**: Abraham**'**s journey is a prime example of fulfilling God**'**s calling. God called Abraham to leave his homeland and go to a land He would show him, despite not knowing where he was going (Genesis 12:1-4). Abraham**'**s obedience, even when it seemed unclear or uncertain, demonstrated his trust in God**'**s plan. Through Abraham, God would establish a covenant that would lead to the birth of a nation through which salvation would come to the world.

- **Moses 'Leadership and Deliverance**: Moses was called to deliver Israel from slavery in Egypt. Despite his initial hesitancy, fear, and self-doubt (Exodus 3:11-12), Moses eventually obeyed God**'**s command. His fulfillment of God**'**s will involved not just leadership but also a continuous dependence on God**'**s presence and guidance throughout Israel**'**s journey to the Promised Land.

- **Jesus 'Obedience to the Father's Will**: The life of Jesus exemplifies perfect submission to God**'**s will. His ultimate purpose on earth was to redeem humanity through His death and resurrection. Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, **"**Not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42), and He faithfully walked the path of suffering, fulfilling God**'**s redemptive plan for all of creation (Matthew 26:39).

2. The Importance of Fulfilling God's Calling and Will

2.1 **Spiritual Growth and Maturity** Fulfilling God**'**s calling and will is integral to the believer**'**s spiritual growth. When a person actively seeks to obey God's voice and follow His plan, they experience spiritual development. This is because fulfilling God**'**s will requires faith, reliance on the Holy Spirit, and regular communion with God through prayer and Scripture. Each step taken in obedience brings us closer to God's image, refining our character and deepening our relationship with Him. Every Christian should understand that they are a vital part of God's Master plan;

Romans 12:2 (AKJV) **" –**And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.."

In this passage, Paul encourages believers to transform their thinking by aligning it with God's will, which brings about personal and spiritual maturity. Knowing and doing God's will leads to a life that reflects His goodness and perfection.

2.2 **Impacting the World for Christ** The primary reason God calls believers is for the advancement of His Kingdom. By living out His will, Christians serve as witnesses of God**'**s love and redemption to a lost world. Fulfilling God**'**s calling is not just about personal benefit but about glorifying God and helping others experience His grace. Jesus **'**call to **"**go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19) is an example of the outward focus of God**'**s will—filling the earth with the knowledge of His glory.

2.3 **Being a Blessing to Others** Fulfilling God**'**s will is often expressed through acts of service and love for others. Whether in the context of family, community, or the global Church, believers are called to serve, encourage, and build up one another. This outward expression of God**'**s will serves both to bless others and to testify to the world of the transformative power of the gospel.

Galatians 5:13 (AKJV) **" –**For, brothers, you have been called to liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another"

Believers fulfill their calling by serving others, using the gifts and resources God has given them to meet the needs of those around them and to build up the body of Christ.

3. The Challenges in Fulfilling God's Calling and Will

3.1 **Resistance and Opposition** Fulfilling God's will is not always easy, and we can face opposition from both external and internal sources. External opposition may come in the form of persecution, societal pressures, spiritual hinderances, temptations, cares and pleasures of the world or misunderstandings from others, while internal resistance may involve doubts, fears, or a lack of faith and confidence in one's ability through Jesus. Nevertheless, God's promise is that He will provide strength and encouragement to those who seek to fulfill His will, and He will equip them for every good work (Philippians 4:13; 2 Corinthians 12:9).

3.2 **Distractions and Worldly Pressures** One of the greatest obstacles to fulfilling God**'**s calling is the pull of the world. Jesus warned about the deceitfulness of riches and the cares of life that choke the word and make it unfruitful (Matthew 13:22). The pressures of career, relationships, or personal ambition can distract us from our ultimate calling to serve God. Therefore, we must keep our focus on eternal priorities, developng a mindset of seeking first God**'**s Kingdom (Matthew 6:33).

3.3 **Fear and Uncertainty** Like Moses or Gideon, many of us struggle with fear and uncertainty when it comes to fulfilling God**'**s calling. However, God consistently reassures His people that He will be with them. The command **"**Do not be afraid" is repeated throughout Scripture as a reminder that God's presence is the antidote to fear (Isaiah 41:10; Joshua 1:9).

4. The Rewards of Fulfilling God's Calling and Will

4.1 **God's Pleasure and Approval** Ultimately, fulfilling God**'**s calling brings us into deeper fellowship with God, and this pleases Him. Jesus **'**parable of the faithful servant who is rewarded for his obedience (Matthew 25:21) demonstrates that God rewards those who are faithful in fulfilling His will, both in this life and the life to come.

4.2 **Eternal Impact** Fulfilling God**’**s calling has eternal significance. As we walk in obedience and live according to God's will, we contribute to the advancement of His Kingdom, impacting the lives of others and furthering the gospel. Every act of obedience, no matter how small, is stored up as treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21).

4.3 **Spiritual Fulfillment** There is a deep sense of fulfillment that comes from knowing one is living in alignment with God**’**s purpose. As we fulfill our calling, we experience the joy of partnering with God in His work, knowing that our lives have eternal value and significance.

Conclusion: Fulfilling God’s Calling and Will

Fulfilling God**’**s calling and will is one of the Christian life**’**s main purpose. It requires obedience, faith, perseverance, and a heart committed to loving and serving God and others. Though challenges abound, we who seeks to fulfill God's will finds joy, purpose, and eternal reward. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and a deep reliance on God's Word, Christians are empowered to live out their divine calling, bringing glory to God and expanding His Kingdom on earth.

(48) LOVE:

Hebrew and Greek Words for "Love"

Hebrew Words (Old Testament)

1. אָהַב(ʾāhēv / ʾāhab) – *To love*
    - Most common Hebrew verb for love; used for love between people, love for God, and God’s love for His people.
    - Broad in scope—can mean affection, desire, covenantal loyalty.
    - Example:
      “You shall love (ʾāhab) the Lord your God with all your heart...” – Deuteronomy 6:5“ I have loved (ʾāhab) you,” says the Lord. – Malachi 1:2
2. **חֶסֶד(ḥesed)** – Loyal love, steadfast love, covenant faithfulness
    - Often translated as “lovingkindness,” “mercy,” or “steadfast love.”
    - Emphasizes God's covenantal loyalty and kindness toward His people.
    - Example:
      “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His steadfast love (ḥesed) endures forever.” – Psalm 136:1

Greek Words (New Testament)

1. **ἀγάπη (agapē)** – Selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love

- The highest form of love; often used to describe God's love for humanity and the kind of love Christians are called to have for others.
- Not based on emotion but on will, choice, and action.
- Example:" For God so loved (agapē) the world that He gave His only Son..." – John 3:16" Love (agapē) is patient, love is kind..." – 1 Corinthians 13:4

2. **ἀγαπάω (agapaō)** – To love (verb form of agapē)
    - To act in love, choosing the good of others, often at personal cost.
    - Example:" You shall love (agapaō) your neighbor as yourself." – Matthew 22:39
3. **φιλία (philia)** – Brotherly love, friendship, affection
    - Emotional, relational love between friends or family members.
    - Root of "Philadelphia" (brotherly love).
    - Example: Implied in John 21:15–17, where Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him, switching between *agapaō* and *phileō*.
4. **φιλέω (phileō)** – To love as a friend, to have affection for
    - Often used to describe natural human affection.
    - Example:" The Father loves (phileō) the Son and shows Him all He does." – John 5:20
5. **στοργή (storgē)** – Familial love, natural affection
    - Rare in the New Testament; usually appears in compound forms like **philostorgos** (loving dearly).
    - Example:" Be devoted to one another in brotherly love (philostorgos)..." – Romans 12:10

Love, at its core, is the very essence of God's nature and the central theme of our Christian faith. The Bible declares in *1 John 4:8*, *"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."* This divine love—*agape* love—is selfless, sacrificial, and unmerited. It is most powerfully demonstrated through Jesus Christ, who gave His life for humanity so that we might be reconciled to God. This act of love invites us not only to receive God's love but also to reflect it in our relationships with others.

God calls us to live lives rooted in love, both for Him and for those around us. *1 Corinthians 13:4-7* gives a vivid picture of what that love looks like: *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud..."* These verses show that true love goes beyond feelings—it is active, enduring, and transformative. When we truly love God, that love overflows into how we treat others, becoming the guiding principle in every area of our lives.

See my Book "The Greatest Love Of All - Jesus Christ"

This comprehensive biblical study and reference more adequately covers the essential aspects of God's love than just trying to give a short oulline summary here. It is crucial for any disciple of Jesus Christ to gain a deeper understanding of what God's love encompasses and how we, as followers of Christ, are called to demonstrate that same love in our everyday lives. By studying the life, teachings, and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we can learn to reflect His love in our relationships, actions, and attitudes.

(49) Loving God Above the Things of the World and above all others:

Scriptures: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." - 1 John 2:15

Matthew 10:37-39 (AKJV) He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38And he that takes not his cross, and follows after me, is not worthy of me. 39He that finds his life shall lose it: and he that loses his life for my sake shall find it.

In 1 John 2:15, the apostle John admonishes believers not to love the world or the things in it. This command challenges us to examine our priorities and affections, ensuring that our love for God takes precedence over any attachment to worldly pursuits or possessions.

The world, in this context, refers to the system and values of the world that are contrary to God's kingdom—such as materialism, selfish ambition, and sinful desires. When we prioritize the things of the world over our relationship with God, we risk compromising our faith and drifting away from His will.

Loving the things of the world can manifest in various ways—whether it's an obsession with material possessions, a pursuit of worldly success, or an indulgence in sinful pleasures. While these things may offer temporary satisfaction, they ultimately fail to satisfy the deepest longings of our souls and lead us away from God.

As followers of Christ, we are called to set our hearts on things above, not on earthly things (Colossians 3:2). This doesn't mean that we must renounce all worldly possessions or live as ascetics but rather that we hold them loosely, recognizing their transient nature and prioritizing our relationship with God above all else.

Jesus Himself taught that we cannot serve both God and wealth (Matthew 6:24). He invites us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, trusting that He will provide for our needs (Matthew 6:33). When we love God above the things of the world, we experience true freedom, contentment, and fulfillment in Him.

Moreover, loving God above the things of the world is a mark of genuine discipleship. It's a reflection of our allegiance to Christ and our commitment to His kingdom purposes. It's a recognition that true life and joy are found in knowing and following Him, rather than in the fleeting pleasures of this world.

So, let us heed John's admonition not to love the world or the things in it. Instead, may we fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, and find our ultimate satisfaction and fulfillment in Him alone.

(50) Expressing Or Love For God:

Mark 12:30 AKJV "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength: this is the first commandment.."

Our love for God is the foundation of our faith, it is the way that we give our devotion and obedience to Him, with all thanksgiving. In Mark 12:30, Jesus emphasizes the greatest commandment: to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. This commandment calls us to express our love for God in every aspect of our lives, offering Him the highest form of worship and devotion.

Expressing our love for God begins with a heart surrendered to Him. It involves acknowledging His lordship over our lives and submitting to His will with humility and reverence. As we yield our hearts to God, we open ourselves to His transforming love and allow Him to work in us and through us for His glory.

Our love for God is also demonstrated through our obedience to His Word. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commands" (John 14:15, NIV). As we walk in obedience to God's commands, we show our love and devotion to Him, aligning our lives with His will and purposes. Furthermore, expressing our love for God involves worshiping Him with our whole being. This includes offering Him praise and adoration in song and prayer, giving thanks for His goodness and faithfulness, and magnifying His name with joyful hearts. True worship flows from a heart that is captivated by God's love and filled with gratitude for His blessings. Additionally, expressing our love for God extends beyond our words and actions to encompass our thoughts and desires. We are called to meditate on His Word day and night, to dwell on His goodness and faithfulness, and to set our minds on things above. As we cultivate a heart and mind focused on God, our love for Him deepens and grows stronger.

Ultimately, expressing our love for God is a lifelong walk of faith, and of intimacy and devotion. It is a response to His infinite love for us, poured out through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. May we, therefore, love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and may our lives be a testament to His love and grace.

(51) Wholehearted Devotion and Love for God:

Wholehearted devotion and love for God is the foundation of a meaningful and transformative relationship with Him. It involves surrendering every part of our lives—our thoughts, actions, desires, and priorities—to His will. This kind of love is not half-hearted or occasional; it is steadfast, passionate, and fully committed. Jesus emphasized this in

Matthew 22:37, saying, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."* This command reflects the kind of all-encompassing devotion God desires, one that flows from the depths of our being and shapes every aspect of our lives.

True love for God also involves obedience and trust. When we love Him wholeheartedly, we naturally seek to please Him and walk in His ways, even when it's difficult or inconvenient. *John 14:15* captures this connection clearly: *"If you love me, keep my commandments."* Our actions become an expression of our love, not driven by obligation but by a deep desire to honor the One who first loved us. In loving God wholeheartedly, we find purpose, peace, and the strength to live lives marked by faithfulness and joy, regardless of our circumstances.

Scripture References:

- **Deuteronomy 6:5-9**: (AKJV) "And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. 6And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart: 7And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8And you shall bind them for a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9And you shall write them on the posts of your house, and on your gates. "
- **Psalm 119:2-3**: (AKJV) "2Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. 3They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. ."
- **Matthew 22:37-38**: (AKJV)"Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38This is the first and great commandment. 39And the second is like to it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'"
- **Colossians 3:23-25**: (AKJV)"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men; 24Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ. 25But he that does wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done: and there is no respect of persons.."

Reflection:

God's word consistently instructs calls us to love and serve Him with our entire being. This devotion is not just an emotional response; it encompasses our actions, thoughts, and intentions.

1. Loving God Completely

In Deuteronomy 6:5, we are commanded to love God with all our heart, soul, and strength. This holistic approach invites us to engage every part of ourselves in our relationship with Him. It's a call to integrate our faith into our daily lives—seeking God not only in prayer and worship but in our work, our relationships, and our decisions.

2. Seeking Him Earnestly

Psalm 119:2 reminds us that those who seek God wholeheartedly are blessed. This pursuit requires intention and effort. How can we develop this seeking? It may mean setting aside dedicated time for prayer and Bible study, being intentional about worship, or simply seeking to align our daily actions with His will.

3. Loving with Intention

In Matthew 22:37, Jesus reiterates the command to love God with all that we are. This love is active and intentional. It manifests in obedience, in serving others, and in making choices that honor Him. Wholehearted devotion is about prioritizing God in every aspect of our lives and allowing that love to shape our character.

4. Working for the Lord and serving Him with our entire being

Colossians 3:23 teaches us to work at everything with our whole heart as if we**'**re working for the Lord. This perspective transforms mundane tasks into acts of worship. Whether at home, in our careers, or in our communities, we have the opportunity to express our devotion through diligence and integrity.

Wholehearted Devotion and Love for God: Continued…

- **Worshiping and Following Him Alone with All Your Heart**

Scripture References:

- **Exodus 20:3-6**:(AKJV) "You shall have no other gods before me. 4You shall not make to you any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 6And showing mercy to thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."
- **Psalm 86:11**: (AKJV)"Teach me your way, O LORD; I will walk in your truth: unite my heart (give me an undivided heart) to fear your name.."
- **Matthew 6:24**: (AKJV) "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.."
- **Hebrews 12:1-2**: (AKJV) "Why seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.."

Reflection:

To have wholehearted devotion and love for God is also to purpose to worship and follow God alone with all our hearts. This is a profound and decisive commitment to do the will of God and to willingly love God because of His great unmerited love and grace given to

us, As sincere disciples of Jesus Christ, we give devotion and worship to God alone and to no other person, or thing nor false god or idol.

1. No Other gods or idols

Exodus 20:3 reminds us of the importance of prioritizing God above all else. Worshiping Him alone means examining our lives for anything that competes for our affection or loyalty—be it career ambitions, relationships, or personal desires. We are invited to realign our hearts, recognizing that true fulfillment comes from placing Him first.

2. An Undivided Heart

Psalm 86:11 expresses a desire for an undivided heart. This prayer is a call to ask God for help in focusing our lives on Him. An undivided heart is one that seeks Him wholeheartedly, without distraction or compromise. It is a heart that finds joy and purpose in aligning with His will.

3. The Danger of Divided Loyalty

In Matthew 6:24, Jesus emphasizes that we cannot serve two masters. Divided loyalty leads to a lack of true commitment. When we attempt to balance our devotion between God and other pursuits, we often find ourselves feeling empty. By choosing to follow Him alone, we gain clarity and direction for our lives.

4. Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus

Hebrews 12:1-2 encourages us to cast aside distractions and fix our eyes on Jesus. This active pursuit of Him requires effort; it means letting go of what hinders our relationship with Him. As we focus on Jesus, we gain strength and perseverance to follow Him wholeheartedly, empowered by His love and grace.

Prayer:

Lord, I desire to worship You and follow You with all my heart. Help me to remove anything that competes for my devotion. Teach me to seek You first and to rely on Your faithfulness. Give me an undivided heart, and guide me in every step of my journey. Amen.

Challenge:

This week, take intentional steps to prioritize your relationship with God. Consider journaling your thoughts and prayers, dedicating specific times for worship and reflection, or finding a way to serve others in His name. As you do, watch how your heart becomes more aligned with His purpose for your life.

(52) Loving Others As Jesus Loved Us:

Scripture Reference: John 13:34-35 (AKJV) "A new commandment I give to you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.."

Jesus calls us as His disciples and followers to a radical way of living—one that centers on loving others as He loved us. In a world tainted by sin, selfishness and confusion, He has set a profound standard. This is a new commandment that clarifies exactly how we should love one another. This love is not merely an emotion; nor a human interpretation or terms, but is biblically defined by the truth and life of Jesus Christ. it is a deliberate choice and action that reflects Christ's pure and unmerited love for us.

Jesus fully revealed and demonstated what love is and how we should love others.

Consider how Jesus exhibited and demonstrated love during His time on earth. Jesus' love was compassionate, kind, non-hypocritical, He healed the sick, embraced the marginalized, forgave sinners, and laid down His life for us. His love was sacrificial, patient, humble without arrogance or pride. We are invited to embody this same love in our daily lives. You are called to feed those who are hungry, clothe the needy, visit those who are widows, sick, prisoners and orphans. Loving others often requires sacrifice. It may mean putting aside our own needs for the sake of another, just as Jesus sacrificed His life for our redemption. Reflect on ways you can serve those around you—whether through acts of kindness, lending an ear, or offering support in tough times.

Loving others as Jesus loved us means embracing a profound, unmerited love that transcends our natural inclinations. This kind of love doesn't wait for others to earn it through good deeds or favorable behavior; instead, it mirrors the grace that Jesus demonstrated in His life and teachings. By extending kindness and compassion to everyone—especially those who may not deserve it or who have wronged us—we embody the essence of His love. This selfless love fosters healing, reconciliation and unity, reminding us that every individual is worthy of love simply because God created them and loves them with the hope that they might be saved. Demonstrating unmerited love is reflecting the heart of Christ in our everyday lives.

Forgiveness is at the heart of love. Just as we have received grace, we are called to extend it to others. Think about any grudges you may be holding. Pray for the strength to forgive, recognizing that doing so frees both you and the other person.

Our love for others should be pure, without any evil, steadfast, enduring, Christlike in all that we say and do, God willing, and by the grace of God.

(53) Be Christlike:

Ephesians 5:1-2 AKJV" Be you therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling smell."

To be Christlike is to embody the character and actions of Jesus Christ in our daily lives. As followers of Christ, we are called to imitate His love, this should be our main focus along with compassion, humility, and servanthood. The Scriptures provide us with a clear blueprint for what it means to live a life that reflects the heart of Christ.

One of the primary aspects of being Christlike is to walk in love. Jesus demonstrated love for all people, regardless of their background or circumstances, and

even if they don’t deserve it, that’s unmerited love. He reached out to the marginalized, the outcasts, and the sinners, showing compassion and acceptance to everyone He encountered. As followers of Christ, we are called to love one another as He loved us, sacrificially and many times in a unmerited manner even though another person didn’t deserve it, or even unconditionally at times. Furthermore, being Christlike involves developing a spirit of humility and servanthood. Jesus, the Son of God, humbled Himself and took on the form of a servant, willingly laying down His life for the needs and redemption of those around us. He taught us that true greatness is found in serving others and putting their needs above our own. As His disciples, we are called to follow His example, serving others with humility and selflessness.

Another aspect of being Christlike is to walk in obedience to God's Word. Jesus lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father, fulfilling His divine mission and carrying out His will on earth. He taught us the importance of aligning our lives with God's purposes and following His commandments. As we study the Scriptures and seek to obey God's Word, we grow in conformity to the image of Christ, becoming more like Him in character and conduct. Moreover, being Christlike involves sharing the good news of salvation with others and making disciples of all nations. Jesus commissioned His followers to go into all the world and preach the gospel, baptizing believers and teaching them to obey His commandments. As ambassadors of Christ, we are called to proclaim His message of hope and reconciliation to a lost and broken world, inviting others to experience the transformative power of His love and grace.

Reflection:

In conclusion, being Christlike is not merely about outward actions but about the transformation of the heart and mind. It is a lifelong journey of becoming more like Jesus in our attitudes, behaviors, and relationships. As we abide in Him and allow His Spirit to work in us, we will increasingly reflect His image to the world, bringing glory to His name and advancing His kingdom.

(54) Love One Another:

Ministering to One Another: Practicing Love and Compassion in Christian Community and Beyond

John 13:35 (AKJV) “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another." -

WithIn John 13:35, Jesus provides a powerful insight into the essence of Christian discipleship: love. He tells His disciples that their love for one another will be the distinguishing mark of their identity as followers of Christ. This profound truth underscores the importance of ministering to one another with love and compassion in both our Christian communities and the broader society.

As Christians, we are called to embody the love of Christ in all aspects of our lives. This includes how we interact with one another within our church and how we engage with

those in our community and around the world. Love is not merely a feeling or emotion; it is a choice—a deliberate act of selflessness and sacrifice for the well-being of others.

Ministering to one another with love and compassion is at the heart of what we should live by. It involves caring for each other's needs, offering support and encouragement, and bearing one another's burdens. It means rejoicing with those who rejoice and mourning with those who mourn (Romans 12:15). It means speaking the truth in love and extending grace and forgiveness to one another (Ephesians 4:15, Colossians 3:13).

In a world that often prioritizes individualism and self-interest, we as Christians should be ambassadors and examples of God's love in our church and communities and beyond. Our love for one another serves as a powerful testimony to the transformative power of the Gospel. It demonstrates to the world around us that we are followers of Christ, who laid down His life for us out of love (1 John 3:16).

But our call to love extends beyond the boundaries of our Christian communities. Jesus commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:39), and He defines our "neighbor" as anyone in need (Luke 10:25-37). This means reaching out to the marginalized, the oppressed, and the vulnerable in our society and showing them the same love and compassion that Christ has shown to us.

Ministering to one another with love and compassion is not always easy. It requires humility, patience, and a willingness to put the needs of others before our own. But it is in these acts of selfless love that we truly reflect the heart of Christ and fulfill His commandment to love one another.

May we, as followers of Christ, be known by our love for one another. May we strive to create communities of love and compassion where all are valued and welcomed. And may we extend the same love and compassion to those outside our communities, showing them the love of Christ in both word and deed.

(55) Love does not seek it's own way or interests:

Scriptural Reference: 1 Corinthians 13:5 (AKJV) - **"**Love…does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; ."

In a world that often prioritizes self-interest and personal gain, the biblical definition of love stands in stark contrast. The Apostle Paul beautifully captures the essence of love in 1 Corinthians 13, describing it as selfless, humble, and patient. When we think about love that does not seek its own, we are reminded that true love is about giving rather than receiving.

This kind of love invites us to put others first. It calls us to be generous with our time, our resources, and our affection. It encourages us to listen more than we speak and to serve rather than be served. When love is our guiding principle, we find joy in seeing others thrive, even if it means laying aside our own desires.

Consider the example of Christ, who epitomized this selfless love. He washed the feet of His disciples, a task reserved for the lowest servant, and ultimately laid down His life for us. His actions remind us that love is not about our comfort or recognition but about the welfare of others.

Application

1. **Identify Opportunities for Selflessness:** Take a moment to reflect on your daily interactions. Are there situations where you can choose to prioritize someone else**'**s needs over your own?
2. **Practice Active Listening:** Make a conscious effort to listen without interrupting or steering the conversation back to yourself. This simple act demonstrates love and respect for others.
3. **Serve Without Expectation:** Find a way to serve someone this week—whether through a kind word, a helping hand, or a small act of kindness. Do it without expecting anything in return.
4. **Pray for a Heart of Love:** We should ask God to transform our hearts to become more thoughtful and considerate of others above ourselves and help us embody the love that doesn**'**t seek its own. Pray for the strength to overcome selfish tendencies and to truly celebrate the successes and joys of others.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the incredible gift of love that You have shown us through Your Son, Jesus. Help me to reflect that love in my daily life. Teach me to put others before myself and to find joy in serving and uplifting those around me. May my actions reflect Your heart, and may I be a servant and minister of Your love in a world that desperately needs it. Amen.

Conclusion

As we desire and seek to embody God's divine love that does not seek its own, we become instruments of grace and compassion. Let us commit to loving selflessly, within our relationships and communities through God's Holy Spirit who transforms lives with genuine love.

Love does not seek it's own way or interests - Continued…

Yielding to God's Way: Embracing Humility and Submission

I Corinthians 13:5 LOVE Does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not it's own way, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil;

Scripture: Philippians 2:3-4 "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

In his letter to the Philippians, the apostle Paul exhorts believers to avoid insisting on their own way but instead to prioritize humility and consideration for others. This call to humility and selflessness reflects the heart of Christ, who modeled perfect submission to the will of the Father.

Insisting on our own way often stems from selfish ambition and pride. It is rooted in the desire to assert our own preferences and agendas above those of others, leading to conflict, division, and discord within relationships. However, God calls us to a higher standard of living—one characterized by humility, love, and consideration for others.

Humility involves recognizing our own limitations and weaknesses and acknowledging our need for God's guidance and grace. It requires us to set aside our own desires and preferences in deference to the needs and interests of others. In doing so, we imitate the example of Christ, who humbled Himself and became obedient even to the point of death on the cross (Philippians 2:8).

Yielding to God's way requires a posture of surrender and trust in His wisdom and sovereignty. It means aligning our will with His and seeking His guidance in every decision and circumstance. As we yield to God's way, we open ourselves to His leading and direction, allowing Him to work in and through us for His glory and the good of others.

Yielding to God's way also involves valuing and honoring the perspectives and needs of others above our own. It means listening attentively to their concerns, seeking to understand their point of view, and empathizing with their experiences. In doing so, we demonstrate Christlike love and build unity and harmony within the body of Christ.

As followers of Christ, let us develop a spirit of humility and submission, yielding to God's way and considering the interests of others above our own. May our lives reflect the beauty of Christ's selfless love, bringing glory to God and blessing to those around us.

(56) Laying Down Our Lives for Our Friends:

Scripture Reference: John 15:11-15 - **“***These things have I spoken to you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. 12This is my commandment, That you love one another, as I have loved you.* ***13Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*** *14You are my friends, if you do whatever I command you. 15From now on I call you not servants; for the servant knows not what his lord does: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you..”*

This profound statement by Jesus occurs in the context of His final teachings to His disciples during the Last Supper, in what is often called His "Farewell Discourse." Here, Jesus not only gives a powerful command but also models the ultimate expression of love, offering Himself as the supreme example. In John 15:13, the phrase "lay down one's life" captures the essence of sacrificial love and is a key theme in Christian ethics and discipleship.

1. Understanding "Laying Down Our Lives"

"Laying down one's life" is typically associated with the ultimate sacrifice—death. In the immediate historical context, Jesus is foreshadowing His own death on the cross, where He will literally lay down His life for the salvation of humanity. However, the phrase also carries a broader, more nuanced meaning that goes beyond physical death. To "lay down one's life" can be understood as a willingness to sacrifice one's own comfort, desires, or even rights for the well-being of others.

Jesus is not only referring to the literal laying down of life, but also the laying down of self-interests, sinful desires, evil behaviors, ego, and pride for the sake of someone else's good. This idea echoes other passages in the New Testament, such as in Romans 12:1, where Paul urges followers of Jesus Christ to present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. To lay down one's life, therefore, includes acts of selflessness and love in daily life, not just in moments of crisis or even for some martyrdom. Laying down one's life does not mean that every Christian is required to physically endanger ones own life in service to God, but only to those whom are personally called by God to undertake a particular testimony of faith in Jesus or in serving and loving others regardless of the outcome.

2. The Greater Love: A Love that Transcends Self and Worldly love

In declaring that "greater love has no one than this," Jesus establishes the standard of love as one that is sacrificial and self-giving. The world often defines love in terms of feelings or reciprocity—loving others because they love us in return. However, the love Jesus describes is a love that goes beyond mutual benefit or emotional attachment. It is a love that seeks the welfare of others, even when it costs us personally.

This kind of love challenges both cultural norms and human instincts. It is not a love that demands or expects anything in return; rather, it is a love that seeks the good of others, sometimes at great personal cost. This is the kind of love that Jesus exemplifies on the cross—He gives His life not because humanity deserves it, but because it is an act of love and grace, a demonstration of the character of God.

3. Friendship in Christ's Eyes

Jesus calls His disciples "friends" in this passage, which is deeply significant. In the ancient world, the concept of friendship was more than just an emotional connection; it was a bond of trust, loyalty, and mutual care. To be called a friend by Jesus is an invitation to a deep and intimate relationship with Him, built on love and shared purpose. Jesus is saying that true friendship is not about superficial camaraderie but about sacrificial love and commitment.

By laying down His life for His friends, Jesus defines what true friendship looks like. It is a friendship that goes beyond mere affection or companionship—it is a sacrificial relationship in which the well-being of the other is prioritized. For Christians, this redefines relationships within the community of believers and calls them to a higher standard of love and care for one another.

4. Imitating Christ's Love in Our Lives

As followers of Jesus, we are called to imitate His sacrificial love. Jesus does not only teach His disciples what love is, but He also calls them (and by extension, all believers) to live out that love. In 1 John 3:16, the apostle John reinforces this teaching:

“*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our friends.”*

This does not necessarily mean literal death by all Christians (however it could for some of us), but it means essentially dying to one**’**s own desires, preferences, and pride in order to serve others. It might look like offering time, resources, or emotional support to those in need. It could mean forgiving those who have wronged us, even when it is difficult. It could even involve laying down one's social standing or reputation in order to advocate for justice, mercy, or the welfare of others.

For example, in Philippians 2:5-8, Paul encourages believers to have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, who, "being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant." Jesus' humility and self-sacrifice are the ultimate model of how we are to lay down our lives—not in a way that seeks recognition or reward, but in a way that seeks the glory of God and the good of others.

5. The Impact of Sacrificial Love

When we lay down our lives for others, we reflect the love of Christ to a watching world. The impact of sacrificial love is profound, both within the church and beyond. In John 13:34-35, Jesus commands His disciples to love one another as He has loved them, and He says, **“***By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”* This love becomes the distinguishing mark of true discipleship.

In a world where self-interest and personal gain often take precedence, the self-sacrificial love of Christ stands in stark contrast. As believers live out this love in their relationships, it becomes a powerful testimony to the world of the reality of the gospel. When we lay down our lives for others—whether through small acts of kindness or great sacrifices—we demonstrate that we belong to Jesus and that His love is transforming us.

Conclusion: The Ultimate Expression of Love

Ultimately, the command to "lay down our lives for our friends" is not just a call to action but a call to a deeper understanding of love itself. Jesus teaches us that the highest form of love is sacrificial, and He exemplifies this in His own death. As His followers, we are called to model that love, whether through small daily sacrifices or larger acts of devotion. In doing so, we reflect the heart of the gospel, and our love becomes a testimony to the world of God**’**s great love for humanity.

May we, by the grace of God, grow in our ability to lay down our lives in love for others, just as Christ laid down His life for us.

(57) Compassion:

Compassion is a deep feeling of empathy and concern for the suffering or misfortune of others, accompanied by a desire to alleviate their pain or hardship. It involves recognizing the struggles of others and responding with kindness, care, and a willingness to help. Compassion goes beyond sympathy; it is an active expression of love and understanding, often prompting someone to take action in offering support, comfort,

or assistance. In a Christian context, compassion reflects the love and mercy that Jesus demonstrated to those in need, calling all of us to extend that same love not only in feelings and emotion but in action to others.

As followers of Christ, we are called to love and show compassion, not just to those within the church, but to the world around us. Jesus demonstrated the ultimate example of compassion, reaching out to the broken, the hurting, and the lost. We, too, must reflect His love by extending grace and kindness to those in need, regardless of their background or beliefs. In a world that often feels divided and chaotic, our love can be a beacon of hope.

At the same time, we must not forget the importance of compassion within the body of Christ. Just as we are called to love our neighbors, we are also called to love one another as fellow believers. The church is meant to be a place of support and encouragement, where we bear each other**'**s burdens and walk alongside one another through life**'**s challenges. By showing kindness, patience, and forgiveness to our brothers and sisters in Christ, we create a community that reflects the heart of God. Let us be known for our love, both inside the church and out, for it is through this love that others will see Christ in us.

Text: Colossians 3:12 (AKJV):" Therefore, as God**'**s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."

Introduction: Compassion as a Core Christian Virtue

In Colossians 3:12, God's word provides us with a powerful command: **"**clothe yourselves with compassion." This verse is a call for Christians to reflect the character of Christ in their daily lives, demonstrating His love, grace, and mercy toward others. As followers of Jesus, we are not only called to believe in Him but also to live in a way that mirrors His heart and actions. Just as we put on clothes every day, Paul urges us to "clothe" ourselves with the virtues that reflect Christ**'**s love, including compassion.

This commentary will explore the depth of this command, focusing specifically on the biblical understanding of compassion and how Christians are empowered to live it out. Compassion is not merely a feeling, but an active response to the needs of others, rooted in the love and mercy we have received from God.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Compassion

Compassion, as seen in the life of Christ and throughout the Scriptures, is central to our Christian faith. It is the ability to feel deep sympathy for others and take action to meet their needs, particularly when they are suffering or in distress.

1.1 Compassion in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, God's compassion is often connected with His mercy and loving-kindness. It reflects His deep concern for His people, especially when they are suffering or in need.

Psalm 103:13 (AKJV):“ Like as a father pities (has Compassion for) his children, so the LORD pities them that fear him. .”

This verse highlights God's fatherly compassion—a tender, loving care that desires to meet the needs of His people. The same compassion is seen in the life of Jesus, who is the fullest revelation of God**’**s heart. As Christians, we are called to reflect that same tender mercy and concern for others.

1.2 Compassion in the Life of Jesus

Jesus' ministry was marked by compassion. He didn**’**t merely feel pity for those in need—He was moved by compassion to act. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and reached out to the outcasts of society. His compassion was always linked with action.

Matthew 9:36-38 (AKJV):“ But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. 37Then says he to his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; 38Pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.”

Mark 6:34 (AKJV):“ And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.”

Jesus' compassion was driven by His deep awareness of the spiritual and physical needs of others. As His followers, we are called to follow His example—compassion is not just an internal feeling, but a catalyst for action.

2. The Command to “Clothe Yourselves” with Compassion

In Colossians 3:12, Paul uses the metaphor of clothing to describe how Christians should adopt certain virtues. Just as we consciously choose our clothes each day, we are to intentionally **“**put on” compassion. It is a deliberate choice to live in a way that reflects Christ**’**s heart for others.

2.1 A New Identity in Christ

Paul begins the verse by reminding us of our new identity in Christ: **“**as God**’**s chosen people, holy and dearly loved.” This identity is foundational to understanding the command to clothe ourselves with compassion. We are chosen by God, set apart for His purposes, and deeply loved. This is the basis of our Christian life—the love and grace of God have been poured out on us, and it is in response to this that we are called to live differently.

In other words, our compassion comes from an understanding of God's compassion toward us. Because we have experienced His mercy, we are empowered to show mercy to others. The call to **“**clothe yourselves” with compassion is an invitation to live out our new identity in Christ—a life marked by His love and grace.

2.2 Compassion as Part of the Christian “Wardrobe”

The idea of clothing oneself with virtues in the Christian life is repeated in other parts of Scripture. In Colossians 3:12, compassion is listed alongside other key virtues like kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. These qualities are interconnected, reflecting the character of Jesus. They are not optional, but essential to how Christians are to live and interact with others.

Compassion isn**’**t something we put on occasionally or only in certain circumstances. It is to be an ongoing, daily attitude and action that colors all our relationships—at home, at work, in the community, and in the church. As we clothe ourselves with these virtues, we make them visible in our lives for others to see and experience.

3. The Role of Compassion in Christian Community

One of the primary contexts for displaying compassion is within the Christian community. Paul**’**s instructions in Colossians 3 are directed toward believers, urging them to embody these virtues in their relationships with one another.

3.1 Compassion in the Body of Christ

In the Christian community, compassion is vital to maintaining unity and harmony. When we are compassionate, we are better equipped to bear one another's burdens, forgive one another, and show love even in difficult circumstances.

Galatians 6:2 (AKJV):“ Bear you one another**’**s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

Compassion enables us to enter into each other**’**s pain, walk alongside each other in times of suffering, and offer practical help and emotional support. In doing so, we live out the command to love one another as Christ loved us.

3.2 Compassion Toward the World

While the immediate focus of Colossians 3:12 is the Christian community, the command to clothe ourselves with compassion also extends to the world around us. Just as Jesus was moved by compassion toward the crowds who were spiritually lost, we, too, are called to show compassion to the world in practical ways. This may involve serving the needs of poor, caring for the marginalized, being hospitable to strangers and sharing the gospel with those who are spiritually needy.

Matthew 25:35-40 (AKJV):“ Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the

world: 35For I was an hungered, and you gave me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: 36Naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me. 37Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we you an hungered, and fed you? or thirsty, and gave you drink? 38When saw we you a stranger, and took you in? or naked, and clothed you? 39Or when saw we you sick, or in prison, and came to you? 40And the King shall answer and say to them, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it to me."

Living out compassion means stepping into action. It could mean providing for someone's physical needs, offering emotional support, or sharing the hope of the gospel. Just as Jesus healed the sick and cared for the poor, we are called to do the same in His name.

When we clothe ourselves with compassion, we are also reflecting God's love to a broken world. Our compassion becomes a testimony of His grace and a tangible way to demonstrate His kingdom on earth.

4. How Christians Can Live Out Compassion

4.1 Through Prayer and Dependence on God

Compassion is not something we can fully produce on our own. It is a fruit of the Spirit, cultivated in us through prayer and dependence on God. As we pray for God's heart for others and allow the Holy Spirit to fill us with His love, compassion will flow from us naturally.

Romans 5:5 (AKJV):" And hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us. "

4.2 Practical Action: Responding to Needs

Compassion is not just a feeling—it's an action. It's about seeing the needs of others and responding with practical help, encouragement, and care. This may look like visiting someone who is sick, providing food for the hungry, offering counsel to the brokenhearted, or simply being present with someone in pain.

James 2:15-16 (AKJV):" If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16And one of you say to them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful to the body; what does it profit?"

4.3 Living with Patience and Humility

Compassion often requires patience and humility. It's about setting aside our own agenda to listen, to serve, and to care for others. When we are patient and humble, we are more likely to notice the needs around us and respond with the love and care that Christ would.

Conclusion: Clothed with Compassion for the Glory of God

As Christians, we are called to clothe ourselves with compassion—not just as a way of behaving, but as an outward expression of the inward transformation we've experienced through Christ. Compassion reflects the heart of God, and when we live out this virtue, we bring glory to Him. Just as we have been chosen, loved, and forgiven by God, we are called to reflect His love and mercy to others. May we, by the power of the Holy Spirit, continually clothe ourselves with compassion, living out the character of Christ in all that we do.

(58) Charity / Giving To Those In Need:

This word has several clear and distinct meanings, many of which can be found in various scripture verses of the Bible. The most significant meanings include:

1. Love, kindness, and goodwill, particularly toward our neighbors;
2. Generosity and compassion for the poor and suffering, commonly referred to as almsgiving.

We as Christians, followers of Jesus Christ should always be charitable and be very giving towards the support of those in need both within the church as well as towards non-christians.

God loves those whom are cheerful givers, who give willingly and expect nothing in return; God abundantly blesses those whom have a kind and generous heart.

Isaiah 58:6-7 (AKJV)

" Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? 7Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor that are cast out to your house? when you see the naked, that you cover him; and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh?"

Introduction:

Charity, often synonymous with love in the Bible, stands as a foundational doctrine of our Christian faith. Having a Christlike charitable heart of giving one's time and resources to those in need is a significant aspect of our Christian walk. We should joyfully give to various needed causes to glorify God and not ourselves, therefore we should give in secret whenever possible and not in a boastful way. As disciples of Jesus Christ we should likewise give unselfishly without expecting anything in return. God does reward those who give, but more in spiritual abundance and blessings rather than in a monetary increase. While God does prospers his people both spiritually and sometimes also materially , we should beware of the false prosperity doctrines that have enter some churches.

The word **"charity"** is often used in older English Bible translations (especially the **King James Version**) where we would now use the word **"love."** It specifically translates the Greek word **ἀγάπη (*agapē*)**, which refers to **selfless, sacrificial, divine love**.

So Charity, in the biblical sense, again, is often synonymous with love—specifically *agape*, the highest form of love that reflects God's own character. In older translations

like the King James Version, **“**charity” is used to describe this selfless, sacrificial love. *1 Corinthians 13:13* says, **“***And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”* This highlights that even among the essential virtues of the Christian life, love—charity—stands above the rest. It is not merely about giving material goods, but about offering ourselves in kindness, humility, and grace, even when it costs us something.

True charity is a reflection of God**’**s love working through us. It**’**s not done for recognition or reward, but from a heart transformed by the Spirit. *Colossians 3:14* says, **“***And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”* This means that charity binds together all virtues and makes them complete. It brings unity, healing, and wholeness in our relationships. When we live with charitable hearts, we mirror the love Christ has shown to us—serving others, forgiving freely, and giving generously with no strings attached.

Don’t give to be seen or to take credit for the glory that belongs to God Our Provider:

Matthew 6:1-4 (AKJV) “Take heed that you do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise you have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 2Therefore when you do your alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward. 3But when you do alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand does: 4That your alms may be in secret: and your Father which sees in secret himself shall reward you openly.”

The Biblical Foundation of Charity:

The Bible defines charity not merely as a sentimental feeling but as a selfless, sacrificial act. The apostle Paul beautifully articulates the essence of charity in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, describing it as patient, kind, not envious or boastful, and always seeking the well-being of others. Jesus, in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), exemplifies charity as extending compassion and aid to those in need, transcending cultural and societal boundaries.

Charity in Action:

Charity is not merely a thoughtful concern to be understood but a virtue to be practiced. James 2:14-17 challenges us as Christians to demonstrate our faith through deeds of charity, emphasizing that true faith is alive and active. The compassionate acts of charity go beyond meeting physical needs; they also touch the deepest recesses of the human soul, reflecting the love of Christ.

The Example of Christ:

The epitome of charity is found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. John 15:13 declares, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." Jesus not only taught about love but exemplified it through His sacrificial death

on the cross. His life serves as the ultimate model for believers to emulate in their practice of charity.

Charity as an Expression of Gratitude:

Our acts of charity are not only a response to God's love but also a reflection of our gratitude for the grace we have received. 1 John 4:19 encapsulates this truth: "We love because he first loved us." Charity, therefore, becomes a tangible expression of our love for God and a demonstration of His love working through us to impact the lives of those around us.

The Eternal Impact of Charity:

The Scriptures emphasize the eternal impact of acts of charity. In Matthew 25:34-40, Jesus describes how acts of kindness, such as feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, are tantamount to serving Him. The enduring nature of charity lies not only in its immediate effects but also in the lasting legacy it leaves in the hearts and lives of those touched by its grace.

The Heart of Charity:

At the core of Christian charity is a heart transformed by God's love. Galatians 5:22-23 describes the fruit of the Spirit, with love (agape) being the first listed. This divine love, exemplified in the life of Christ, becomes the wellspring from which genuine charity flows. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we should develop a heart of love, where acts of charity become a natural outpouring of the indwelling Spirit.

Charity in Relationships:

Christian charity is manifested in our interactions with others, both within and outside the faith community. 1 Peter 4:8 encourages us to "above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins." Caring for the needs of others around us. This love, characterized by forgiveness and compassion, creates a unity that testifies to the transformative power of Christ in our lives.

Charity in Generosity:

The Bible calls believers to be generous with their resources, sharing with those in need. 2 Corinthians 9:7 emphasizes cheerful giving, highlighting the principle that God loves a cheerful giver. Acts of charity, whether in financial support, time, or talents, become a tangible expression of gratitude for God's abundant provision and an acknowledgment of our stewardship responsibilities.

Charity in Action:

Christian charity is not passive but actively seeks to address the needs of others. Jesus, in Matthew 5:42, encourages giving to those who ask and not turning away from those who want to borrow. Acts of charity, when performed with a Christlike attitude, mirror the compassionate heart of our Savior, creating opportunities for the Gospel to be shared through our actions.

Charity as a Witness:

Christian charity serves as a powerful witness to the world. In John 13:35, Jesus declares, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

A lifestyle of charity, marked by love and compassion, becomes a compelling testimony that draws others to the redemptive love of Christ.

Charity to your Neighbor and Strangers:

The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) challenges us to show love to all, as we able and as God directs our hearts especially to those in need. Charity is an attribute of the nature of Christ's love.

Charity Beyond Expectations:

The Gospel challenges believers to go beyond societal norms and expectations in demonstrating charity. In Matthew 5:46-47, Jesus asks, "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?" Christian charity surpasses conventional boundaries, embracing a love that mirrors the unconditional nature of God's love for us.

Charity as a Reflection of God's Character:

Ultimately, Christian charity is a reflection of God's character. 1 John 4:16 declares, "So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and anyone who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in them." As we engage in acts of charity, we mirror the very nature of God, who is the source and embodiment of love.

Key Scriptures

Luke 12:33-34 AKJV Sell that you have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fails not, where no thief approaches, neither moth corrupts. 34For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Matthew 6:1-4 AKJV Take heed that you do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise you have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 2Therefore when you do your alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward. 3But when you do alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand does: 4That your alms may be in secret: and your Father which sees in secret himself shall reward you openly.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 AKJV 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (AKJV) But this I say, He which sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver. :

Matthew 25:34-46 (Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35For I was an hungered, and you gave me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: 36Naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me. 37Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we you an hungered, and fed you? or thirsty, and gave you drink? 38When saw we you a stranger, and took you in? or naked, and clothed you? 39Or when

saw we you sick, or in prison, and came to you? 40And the King shall answer and say to them, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it to me.

41Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42For I was an hungered, and you gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink: 43I was a stranger, and you took me not in: naked, and you clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and you visited me not. 44Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we you an hungered, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to you? 45Then shall he answer them, saying, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me. 46And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Acts 20:35 (AKJV) I have showed you all things, how that so laboring you ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Hebrews 13:16 (AKJV): **“**But to do good and to *communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” (*and to share with others)

Philippians 4:15-20 (AKJV): **“**Now you Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you only. 16For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again to my necessity. 17Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. 18But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. 19But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20Now to God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. .”

Luke 6:38 (AKJV): **“**Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you mete with it shall be measured to you again.”

Matthew 19:21-26 (AKJV) Jesus said to him, If you will be perfect, go and sell that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. 22But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.23Then said Jesus to his disciples, Truly I say to you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24And again I say to you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 25When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? 26But Jesus beheld them, and said to them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

Conclusion:

Christian charity, when expressed in the context of God’s truth and desire for us to be heartfelt givers, reveals the depth and transformative power of God's love. As we as followers of Jesus extend charity beyond expectations, in times of suffering, and in the pursuit of reconciliation, we embody the inclusive and boundless love of Christ. May our acts of charity be a testament to the profound impact of God's love on a world in need.

(59) Tithes And Offerings:

In Judaism, tithes and offerings play a significant role in religious and communal practices. The concept of tithing in Judaism is deeply rooted in the Torah, and specific regulations outline the various types of tithes to be observed. Here are explanations of different Jewish tithes and offerings:

Maaser Rishon (First Tithe):

Maaser Rishon involves giving a tenth (10%) of one's agricultural produce to the Levites, who were a tribe dedicated to religious service in ancient Israel but did not receive a tribal portion of land like the other tribes. The Levites would, in turn, give a tenth of this tithe to the priests (Kohanim) as a further contribution to religious support.

Maaser Sheni (Second Tithe):

Maaser Sheni is a tithe that is separate from the first tithe. In the second, fourth, and sixth years of a seven-year agricultural cycle, an additional tenth (10%) of the produce is set aside. This tithe is either consumed in Jerusalem or, if impractical, redeemed by converting it into money, and the money is then used to buy food in Jerusalem. The purpose is to elevate the spiritual connection of the Jewish people to their land and the sanctity of the city of Jerusalem.

Maaser Ani (Poor Tithe):

In the third and sixth years of the seven-year cycle, Maaser Ani, or the Poor Tithe, involves setting aside another tenth (10%) of the produce. This tithe is designated for the poor and needy within the community. It ensures that the most vulnerable members of society are provided for and able to partake in the community's agricultural blessings.

Terumah (Contribution):

Terumah is a different form of giving and is not exactly a tithe. It involves setting aside a portion (generally around 2%) of one's agricultural produce for the benefit of the Kohen (priestly class). The Kohanim would use this contribution to maintain their religious duties and services in the Temple, underscoring the special status of the priesthood.

Bikkurim (First Fruits):

While not a tithe per se, the offering of Bikkurim involves bringing the first fruits of the harvest to the Temple as an expression of gratitude to God. This practice is mentioned in the context of the land of Israel and symbolizes acknowledgment of God's blessings. It is a joyous offering, with special ceremonies that highlight the connection between the people, their land, and divine providence.

These tithes and offerings were integral to the economic and religious structure of ancient Israel. They served to support the religious leaders (Levites and Kohanim), provide for the less fortunate, and express gratitude for the blessings received from the land. Although the practice of these specific tithes is not as widely observed today due to the absence of the Temple, some elements, such as charitable giving and supporting the community, continue to be central tenets in Jewish life.

In the early Christian church, the concept of tithes and offerings evolved from Jewish traditions but took on distinct characteristics within the context of the emerging Christian community. While the New Testament does not provide explicit instructions on tithing in the same systematic way as the Old Testament, various passages suggest principles of generous giving, supporting the community, and aiding those in need. Here's an overview of financial practices among early Christians:

Voluntary Giving:

Early Christian giving was characterized by voluntary contributions rather than a strict tithe. The apostle Paul, in his letters to various churches, emphasized the importance of cheerful and voluntary giving. For example, in 2 Corinthians 9:7, Paul writes, "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Offerings for the Community:

The early Christians were known for pooling their resources to support the needs of the community. Acts 4:32-35 describes how believers shared their possessions, and those with excess sold their property to provide for those in need. This communal sharing extended to supporting widows, orphans, and those facing economic hardships.

Collection for Jerusalem:

In several of Paul's letters, there are references to collections for the saints in Jerusalem. This was a charitable effort to support the Christian community in Jerusalem, which may have been facing economic challenges. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, Paul instructs the Corinthians to set aside contributions on the first day of the week for this purpose.

Support for Ministers and Teachers:

Early Christians recognized the importance of supporting those who devoted themselves to full-time ministry. In 1 Corinthians 9:14, Paul argues that those who preach the Gospel should receive their living from the Gospel. This support likely included financial provisions for apostles, elders, and teachers.

First Day of the Week Contributions:

In Acts 20:7, there is a reference to the disciples coming together on the first day of the week to break bread. While the primary focus is on the Eucharist, some interpret this as an indication of regular gatherings for worship and perhaps offerings.

Principles of Generosity:

The early Christians were encouraged to be generous in their giving. In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul commends the Macedonian churches for their generosity despite their own poverty and encourages the Corinthians to excel in the grace of giving.

Today's Christians while are encouraged to give to the needs of others we are not obligated to tithe, but can willing if they want or led by God's Holy Spirit. Neither did the early Christian church practices adhere strictly to a tithe system, rather the principles of generosity, voluntary giving, and support for the community became foundational aspects of Christian stewardship. Over time, as the Christian church expanded and developed, various traditions and practices related to financial giving emerged, including tithing as a way to support the work of the church and its ministers.

(60) Spiritual Fruit:

God wants our lives to be productive and fruitful; Many people in the world are spiritually famished and God wants to establish His spiritual fruit within every Christian's life so that they will truly have something to give to others to fill their hearts with God's eternal goodness. God is glorified when we bear much spiritual fruit in our hearts.

Spiritual fruit is the good spiritual attributes and abilities that God plants and brings to maturity in our lives. For instance, Love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control etc...

We need to be in God's word, and follow Jesus, in order to bear fruit and God will produce much growth.

As followers of Christ, we are called to bear good fruit and demonstrate the transformative power of our faith through our actions and works. Just as a good tree naturally produces good fruit, so too should our lives reflect the character and love of Christ in all that we do.

The fruit of our lives is not merely measured by outward acts of service but by the inward transformation that occurs as a result of our relationship with Christ. Galatians 5:22-23 describes the fruit of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are the qualities that should characterize our lives as we abide in Christ and allow His Spirit to work in us.

Bearing good fruit and works requires intentionality and obedience to God's Word. Jesus said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last" (John 15:16). As branches connected to the vine, our responsibility is to remain in Him and allow His life to flow through us, producing fruit that brings glory to His name.

Our good works are not done to earn salvation but as a response to God's grace and love poured out upon us. Ephesians 2:10 reminds us that we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which He prepared in advance for us to do. Our

lives are to be a living testimony of God's transforming power, drawing others to Him through our love and service.

May we, therefore, be diligent in bearing good fruit and works, allowing the Spirit of God to produce His fruit in us and through us. Let us be faithful stewards of the gifts and talents entrusted to us, using them to advance God's kingdom and bring glory to His name.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Galatians 5:22 25 (AKJV) — But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24And they that are Christ**'**s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

James 3:17-18 (AKJV) But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

John 15:1-10 (AKJV) I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer. 2Every branch in me that bears not fruit he takes away: and every branch that bears fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken to you. 4Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. 5I am the vine, you are the branches: He that stays in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. 6If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you. 8Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be my disciples. 9As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: continue you in my love. 10If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father**'**s commandments, and abide in his love.

Colossians 1:10-12 (AKJV) That you might walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, to all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; 12Giving thanks to the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Spiritual Fruit

Definition

Spiritual fruit refers to the visible evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence and work in a believer's life. These are not human efforts but godly qualities produced by a life yielded to the Spirit of God.

Key Passage: Galatians 5:22–23 (ESV)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Greek Word for "Fruit"

- **καρπός (karpos)** – fruit, result, outcome
  - Used metaphorically for the result of spiritual life.
  - Appears in contexts describing both good and bad fruit, depending on the source (Spirit or flesh).
  - Example: Matthew 7:17 – “Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.”

The 9 Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23)

1. **Love (ἀγάπη – *agapē*)** Selfless, sacrificial love; the foundational fruit from which all others flow.
2. **Joy (χαρά – *chara*)** Deep, abiding gladness in God, not dependent on circumstances.
3. **Peace (εἰρήνη – *eirēnē*)** Inner rest and harmony with God and others; the opposite of anxiety or conflict.
4. **Patience (μακροθυμία – *makrothymia*)** Long-suffering, endurance under hardship or provocation.
5. **Kindness (χρηστότης – *chrēstotēs*)** Moral goodness expressed in gentle, helpful behavior.
6. **Goodness (ἀγαθωσύνη – *agathōsynē*)** Uprightness of heart and life; a desire to do what is right.
7. **Faithfulness (πίστις – *pistis*)** Loyalty, reliability, and trustworthiness in relationships—especially toward God.
8. **Gentleness (πραΰτης – *praÿtēs*)** Meekness or controlled strength; humility in dealing with others.
9. **Self-control (ἐγκράτεια – *enkrateia*)** Mastery over one’s desires and impulses; discipline and restraint.

Important Notes

- **Singular Word**: “Fruit” (καρπός) is singular in Greek, indicating these qualities are a unified whole, not separate options.
- **Not Human Obtained**: These are not achieved through self-effort, except for dying to one’s self and allowing God to establish his spiritual fruit within us therefore spiritual fruit is produced by the Holy Spirit in a surrendered believer and are reflected in one’s actions.

- **Contrast with Works of the Flesh**: Galatians 5:19–21 lists sinful behaviors as the natural product of the flesh; spiritual fruit is the opposite result of life in the Spirit.

Additional References to Spiritual Fruit

- **John 15:5** – “Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit...”
- **Romans 6:22** – “But now... the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.”
- **Philippians 1:11** – “Filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ...”

The Fruit of the Spirit - Love:

Galatians 5:22-23 outlines the fruit of the Spirit, beginning with love: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Love is identified as the first and foremost fruit of the Spirit. It transcends mere affection and encompasses selfless, sacrificial love that reflects God's love for humanity.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Joy:

Following love, joy is listed as a fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. This joy is not dependent on circumstances but is rooted in the believer's relationship with God.

Joy, as a fruit of the Spirit, goes beyond fleeting happiness. It is a deep-seated gladness that arises from the knowledge of God's presence and salvation.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Peace:

Galatians 5:22-23 includes peace as a fruit of the Spirit, signifying a tranquility that surpasses understanding: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

The peace mentioned here is not merely the absence of conflict but a holistic well-being that comes from being reconciled with God and trusting in His sovereignty.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Patience:

Patience is highlighted as a fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, representing enduring perseverance in the face of challenges, suffering , and waiting God’s perfect timing to make everything work for good for those who love Him.”But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

This patience involves maintaining steadfastness and composure even in difficult circumstances, reflecting God's enduring patience with humanity.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Kindness:

Galatians 5:22-23 includes kindness as a fruit of the Spirit, embodying a benevolent and compassionate disposition: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience,

kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Kindness, as a fruit of the Spirit, involves a genuine concern for the well-being of others, demonstrating God's kindness extended to humanity.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Goodness:

Galatians 5:22-23 lists goodness as a fruit of the Spirit, portraying moral excellence and virtue: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Goodness, in this context, represents an inherent moral quality that seeks to do what is right, reflecting the goodness of God.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Faithfulness:

Galatians 5:22-23 includes faithfulness as a fruit of the Spirit, depicting unwavering loyalty and reliability: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

This faithfulness extends beyond mere belief; it involves steadfastness and reliability, mirroring God's faithful nature.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Gentleness:

Gentleness is identified as a fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, characterizing a considerate and humble demeanor: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Gentleness involves a tender and compassionate approach to others, reflecting the gentleness of God in His dealings with humanity.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Self-Control:

Galatians 5:22-23 concludes with self-control as a fruit of the Spirit, denoting disciplined and controlled behavior: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Self-control involves the mastery of one's desires and impulses, aligning with the discipline that comes from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Bearing Fruit in Every Good Work:

Colossians 1:10 encourages believers to bear fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God: "so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

This verse emphasizes that the fruit of the Spirit should manifest in practical expressions of goodness and service, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of God.

Abounding in Fruitful Work:

In 2 Corinthians 9:8, the concept of abounding in every good work is connected to God's ability to make all grace abound to believers: "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work."

Abounding in every good work is seen as a result of God's grace, highlighting the connection between the indwelling Spirit and a life that bears fruit in service to others.

These scriptural references give insight into the diverse aspects of spiritual fruit, exploring the characteristics of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control as manifestations of the Holy Spirit's work in the lives of believers. Additionally, the call to bear fruit in every good work underscores the transformative impact of the Spirit's fruit in practical expressions of service and righteousness.

God desires not only that we bear good spiritual fruit but that it remains, signifying a consistent and lasting growth in our faith and character. In John 15:16, Jesus says, **"***You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last."* This means that as followers of Christ, our actions and transformation should reflect His love and truth in a way that endures, impacting others and demonstrating God's glory over time. True spiritual fruitfulness is not just a momentary achievement but a continual, lasting expression of God's work in our lives.

(61) Christian Works And Talents:

Works in the Bible

Definition

In Scripture, *works* refer to human actions—either righteous or sinful—performed in obedience to God or apart from Him. They can be:

- **Good works**: Done in obedience to God, as evidence of faith.
- **Dead works**: Done apart from faith, in self-righteousness or rebellion.
- **Evil works**: Sins, transgressions, acts of the flesh.

Hebrew Words (Old Testament)

1. **מַעֲשֶׂה (maʿăseh)** – Deed, work, act
    - General word for human action or labor.
    - Used for both godly obedience and sinful behavior.
    - Example: "God will bring every work (maʿăseh) into judgment..." – Ecclesiastes 12:14
2. **עֲבֹדָה (ʿăvōdāh)** – Service, labor, worship
    - Often used for priestly service or spiritual labor.
    - Example: "You shall serve (ʿăvōdāh) the Lord your God..." – Exodus 23:25

Greek Words (New Testament)

1. **ἔργον (ergon)** – Work, deed, task, action
    - Most common Greek word for "works" in the New Testament.
    - Can refer to physical labor, moral deeds, or spiritual service.
    - Example: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works (erga)...” – Ephesians 2:10
2. **ἔργα νόμου (erga nomou)** – Works of the Law
    - Refers specifically to actions done to fulfill the Mosaic Law.
    - Key concept in Paul’s letters: works of the Law do not justify a person before God.
    - Example: “By the works of the law (erga nomou) no one will be justified...” – Galatians 2:16

Talents in the Bible

1. Literal Meaning: A Unit of Weight or Money

- Hebrew (Old Testament):
    - **כִּכָּר(kikkār)** – "Talent" or "round weight" (often of gold or silver)
    - A **talent** in ancient Israel was a **large unit of weight**, approximately **75 pounds (34 kilograms)**.
    - Used in measuring silver or gold for offerings, trade, or construction.
    - Example: “The silver from those of the congregation... was 100 talents and 1,775 shekels...” – Exodus 38:25
- Greek (New Testament):
    - **τάλαντον (talanton)** – A large unit of weight or money
    - In the Greco-Roman world, a **talanton** could represent **6,000 drachmas** (a huge amount—equivalent to 20 years of wages for a laborer).
    - Example: “To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one...” – Matthew 25:15

2. Figurative Meaning: Spiritual Trust or Responsibility

- **Matthew 25:14–30** – Parable of the Talents
    - Jesus uses “talents” metaphorically to describe the **resources, opportunities, and responsibilities** God entrusts to each believer.
    - Each servant receives a different amount “according to his ability,” and is judged not by how much he received, but by what he did with it.

- The **faithful servants multiply their talents**, while the unfaithful one hides his in fear.

Key Lessons from the Parable:

- God gives each person resources and responsibilities.
- Faithfulness is required regardless of how much one is given.
- Judgment will come based on what we did with what we were entrusted.

3. Metaphoric Parable Usage of : "Talents" as Skills or Gifts

While the Bible's original use of "talents" refers to **money or weight**, "talents" Metaphorically allso refers to **abilities or skills**.

Whatever God gives you—whether time, skills, money, or opportunities—you are to steward it faithfully.

Related Concepts in Scripture

- **Spiritual Gifts (χαρίσματα – *charismata*)** – Given by the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:6–8, 1 Corinthians 12)
- **Natural Abilities** – God-given traits used for His glory (Exodus 31:3 – Bezalel's artistic ability)

James 2:14-26 (AKJV) "What does it profit, my brothers, though a man say he has faith, and have not works? can faith save him? 15If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16And one of you say to them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful to the body; what does it profit? 1**7Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone.** 18Yes, a man may say, You have faith, and I have works: show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19You believe that there is one God; you do well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20But will you know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22See you how faith worked with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23And the scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. **24You see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.** 25Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? 26For as the body without the spirit is dead, **so faith without works is dead also."**

Introduction

In God's word, we are called to use our talents and abilities for the glory of God and the service of others. God has endowed each Christian with unique gifts, which, when faithfully employed, contribute to the building of His Kingdom and the advancement of His purposes in the world. The Bible teaches that the works and talents of a Christian are not only expressions of personal potential but also acts of obedience, stewardship, and love for God and neighbor.

Biblical “works” are services done in love for the welfare of others or/and for bringing the truth of the gospel or the invitation of salvation through Jesus Christ.

On the otherhand Biblical “ Talents” are the spiritual gifts, God given abilities and material resources to carry out God’s callings and purposes.

This commentary explores the Biblical foundation for understanding the works and talents of Christians, their purpose, and how they are to be used in alignment with God**’**s will.

Key Biblical Passages

1 Peter 4:10-11 (AKJV) “As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God gives: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*”* This passage highlights the truth that every Christian has been entrusted with gifts—whether spiritual or natural—and is called to use them in service to others. These gifts are not for personal glory but for the edification of the body of Christ and the glory of God. Whether one**’**s talent is in speaking, teaching, leading, or serving, the goal is that in all things, God may be praised. The key principle here is stewardship: We are to recognize that our talents as gifts from God, to be used faithfully and wisely.

Matthew 25:14-30 (AKJV) (The Parable of the Talents)“ For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered to them his goods. 15And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. 16Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. 17And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. 18But he that had received one went and dig in the earth, and hid his lord**’**s money. 19After a long time the lord of those servants comes, and reckons with them. 20And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, you delivered to me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. 21His lord said to him, Well done, you good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter you into the joy of your lord. 22He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, you delivered to me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. 23His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter you into the joy of your lord. 24Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew you that you are an hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not strewed: 25And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the earth: see, there you have that is yours. 26His lord answered and said to him, You wicked and slothful servant, you knew that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed: 27You should therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received my own with usury. 28Take therefore the talent from him, and give it to him which has ten talents. 29For to every one that has shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that has not shall be taken away even that which he has. 30And cast you the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

In this well-known parable, Jesus teaches about the responsibility of stewardship. The master entrusts his servants with various amounts of talents (a form of currency) before going on a journey. The servants who wisely invest and use their talents are rewarded, while the servant who hides his talent out of fear is reprimanded. The parable emphasizes that God has entrusted each believer with different gifts and abilities according to their capacity. Faithful stewardship of those talents is expected, and those who use their gifts for God's purposes will be rewarded.

Romans 12:4-8 (AKJV) "*For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teaches, on teaching; 8Or he that exhorts, on exhortation: he that gives, let him do it with simplicity; he that rules, with diligence; he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness."* In this passage, Paul explains the diversity of gifts within the body of Christ. He uses the analogy of the human body, where each part has a specific function, yet all work together for the good of the whole. Just as the body's parts have different roles, so too do the members of the church, each with unique talents and abilities. Every Christian is called to use their specific gifts in harmony with others for the benefit of the church and the advancement of God's Kingdom.

Ephesians 2:10 (AKJV) "*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.."* This verse beautifully summarizes the purpose of a Christian's works and talents. Christians are not only created by God, but also for a purpose—"to do good works." These works are not just random acts of kindness, but are part of God's divine plan, prepared in advance for each believer. This underscores the idea that God has uniquely equipped each person for specific tasks and that our talents and abilities are part of His sovereign purpose for us in the world.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (AKJV) "*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which works all in all. 7But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit with. 8For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11But all these works that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."*

Paul's teaching on spiritual gifts further highlights the diversity of talents within the church. Whether natural or spiritual, every gift is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit for the common good of the body of Christ. This passage underscores the idea that no talent or gift is inherently superior to another. What matters is how each believer uses their abilities in service to God and to others, recognizing that it is God who works through them.

Theological Significance of Works and Talents

Stewardship and Responsibility Both in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25) and in Paul's letters, there is a clear theme of stewardship. Christians are entrusted with gifts

and abilities by God, and we are responsible for using them faithfully. Whether our talents are great or small, we are called to use them for God's glory, not to hoard or neglect them. Good stewardship involves recognizing the gifts we have received, being accountable for their use, and ensuring they serve God's purposes.

God's Purpose for Our Lives God has uniquely designed each believer with specific talents and works in mind. As Paul writes in Ephesians 2:10, we are God's "handiwork," created for "good works." This emphasizes that our talents are not random or accidental; they are part of God's intentional plan for our lives. By using our gifts in accordance with His will, we fulfill the purpose for which we were created—glorifying God and serving others.

Unity and Effectiveness in Diversity The Bible stresses that the body of Christ is made up of many parts, each with different functions (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11). This diversity of talents within the church is not a source of division but rather an opportunity for mutual support and collaboration. The Christian community is meant to function as a unified whole, with each member contributing their unique gifts for the common good. This truth invites believers to appreciate and value the gifts of others, recognizing that each gift plays an essential role in the life of the church.

Glorifying God Through Our Works The ultimate aim of our works and talents is to glorify God. In 1 Peter 4:10-11, we are reminded that in all things, whether in speaking or serving, the goal is that "God may be praised through Jesus Christ." The works of Christians are meant to point others to the goodness and greatness of God. Whether through acts of mercy, teaching, giving, or leadership, every talent is an opportunity to reflect God's love and grace to the world.

Spiritual Growth and Maturity Using our talents in service to others also contributes to our spiritual growth. As we faithfully steward the gifts God has given us, we learn humility, selflessness, and dependence on God. Talents used in service deepen our relationship with God, as we experience His power working through us and witness His Kingdom expanding. The process of using our gifts in love and service is integral to our transformation into the likeness of Christ.

Conclusion

The works and talents of a Christian are not merely personal accomplishments but are divinely ordained opportunities to serve God and others. Each believer is uniquely gifted, and these gifts are to be used in stewardship, for the common good of the church, and for the glory of God. By embracing the diversity of talents within the body of Christ, we work together in unity to fulfill the good works God has prepared for us. Ultimately, the faithful use of our gifts serves to glorify God, build up His Kingdom, and grow us in Christlikeness.

(62) Compassion: Reflecting God's Heart:

1 Peter 3:8 AKJV "Finally, be you all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brothers, be pitiful (lowly at heart), be courteous."-

Compassion, an essential quality of God's character, is the heartfelt response to the suffering and needs of others. It is the tender empathy that moves us to action, to extend kindness, mercy, and support to those who are hurting or in need. As followers of Christ, we are called to embody His compassion and love toward all people.

Throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus exemplifying compassion in His interactions with others. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and comforted the brokenhearted, demonstrating His deep empathy and concern for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those around Him. He calls us to follow His example, to be compassionate and humble in our relationships with one another.

Living with compassion requires us to see others through the eyes of Jesus, to recognize their inherent worth and dignity as fellow image-bearers of God. It involves stepping outside of our own comfort zones and reaching out to those who are marginalized, oppressed, or overlooked by society. It means listening with empathy, sharing in their joys and sorrows, and offering practical assistance and support. Compassion is more than just a feeling; it is a deliberate choice to love and serve others as Jesus did. It requires us to be willing to inconvenience ourselves, to sacrifice our time and resources, and to advocate for justice and equality on behalf of those who are vulnerable or oppressed. It is a lifestyle of generosity, kindness, and selflessness that reflects the heart of our Heavenly Father.

As God instills compassion in our lives, we become vessels of God's love and instruments of His grace in a broken and hurting world. Our acts of compassion not only bring comfort and relief to those in need but also bear witness to the transformative power of God's love. They point others to the source of true compassion and hope—Jesus Christ, who gave His life that we might experience abundant life and eternal salvation.

(63) Radical Generosity: Selling Possessions to Serve the Needs of Others:

Scripture: Luke 12:33-34 (AKJV) **“**Sell that you have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fails not, where no thief approaches, neither moth corrupts. 34For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also..."

Jesus's call to sell possessions and give to the poor challenges us to examine our priorities and stewardship of resources. It's a call to radical generosity, rooted in love and concern for those in need.

In Luke 12:33, Jesus presents a compelling vision of the eternal value of investing in the kingdom of God. He encourages His followers to let go of material possessions, recognizing that true wealth is found not in earthly treasures but in the treasures stored up in heaven. These treasures are not subject to decay, theft, or loss but endure for eternity.

Selling possessions and giving to the poor is more than just a financial transaction—it's an act of obedience and faith. It's a tangible expression of our love for God and our love

for our neighbors. It's an acknowledgment that everything we have ultimately belongs to God and should be used for His purposes.

Throughout Scripture, we see examples of individuals who responded to Jesus's call to radical generosity. The rich young ruler, though hesitant, was challenged to sell his possessions and follow Jesus. Zacchaeus, after encountering Jesus, willingly gave half of his possessions to the poor and repaid those he had wronged fourfold.

Jesus Himself exemplified radical generosity in His ministry, teaching His disciples to care for the marginalized and to give sacrificially. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, and welcomed the outcast, demonstrating God's love in tangible ways.

As followers of Christ, we are called to emulate His example of radical generosity. This may involve selling possessions, sharing our resources, and sacrificially giving of ourselves for the well-being of others. It's a countercultural way of living that bears witness to the transformative power of the gospel.

So, let us prayerfully consider how we can respond to Jesus's call to sell possessions and give to the poor. May we steward our resources wisely, prioritize eternal investments, and demonstrate God's love through radical acts of generosity.

Radical Generosity: Selling Possessions to Serve the Needs of Others-Continued…

Acts 2:44-45 (AKJV): *"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. ."*

Introduction: Compassion and Kindness through Sacrificial Giving In Acts 2:44-45, the early church exemplified an extraordinary form of kindness through sacrificial generosity. In a time of communal unity and great need, believers responded to one another**'**s hardships by selling their possessions and sharing the proceeds. This passage demonstrates a profound truth: true kindness is not merely an attitude or feeling but is shown through tangible actions, especially when others are in need. Through the lens of the early church, we see that kindness often requires sacrifice—putting the well-being of others before personal comfort and wealth.

This commentary will explore how selling possessions to serve the needs of others is an act of kindness that reflects the character of Christ. By understanding the biblical foundation of generosity, the impact of sacrificial giving, and how it strengthens community, we can learn to cultivate kindness in our own lives, emulating the generosity of the early Christians and reflecting God**'**s love in our world.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Sacrificial Kindness

Generosity and self-sacrifice are central to the Christian faith, and they flow from the kindness and love God has shown toward humanity. The early Christians demonstrated kindness by sharing their possessions, a response to the example set by Christ.

1.1 Kindness and Generosity in the Early Church

In Acts 2:44-45, we read that "all that believed were together, and had all things common." This was a radical act of kindness where material possessions were seen as secondary to the spiritual well-being of the community. The believers sold their goods to meet the needs of others, a clear manifestation of their care and concern for one another. This radical generosity was not driven by obligation, but by a deep sense of love and solidarity within the body of Christ.

In Acts 4:32-35, we see a similar expression of generosity, where believers continued to share their resources to support those in need. The unity they experienced was a direct result of their shared love for God and one another, transcending individual ownership and wealth. In verse 34, we read, "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold." The selling of possessions was not just an individual act, but a collective effort to ensure that the needs of the community were met.

1.2 Christ's Example of Sacrificial Generosity

Jesus Himself demonstrated sacrificial giving through His life and death. He gave of Himself completely to meet the spiritual needs of humanity, showing that true kindness often involves sacrifice. In Philippians 2:5-8, Paul writes about Christ's humility and self-sacrifice:

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Christ's ultimate sacrifice—His death on the cross—was the greatest act of kindness ever shown. He gave everything to meet our greatest need: salvation. This selfless act of love serves as the model for Christians today, urging believers to consider the needs of others as more important than their own comfort or wealth.

1.3 The Parable of the Good Samaritan

In Luke 10:30-37, Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan, who shows kindness to a man beaten and left for dead by the roadside. The Samaritan not only helps the man in immediate need but also goes beyond that, ensuring that his needs are met over the long term.

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." (Luke 10:33-34)

This story highlights that kindness is not merely a momentary gesture, but a long-term commitment to meeting others' needs, even at a personal cost. It also challenges us to

love beyond boundaries, as the Samaritan crossed ethnic and cultural lines to help the injured man.

2. The Command to Give in Kindness

In Acts 2, the early church's decision to sell possessions and share the proceeds was not based on a command, but on a voluntary, sacrificial response to God's love. The spirit of kindness was not dictated by law but flowed from the heart of each believer, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

2.1 A Heart of Generosity

As Christians, we are called to model our lives after the generosity of Christ. The apostle Paul encourages believers to give generously, without reluctance or compulsion: *"Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver"* (2 Corinthians 9:7) This type of giving is rooted in kindness—a willing heart to share with others, knowing that God will bless those who give selflessly.

2.2 The Call to Serve One Another

In 1 John 3:16-18, John speaks of how Christians should demonstrate kindness through sacrificial giving. He writes: *"*Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17But whoever has this world's good, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him? 18My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*"* (1 John 3:16-17) John challenges believers to open their hearts and hands to those in need, echoing the sacrificial kindness of Christ. The early church's practice of selling possessions and distributing the proceeds is an example of how this sacrificial love can be applied in the church community.

3. The Impact of Selling Possessions for the Good of Others

The early church's practice of selling possessions not only served those in need, but it also had a profound impact on the unity of the believers and the growth of the church. Through their radical generosity, they created a testimony of selflessness that attracted others to the faith.

3.1 Building Unity in the Body of Christ

When believers share with one another, it fosters a deep sense of unity. No one is left without, and all needs are met. This model of generosity builds a strong community where individuals are valued, loved, and cared for. In 1 Corinthians 12:25-26, Paul writes,

"That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." The early church

demonstrated this principle in action. When they shared what they had, it solidified their bond as a united body, functioning together for the common good.

3.2 A Powerful Witness to the World

The sacrificial kindness of the early Christians served as a powerful witness to the surrounding world. As others saw the love and generosity of believers, they were drawn to the gospel. Jesus Himself said that love and kindness would be a testimony to the world of His truth: *"By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another."* (John 13:35) The radical generosity of the early Christians opened doors for others to experience the love of Christ and join the community of believers.

4. How Christians Can Cultivate the Kindness of Sacrificial Giving

4.1 Through Prayer and Dependence on God

As with all acts of kindness, the desire to give sacrificially must come from a heart transformed by the Holy Spirit. Christians should pray for a heart of generosity and seek to be sensitive to the needs of others.

4.2 Through Intentional Action

Cultivating sacrificial kindness involves making intentional decisions to give of one's time, resources, and energy for the benefit of others. It may require selling possessions, serving others, or simply giving away what we have.

4.3 By Living with a Grateful Heart

Recognizing God’s abundant provision and generosity toward us leads to a grateful heart, motivating us to share with others freely. Gratefulness opens the door to kindness and ensures that we give out of love, not obligation.

Conclusion: Living a Life of Sacrificial Kindness The early church’s example of selling possessions to serve the needs of others stands as a powerful testimony of the kindness and generosity that should characterize the life of every Christian. Just as Christ laid down His life for us, we are called to lay down our possessions and ourselves for the sake of others. As we seek to develop this kind of sacrificial kindness, we mirror the heart of God and become living testimonies of His love, grace, and generosity. May we, empowered by the Holy Spirit, be faithful in serving the needs of others, reflecting the kindness that has been shown to us in Christ.

(64) Feed The Hungry, Clothe The Naked, Shelter The Homeless, and Welcome The Strangers:

Scripture References:

- **Matthew 25:34-40** (AKJV): **“**Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35For I was an hungered, and you gave me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: 36Naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me. 37Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we you an hungered, and fed you? or thirsty, and gave you drink? 38When saw we you a stranger, and took you in? or naked, and clothed you? 39Or when saw we you sick, or in prison, and came to you? 40And the King shall answer and say to them, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it to me..”
- **Isaiah 58:6-11** (AKJV): **“**Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? 7Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor that are cast out to your house? when you see the naked, that you cover him; and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh?8Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your health shall spring forth speedily: and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. 9Then shall you call, and the LORD shall answer; you shall cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If you take away from the middle of you the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; 10And if you draw out your soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall your light rise in obscurity, and your darkness be as the noon day: 11And the LORD shall guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and make fat your bones: and you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. .”
- **Hebrews 13:2** (AKJV): **“**Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares..”

Feeding the Hungry, Clothe the Naked, Shelter the Homeless, and Welcome the Strangers

Text: Matthew 25:34-40 (AKJV):“ For I was hungry, and you gave me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: Naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came unto me.”…

Introduction: The Call to Serve the Needy In Matthew 25:35-36, Jesus emphasizes the importance of serving others by meeting their basic needs. These acts—feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, and welcoming the strangers—are not merely recommendations; they are commands that reflect God's heart for the marginalized and vulnerable. Jesus reveals that such acts are not just acts of charity but are deeply connected to the heart of the Gospel. Through these practical expressions of care, we demonstrate God**’**s love and grace to the world, fulfilling the call to live out their

faith by serving others in tangible ways. Moreover Jesus emphasis that when we care for the needy and visit the sick, welcome the strangers etc., we are doing it unto Jesus as well. This commentary will explore the significance of these commands and how they reflect God's heart for justice and mercy.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Serving the Needy

The commands and instructions by Jesus to feed, clothe, shelter, and welcome are deeply rooted in the character of God and are foundational to the teachings of the Bible. These actions are not just humanitarian but are rooted in divine compassion and a desire to reflect God's heart toward those in need.

1.1 Old Testament Commands to Care for the Poor

Throughout the Old Testament, God emphasizes the importance of caring for the poor and vulnerable. The law made provisions for the poor, the orphan, and the stranger, and these commands were expressions of God's justice and mercy.

Leviticus 19:9-10 (AKJV):" And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, neither shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10And you shall not glean your vineyard, neither shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God.."

In this passage, God instructs His people to leave part of their harvest for the poor and the stranger. This provision reflects God's care for the marginalized, ensuring that they are not left to fend for themselves. The command to leave food for the poor is a reminder that God's blessings are to be shared, especially with those in need.

1.2 Jesus' Emphasis on Mercy and Compassion

Jesus consistently taught that acts of mercy, such as feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, were not only essential acts of compassion but also expressions of faith. He taught that serving others, especially those who are vulnerable, is akin to serving Him directly.

Matthew 25:40 (AKJV):" And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me." (Jesus, Yeshua)

Here, Jesus identifies with those in need, indicating that when we serve the least in society, we are serving Him. This deepens the significance of our acts of service, linking them to the Kingdom of God and revealing that God sees the care we show to others as a reflection of our love for Him.

2. The Call to Meet Practical Needs In Matthew 25, Jesus outlines the need to address specific, practical needs in society: hunger, thirst, nakedness, homelessness, and loneliness. These are not distant, abstract concepts but real, urgent needs that require action.

2.1 Feeding the Hungry and Giving Drink to the Thirsty Feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty are acts of compassion that address immediate, physical needs. Jesus Himself demonstrated this through His miracles, such as feeding the five thousand (John 6:5-14), showing that meeting physical needs is central to His mission.

John 6:35 (AKJV):" And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall never hunger; and he that believes on me shall never thirst."

In this verse, Jesus reveals that He is the true source of spiritual nourishment. By feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty, Christians are not only addressing physical needs but also symbolizing the deeper, spiritual need for Christ.

2.2 Clothing the Naked Clothing the naked addresses the need for dignity and security. Throughout Scripture, clothing represents more than just physical warmth; it symbolizes honor, protection, and identity. God is concerned about the holistic well-being of His people, which includes their physical appearance and the way they are treated.

Genesis 3:21 (AKJV):" Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

God clothed Adam and Eve after they became aware of their nakedness, an act of care and mercy. In the same way, when Christians clothe the naked, they reflect God**'**s compassion, restoring dignity to those who are vulnerable. And moreover by so doing supplying in many situations much needed foot wear, warm clothing, clean and newer well fitting clothes which are not overworn, and appropriate.

2.3 Sheltering the Homeless and Welcoming the Strangers

Sheltering the homeless and welcoming the stranger reflect the hospitality and protection that God offers to His people. In both the Old and New Testaments, God commands His people to provide refuge and care for those who are strangers, illustrating God**'**s heart for inclusion and care for all, especially the outsider.

Deuteronomy 10:18-19 (AKJV):

"He does execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loves the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. 19Love you therefore the stranger: for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.."

God commands His people to show love to strangers, reminding them of their own time of vulnerability as foreigners in Egypt. This reinforces the principle that those who have experienced God**'**s grace and mercy should extend that same grace and mercy to others, especially those who are marginalized.

3. The Spiritual Significance of Serving Others

Acts of mercy—feeding, clothing, sheltering, and welcoming—are not only physical acts but are deeply spiritual and reflect God**'**s heart of justice and mercy.

3.1 Serving as a Reflection of God’s Love

By serving others, we reflect the love of God, who cares for the poor, the hungry, and the oppressed. These acts of service are an expression of God’s justice and mercy in the world.

Luke 3:11 (AKJV):

“He answers and says to them, He that has two coats, let him impart to him that has none; and he that has meat, let him do likewise.”

This verse from John the Baptist’s teaching emphasizes the direct connection between our possessions and our responsibility to care for others. By sharing what we have, we reflect God’s love and His provision for all people.

3.2 Serving as a Testimony to the World

The way Christians serve others is a powerful testimony to the world. In a society that often values self-interest and accumulation of wealth, the selfless service to others by Christians stands in stark contrast and points others to Christ.

John 13:35 (AKJV):

“By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.”

When Christians serve others, it demonstrates the love of Christ and serves as a powerful witness to the world, drawing others to the love of Jesus.

4. How Christians Can Live Out These Commands

Serving others by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, and welcoming the stranger requires intentionality and action. It is not enough to feel sympathy for those in need; Christians are called to act. There are many opportunities to serve in these ways within our communities and on the Missions field around the world.

4.1 Through Practical Acts of Service

Living out these commands involves actively seeking opportunities to serve others. This may include volunteering at shelters, providing meals for the hungry, donating clothes, or opening one’s home to strangers. Each act of service becomes a way to live out the love and mercy of God.

4.2 Through Prayer and Dependence on God

We cannot fulfill these commands in our own strength. It is only through prayer and dependence on the Holy Spirit that we are empowered to serve others with the love and compassion that God desires.

Galatians 5:22-23 (AKJV):

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

As we yield to the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit empowers us to serve others selflessly and sacrificially, reflecting God’s character in the world.

5. Jesus Identifies with the Needy and the Marginalized

Jesus makes it clear that when we care for the needy, visit the sick, and welcome strangers, we are not merely serving others, but we are serving Him directly. This profound truth underscores the deep connection between our acts of compassion and our relationship with Christ. Jesus identifies Himself with the marginalized and the vulnerable, so much so that He equates our service to them with serving Him.

5.1 Serving Jesus Through Serving Others

In Matthew 25:40, Jesus states, **“**Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me.” This powerful statement reveals that every act of kindness or mercy toward those in need is an act of worship and devotion to Christ. When we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, or visit the sick, we are not simply performing good deeds; we are ministering to Christ Himself. Our service to others is a tangible expression of our love for Jesus, and He receives it as such.

5.2 Embracing the Least as Christ's Own

Jesus also teaches us that those who are often overlooked—whether due to their poverty, sickness, or status as strangers—are especially dear to Him. By welcoming and caring for them, we embrace Christ in the very people He identifies with. This serves as a reminder that Christ's love is not reserved for the powerful or the wealthy but is extended to the least and the lost. Every time we serve those in need, we participate in the heart of Jesus ’ministry on earth.

5.3 A Call to Love as Jesus Loves

By identifying Himself with the vulnerable, Jesus calls His followers to reflect His love and compassion. His words in Matthew 25 compel us to see beyond the surface of people’s lives and recognize that they are precious in God’s sight. Serving the needy is an act of obedience to Christ’s command to love one another, and by doing so, we fulfill the mission He entrusted to His followers.

Through this understanding, we see that the Christian life is not only about seeking personal holiness but also about reflecting the love of Jesus through acts of service toward those in need. When we serve others, we are reminded that we are participating in the kingdom of God, where Christ Himself reigns through acts of love and mercy toward the least among us.

Conclusion: Living Out God's Commands for the Needy

Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, and welcoming the stranger are acts of mercy that reflect the heart of God. These commands go beyond charity; they are expressions of the Gospel itself. By living out these commands by Jesus, we demonstrate God**'**s love, mercy, and justice to a world in need. Through these acts of service, Christians fulfill their calling to love their neighbors as themselves and to share the love of Christ with all people.

May the Church be a beacon of hope, extending God**'**s love to the marginalized and showing the world the transforming power of His mercy. Through such acts, we testify to the love of Christ and invite others into His kingdom of justice, mercy, and grace.

(65) The Consequences of Neglecting to Care for the Needy:

God's word consistently warns against neglecting the poor, the hungry, the homeless, and the oppressed. While the Bible emphasizes the importance of serving others, it also speaks about the dire consequences of ignoring these responsibilities. Below are some scriptures that highlight the repercussions for neglecting acts of compassion and justice.

1. Matthew 25:41-46 - The Judgment of Those Who Fail to Serve

Scripture:

"*Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42For I was an hungered, and you gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink: 43I was a stranger, and you took me not in: naked, and you clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and you visited me not. 44Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we you an hungered, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to you? 45Then shall he answer them, saying, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me. 46And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."* (Matthew 25:41-46, AKJV)

Explanation:

This passage is the continuation of the judgment scene from **Matthew 25:34-40**. In contrast to the righteous, who are commended for their acts of compassion, those who neglect to serve the needy are sent away into eternal punishment. The failure to care for the hungry, thirsty, strangers, and those in prison is treated as a direct failure to serve Christ Himself. The passage underscores the severe spiritual consequence of neglecting justice and mercy.

2. James 2:14-17 - Faith Without Works is Dead

Scripture:
"*What does it profit, my brothers, though a man say he has faith, and have not works?*

can faith save him? 15If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16And one of you say to them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful to the body; what does it profit? 17Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone." (James 2:14-17, AKJV)

Explanation:
James makes it clear that faith without action is useless. If we claim to have faith but ignore the basic needs of others, especially the poor and hungry, our faith is dead. True faith is demonstrated through compassionate acts, and neglecting to care for others exposes the emptiness of a professed belief. This is not just a failure to show kindness, but a fundamental neglect of the core teachings of Christ, and such neglect reflects an incomplete or false faith.

3. 1 John 3:17-18 - Loving in Deed and Truth

Scripture:
"*But whoever has this world***'***s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."* (1 John 3:17-18, NKJV)

Explanation:
This passage condemns the failure to act when we have the resources to help others. If we have the means to assist someone in need and choose to ignore them, John questions how God**'**s love can truly be present in us. The implication is that neglecting the poor and the needy is a sign of an absence of true Christian love. Genuine love for others is not just verbal; it requires tangible action.

4. Proverbs 21:13 - Ignoring the Cry of the Poor

Scripture:
"*Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard."* (Proverbs 21:13, AKJV)

Explanation:
Proverbs warns that if we ignore the pleas of the poor and needy, we will face a time when our own cries will go unheard. This is a powerful reminder of the reciprocal nature of how we treat others. If we disregard the suffering of others, God will not be inclined to listen to our own cries for help.

5. Isaiah 1:16-17 - God Calls for Justice, Not Empty Ritual

Scripture:
"*Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil; 17Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."* (Isaiah 1:16-17, AKJV)

Explanation:
Isaiah calls the people of Israel to stop their religious rituals if they are not accompanied by a commitment to justice and caring for the oppressed. God is not interested in empty acts of worship while His people neglect justice and mercy. Neglecting the care of the oppressed and vulnerable is considered "evil" in God's eyes, and those who do so must turn away from such practices and seek justice instead.

6. Zechariah 7:9-10 - The Call to Justice and Mercy

Scripture:
"*Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Execute true justice, Show mercy and compassion Everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, The alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart against his brother.'"* (Zechariah 7:9-10, NKJV)

Explanation:
God explicitly commands His people to show justice, mercy, and compassion toward the most vulnerable—widows, orphans, aliens (strangers), and the poor. Ignoring these commands and oppressing the weak brings judgment. This is a clear indication that God does not take kindly to neglecting those in need, and such behavior invites His disfavor.

7. **Revelation 3:17-18** (AKJV) **Wretched and miserable:**

"*because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see."*

Key Point: This is part of the message to the church of Laodicea, which represents a self-sufficient, wealthy community that neglected their spiritual poverty and need. Jesus urges them to recognize their true spiritual condition, which includes a failure to care for others **'**needs, both material and spiritual. The church's neglect of its deeper responsibilities (including care for the marginalized) results in being spiritually "wretched and miserable."

8. Revelation 20:12-15 (AKJV) **Judgement** : The final Judgement will be according to whether or not a person has Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour by genuine faith and a person will also be judged by their works.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Key Point: The final judgment will be based on people's works, which include how they lived in relationship to others—whether they acted justly and cared for those in need or lived selfishly. While Revelation doesn't specifically mention neglecting the needy in this passage, the general idea of judgment according to deeds applies to how we treat the vulnerable, marginalized, and poor throughout the book of Revelation.

Conclusion: The Consequences of Neglecting the Needy

Scripture warns that failing to care for the poor, the hungry, the naked, the homeless, and the oppressed has serious spiritual consequences. Whether it is eternal judgment, the rejection of our worship, or a lack of God's favor, neglecting the vulnerable is something God takes very seriously. We are called to reflect His love and justice by actively serving those in need, and those who refuse to do so are warned of the consequences. These passages emphasize that serving others is not optional but a direct expression of our love for God and our faith in Christ.

Reflection:

In a world that often prioritizes self over others, the call to serve those in need stands out as a profound testament to our faith. Jesus teaches us that when we care for the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, and the needy, we are not just helping others; we are serving Him.

Feeding the Hungry: Imagine the impact of a warm meal on someone's life—a simple act that can restore dignity and hope. Isaiah 58:10 reminds us that when we pour ourselves into meeting the needs of the hungry, our own spirits are nourished. Serving food is not just a physical act; it's a powerful statement of love and compassion.

Giving Clothing: Clothing is more than protection from the elements; it is a symbol of care and respect. In Matthew 25, when we clothe the needy, we provide not just warmth but also a sense of belonging and dignity. Every garment offered is a reminder of God's provision and our role as His hands and feet on Earth.

Providing Shelter: Welcoming the stranger and offering shelter transforms lives. In Hebrews 13:2, we are reminded that hospitality can change lives in ways we may not see. By opening our homes or supporting shelters, we create spaces where people feel safe and valued, reflecting God's heart for His children.

Welcoming the Stranger: Every person we encounter carries a story and a need for acceptance. Jesus calls us to look beyond our comfort zones and embrace those who are different from us. By welcoming strangers, we break down barriers and build bridges of understanding and love, embodying the very essence of Christ's teachings.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the countless ways You provide for us. Help us to be Your instruments of love and compassion in a world that desperately needs it. Open our eyes to the needs around us, and grant us the courage to act. May our hands be willing to feed, clothe, and shelter those who are vulnerable. Let our hearts be open to the stranger, welcoming them with the same grace You have shown us. Amen.

Closing Thought: As we go about our daily lives, let us remember that in serving others, we are serving Christ Himself. Each act of kindness, no matter how small, is a reflection

of God’s love in the world. Let’s commit ourselves to feeding the hungry, giving clothing, providing shelter, and welcoming the stranger, allowing our lives to shine brightly in the darkness.

(66) Visit and Support, The Sick, Widows, Orphans, The Broken Hearted, Lonely, Prisoners:

Scripture References:

- **Matthew 25:36-40** (AKJV): **“**Naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me. 37Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we you an hungered, and fed you? or thirsty, and gave you drink? 38When saw we you a stranger, and took you in? or naked, and clothed you? 39Or when saw we you sick, or in prison, and came to you? 40And the King shall answer and say to them, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it to me.”
- **James 1:27** (AKJV): **“**Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”
- **Psalm 68:5** (AKJV): **“**A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation”

Reflection:

In our fast-paced world and every day life, it's easy sometimes to overlook those who are suffering or marginalized. Yet, Jesus calls us to action, reminding us that our faith is not just about personal piety but about tangible love for others—especially the sick, the imprisoned, the widows, and the orphans.

Visiting the Sick: When we visit the sick, we embody Christ’s compassion. Matthew 25:36 encourages us to reach out to those who are suffering. A simple visit can bring hope and comfort, showing them they are not alone. Consider how Jesus healed the sick and brought solace to the afflicted. In our presence, we can offer not just words, but the assurance of God’s love and the reminder that He sees their pain.

Supporting the Imprisoned: Visiting those in prison might feel daunting, yet it’s a powerful way to demonstrate God’s grace. Many who are incarcerated long for connection and understanding. By visiting them, we can reflect God’s forgiveness and mercy, reminding them that their worth is not diminished by their circumstances. Through our actions, we can help restore hope and purpose, as Christ did for those whom society often forgets.

Caring for Widows and Orphans: James 1:27 highlights the importance of caring for widows and orphans. These groups often face unique challenges and loneliness. By reaching out, we provide support and companionship, helping them feel valued and loved. Just as God is a father to the fatherless (Psalm 68:5), we are called to be His hands and feet, offering care and advocacy.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank You for the love and compassion You show us every day. Help us to be mindful of those who are sick, imprisoned, and those who have lost loved ones. Give us the courage to reach out and visit, to listen and to share Your love. May our hearts break for what breaks Yours, and may our actions reflect Your grace in the lives of those we encounter. Amen.

Closing Thought: As we go forth, let us be committed to being a source of light in the lives of those who are struggling. Each visit, each act of kindness, is an opportunity to reflect Christ's love and to fulfill our calling to serve the vulnerable. In caring for them, we find our faith comes alive, and we discover the true heart of God.

(67) Sharing in Common:

Among fellow Believers of Jesus Christ:

Scripture: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that something of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. ."- Acts 4:32 (AKJV)

The early Christian Church described in the book of Acts provides a powerful example of unity and generosity among fellow disciples of Jesus Christs. They lived in such harmony and unity that they considered everything they owned to be held in common, sharing with one another as each had need.This radical sharing of possessions was not driven by obligation or compulsion but by a genuine outpouring of love and concern for one another. It reflected their deep understanding of the interconnectedness of the body of Christ and their commitment to caring for one another as a family.

The unity and commonality among Christians extended beyond material possessions to spiritual matters as well. They shared a common faith, a common purpose, and a common identity as followers of Christ. They were united in heart and mind, bound together by our love for God and one another.This spirit of sharing in common serves as a powerful example for us today. While we may not be called to replicate the exact practices of the early church, we are called to embody the same spirit of divine love, unity, generosity, and mutual care within the body of Christ.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to love one another deeply, to bear one another's burdens, and to share with those in need. This means being willing to sacrificially give of our time, resources, and talents for the well-being of others, just as Jesus sacrificially gave Himself for us.

When we live in harmony and unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we reflect the love and grace of our Heavenly Father to the world. Our shared commonality as believers becomes a powerful testimony to the transformative power of the gospel and the reality of God's kingdom on earth.

So, let us strive to cultivate a spirit of unity and generosity within the body of Christ, sharing with one another in love and humility. May our lives be a reflection of the selfless love of Jesus, who gave everything for us.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (AKJV) But this I say, He which sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver. :

Philippians 4:15-20 (AKJV): **“**Now you Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you only. 16For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again to my necessity. 17Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. 18But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. 19But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20Now to God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. .”

(68) Hospitality:

Text: Romans 12:13 (AKJV):“ Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.”

Hospitality in the Bible

Definition

Hospitality is the generous and sacrificial love shown to strangers, travelers, or guests. In Scripture, it is considered a **commanded virtue** and a **mark of godliness**, not just social courtesy.

Hebrew Words (Old Testament)

While there is no single Hebrew word that directly translates to "hospitality" as in Greek, the concept is deeply embedded in Jewish culture, especially through examples and commands.

1. **גּוּר(gûr) / גֵּר(gēr)** – Sojourner, stranger, foreigner
    - God's people were commanded to treat the *gēr* (sojourner) with compassion and care.
    - Example:
      “You shall love the stranger (gēr), for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” – Deuteronomy 10:19
2. **חָסָה(hāsāh) / פָּתַח(pāthaḥ)** – To receive, to open
    - These words are used in stories where people open their homes or tents to visitors, as Abraham did in Genesis 18.

Greek Words (New Testament)

1. **φιλοξενία (philoxenia)** – Hospitality; love of strangers
    - From *philos* (love) + *xenos* (stranger)
    - Refers to the active, intentional welcoming of those who are not family or close friends.
    - Example:
      "Do not neglect to show hospitality (philoxenia), for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it." – Hebrews 13:2
2. **φιλόξενος (philoxenos)** – Hospitable (adjective)
    - A personal quality; loving and welcoming toward strangers.
    - Required of church leaders and encouraged for all believers.
    - Example:
      "An overseer must be above reproach... hospitable (philoxenos)..." – 1 Timothy 3:2

Biblical Examples of Hospitality

- **Abraham and the Three Visitors** – Genesis 18:1–8 Abraham rushes to provide food and rest for strangers, who turn out to be angelic messengers.
- **Lot and the Angels in Sodom** – Genesis 19:1–3 Lot insists the visitors stay at his home for safety and shelter.
- **The Shunammite Woman** – 2 Kings 4:8–10 Provides a room and meals for Elisha, the prophet of God.
- **Jesus and Meals with Outsiders** – Luke 14 Jesus teaches to invite the poor, crippled, and blind, not just friends, when showing hospitality.
- **Priscilla and Aquila** – Acts 18:2–3, Romans 16:3–5 Opened their home to Paul and used it as a base for ministry and worship.

Theological Significance

- **Reflects God's Character** – God welcomes the outsider and calls His people to do the same (Deut. 10:18–19).
- **Embodies the Gospel** – We were once strangers and enemies, yet Christ welcomed us (Ephesians 2:12–13).
- **Builds the Body** – Hospitality strengthens community, cares for the needy, and supports missions.
- **Tests True Love** – It's easy to love friends; hospitality extends love to strangers (Luke 14:12–14).

Introduction: The Christian Call to Hospitality

In Romans 12:13, the apostle Paul gives a direct and practical command to the Christian community: **"***given to hospitality."* This short phrase encapsulates a profound Christian

virtue—hospitality. The biblical view of hospitality has a very significant meaning more so than what the world understands hospitality to pertain to. God's intended way that we as Christians should demonstrate hospitality encompasses generosity, kindness, and a spirit of welcome toward strangers, neighbors, and even enemies, reflecting God's love for all people.

Hospitality is not merely a social duty, but a way of demonstrating God's grace. It is the outward manifestation of love in action, a living expression of the gospel in our everyday lives. For the early Christians, hospitality was a central part of the church's life, and the practice of welcoming others was often tied to the mission of the gospel and the unity of the body of Christ. This commentary will explore the biblical foundation of hospitality, its significance in the life of a believer, and how Christians can live out this virtue today.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Hospitality

Hospitality has its roots in the nature of God Himself, who has always been hospitable to His people, inviting them into His presence and blessing them with His provision. The theme of welcoming and offering care to others runs throughout both the Old and New Testaments.

1.1 Hospitality in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, hospitality was a both cultural and spiritual way of life. It was a Godly virtue, attitude and a way to display kindness, generosity, righteousness and justice. The importance of hospitality is illustrated in the story of Abraham's encounter with the three strangers (Genesis 18:1-8). When three visitors appeared at Abraham's tent, he immediately offered them food and water, going above and beyond in his generous care. This hospitality was not just an act of kindness but also an opportunity to receive God's blessing and revelation.

In the law of Moses, hospitality toward strangers was commanded as a reflection of God's heart for the foreigner, widow, and orphan:

- **Leviticus 19:33-34** (AKJV):" And if a stranger sojourn with you in your land, you shall not vex him. 34But the stranger that dwells with you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in length, in weight, or in measure. 36Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall you have: I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt. 37Therefore shall you observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: I am the LORD."

This command is powerful in its call to love the stranger. The Israelites, who had themselves been strangers and sojourners in Egypt, were called to welcome the outsider in the same way that God had welcomed them. The practice of hospitality in the Old Testament was not only a matter of social convention but also a reflection of God's justice and mercy.

1.2 Hospitality in the Life of Jesus

The life and ministry of Jesus also demonstrate radical hospitality. Jesus frequently shared meals with those whom society excluded—tax collectors, sinners, and even Pharisees. His table fellowship was a sign of God's inclusive love, offering grace to those who were often marginalized.

- **Matthew 9:10-13** (AKJV):“ And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. 11And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to his disciples, Why eats your Master with publicans and sinners? 12But when Jesus heard that, he said to them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. 13But go you and learn what that means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.’”

In this passage, Jesus' hospitality is a powerful act of ministry. He invites those on the margins of society into fellowship, offering them the grace of God through His presence. Jesus didn’t just offer physical hospitality; He extended spiritual hospitality, offering forgiveness and healing to those who needed it most.

1.3 Hospitality in the Early Church

The early church embraced hospitality as a vital part of Christian community life. In Acts 2:42-47, we see that the first Christians devoted themselves to fellowship, breaking bread together, and caring for one another’s needs. Hospitality was essential for the survival and growth of the early church, especially as they faced persecution and isolation. It was in the homes of believers that the gospel spread, as people gathered to hear teaching, pray together, and serve one another.

2. The Command to Be "Given to Hospitality"

In Romans 12:13, Paul’s instruction to be **“**given to hospitality” is part of a broader exhortation to live in a way that reflects God’s mercy and love. The phrase "given to hospitality" literally means "pursue hospitality" or "eagerly seek out opportunities to show hospitality." It emphasizes intentionality and an eagerness to welcome others.

2.1 Hospitality as a Mark of Christian Love

Paul places hospitality alongside other vital Christian virtues like love, kindness, and generosity. As believers, we are called not to simply wait for guests to arrive but to actively pursue opportunities to serve others. This is consistent with the broader New Testament teaching that love for others should be expressed in tangible actions, and hospitality is one such way to demonstrate love.

- **1 Peter 4:9,10** (AKJV): "Use hospitality one to another without grudging. 10As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

This command emphasizes that hospitality is not just a duty, but an attitude of joy and generosity. Christians are called to offer their homes, time, and resources with a willing heart, just as Christ gave of Himself freely for us.

2.2 Hospitality as a Reflection of God's Grace

Just as God has opened His home to us through Jesus Christ, Christians are to open their homes to others. In a world that often values self-sufficiency and privacy, hospitality is a countercultural expression of the grace and love of God.

- **Hebrews 13:2** (AKJV):" Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

This verse reminds us that hospitality has spiritual significance. By welcoming strangers, we may unknowingly be welcoming angels or representatives of God's kingdom. It encourages believers to practice hospitality without reservation, trusting that God can use our simple acts of kindness in profound ways.

3. The Practice of Hospitality in the Christian Life

Hospitality is not just an abstract command; it is something that believers are called to live out in practical ways.

3.1 Opening Our Homes and Hearts

For many Christians, hospitality begins with the simple act of opening one's home. This can include hosting meals, providing a place for someone in need to stay, or even organizing events for fellowship and community. However, hospitality also extends to opening our hearts to others, being willing to listen, encourage, and care for people.

- **Matthew 25:34-40** (AKJV):" Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35For I was an hungered, and you gave me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: 36Naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me. 37Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we you an hungered, and fed you? or thirsty, and gave you drink? 38When saw we you a stranger, and took you in? or naked, and clothed you? 39Or when saw we you sick, or in prison, and came to you? 40And the King shall answer and say to them, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it to me."

This passage shows that hospitality includes not only the physical act of feeding and sheltering others but also offering care to the sick, visiting the imprisoned, and meeting the emotional and spiritual needs of others. Those who do so will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

3.2 Hospitality in the Church and Community

Hospitality is especially important within the Christian community. It helps foster unity and build stronger relationships within the body of Christ. By opening our homes and hearts to fellow believers, we cultivate a spirit of love and belonging that reflects the unity we share in Christ.

- **Acts 2:46** (AKJV): "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, ."

This early Christian practice of breaking bread together shows the importance of shared fellowship in the life of the church. Hospitality creates opportunities for deeper fellowship, spiritual growth, and mutual support.

4. Living Out Hospitality in a Hostile World

In today**'**s culture, hospitality can be countercultural. With increasing isolation, individualism, and busyness, offering hospitality may require a sacrifice of time, resources, and comfort. However, the practice of hospitality continues to be a powerful witness to the love of Christ.

Of course as Christians we need God's discernment and discretion on how and when we are hospitable; Not every Christian is gifted by God's Holy Spirit to minister to drug addicts, mentally challenged individuals, and those who have spiritual demonic issues etc.

4.1 A Testimony to the World

When Christians practice hospitality, they reflect the love of Christ to a world that is destitute of the kindness, and warmheartedness. By welcoming others into our homes and lives, we create a space for the gospel to be shared and for relationships to be formed. Hospitality offers a glimpse of God**'**s kingdom, where all are invited, no matter their background or status.

- **Luke 14:12-14** (AKJV):" Then said he also to him that bade him, When you make a dinner or a supper, call not your friends, nor your brothers, neither your kinsmen, nor your rich neighbors; lest they also bid you again, and a recompense be made you. 13But when you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14And you shall be blessed; for they cannot recompense you: for you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just..'"

By practicing hospitality toward those who cannot repay us, we follow Jesus **'**example of offering grace to the undeserving. This kind of hospitality reflects the nature of God**'**s grace, which is given freely and without expectation of repayment.

Conclusion: Reflecting God's Welcome

Hospitality is not just a social practice but a deeply spiritual from God calling for every believer. It is an invitation to reflect God**'**s grace, love, and generosity to those around us. As we open our homes, our hearts, and our lives to others, we fulfill the command to be

“given to hospitality,” demonstrating the welcoming love of Christ to a world in need. May we, empowered by the Holy Spirit, practice hospitality in such a way that we reflect the heart of God and draw others to His love.

Hospitality - Continued…

Scripture Reference: Hebrews 13:2 (AKJV))“ Be not forgetful to entertain (show hospitality to) strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

In our world today, where interactions are often brief and impersonal, the call to hospitality stands as a beacon of warmth and welcome. The act of opening our homes and hearts to others reflects the love of Christ in profound ways.

Hospitality is more than just offering a meal or a place to stay; it is an attitude of generosity and openness. When we invite others in—whether friends, family, or strangers—we create space for connection, understanding, and community. In doing so, we mirror God**’**s embrace of us.

Consider the words of Hebrews 13:2, which reminds us that in showing hospitality, we might entertain angels unaware. This suggests that every encounter, no matter how ordinary, holds the potential for extraordinary blessings. Each person who crosses our path carries a story, a need, and an opportunity for divine connection.

As you reflect on your own life, ask yourself: How can I develop a spirit of hospitality? It might be as simple as sharing a cup of coffee with a neighbor, volunteering at a local shelter, or inviting someone new to join your circle. Look for opportunities to be present and attentive to those around you.

Let**’**s remember that hospitality is not solely about our physical resources; it**’**s about our willingness to share ourselves. It**’**s about listening, offering encouragement, and creating an atmosphere where others feel valued and loved.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to be more aware of those around me and to open my heart and home to others. Teach me to see each person as a gift and an opportunity for connection. May my acts of hospitality reflect Your love and grace. Amen.

(69) Bear One Another's Burdens:

Scripture Reference: Galatians 6:2 (AKJV)“ Bear you one another**’**s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

Life is filled with joys and challenges, and sometimes the weight of our struggles can feel overwhelming. As Christians, we are called to support one another in our times of need. The Apostle Paul reminds us in Galatians 6:2 that bearing each other**’**s burdens is not just a good deed; it is a fundamental expression of our faith and love for one another.

To "bear" someone's burden means to help carry the load that is too heavy for them to bear alone. This might look like offering a listening ear, providing practical assistance, or simply being present during difficult times. In these moments, we reflect the compassion of Christ, who bore our burdens on the cross and continues to intercede for us.

Christians in the early church had all things in common and distributed to those in need, as well as visiting the sick, widows, orphans etc.

This is something thing that we not just agree or proclaim is good to do, but actually apply it in our lives between one another.

When we engage in this act of love, we fulfill the law of Christ, which is centered on love—love for God and love for others. It is easy to get caught up in our own lives, but reaching out to someone in need not only lightens their load but also enriches our own lives. It creates a sense of community, reminding us that we are not alone in our struggles.

Reflection:
Think about the people in your life who may be carrying heavy burdens. Is there someone who needs your support today? Perhaps you could reach out with a text, make a phone call, or offer to spend time together.

Prayer:
Lord, help me to be sensitive to the needs of others. Give me the courage and compassion to reach out and bear the burdens of those around me. May my actions reflect Your love and grace, bringing hope and comfort to those who are struggling. Amen.

As you go about your day, look for opportunities to lift someone's burden. In doing so, you not only fulfill God's law but also become a vessel of His love and light in the world.

(70) Gentleness:

Matthew 11:28-30 (AKJV): Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke on you, and learn of me; for I am meek (gentle) and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. 30For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Gentleness in the Bible

Definition

Gentleness is strength under control—expressed in humility, kindness, and patient restraint. It's not weakness but **God-like meekness** that shows compassion and grace even when provoked. Gentleness is a reflection of **Christ's character** and is essential in how believers relate to others.

Hebrew Words (Old Testament)

1. **עֲנָוָה (ʿanavah)** – Humility, meekness, gentleness

- Describes a humble and gentle spirit, especially in the context of dependence on God.
- Example:
  “He guides the humble (ʿanav) in what is right and teaches them his way.” – Psalm 25:9

2. **רַךְ (rakh)** – Tender, soft, gentle
   - Used more literally to describe gentle speech or character.
   - Example:
     “A gentle (rakh) answer turns away wrath...” – Proverbs 15:1

Greek Words (New Testament)

1. **πραΰτης (praÿtēs)** – Meekness, gentleness, humility
   - Often translated as "meekness" or "gentleness."
   - Describes **controlled strength**, not harsh or aggressive, but gracious and self-restrained.
   - A Fruit of the Spirit and a Christlike virtue.
   - Example:
     “But the fruit of the Spirit is... gentleness (praÿtēs)...” – Galatians 5:23
2. **ἐπιεικής (epieikēs)** – Gentle, yielding, fair-minded
   - Related to reasonableness and fairness in relationships.
   - Describes someone who is **not combative** but peaceable and considerate.
   - Example:
     “Let your gentleness (epieikēs) be known to all men.” – Philippians 4:5

Gentleness as a Fruit of the Spirit

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **gentleness**, self-control...” – Galatians 5:22–23

- **Gentleness (praÿtēs)** is not passive weakness, but **Spirit-empowered restraint** and mercy.
- It is the opposite of self-assertiveness or harshness.

Biblical Examples of Gentleness

- **Jesus**
  “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle (praÿs) and lowly in

heart..." – Matthew 11:29 Christ's gentleness did not mean passivity but humility, patience, and mercy.

- **Moses**
  "Now the man Moses was very meek (ʿanav), more than all people who were on the face of the earth." – Numbers 12:3 Moses's leadership was marked by humility and dependence on God.
- **Paul's Appeal** "I, Paul, myself entreat you by the meekness and gentleness (praÿtēs) of Christ..." – 2 Corinthians 10:1
- **Restoring Others Gently** "If someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently (praÿtēs)." – Galatians 6:1

Spiritual and Practical Significance

- **Commanded Virtue**: "Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience." – Colossians 3:12
- **Relational Impact**: Gentleness fosters peace, encourages repentance, and reflects Christlike love.
- **Required for Teaching and Leadership**: "The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone... correcting his opponents with gentleness." – 2 Timothy 2:24–25

Introduction:

In a Christian context, gentleness is often understood as a fruit of the Holy Spirit, as described in Galatians 5:22-23, where it is listed alongside other virtues like love, joy, peace, and patience. Gentleness in this sense involves a meek, humble, and kind attitude towards others. It reflects the character of Jesus Christ, who demonstrated gentleness throughout His life, such as in His interactions with the marginalized, the sick, and even His disciples.

Gentleness is not weakness but strength under control—it's the ability to respond to others with compassion and humility, even in the face of difficult or provoking situations. In Matthew 11:29, Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." This shows that gentleness is closely tied to humility and rest in God's guidance.

In practical terms, gentleness means treating others with respect, avoiding harsh words or actions, and striving to resolve conflicts in a peaceful and understanding manner. It involves being patient, slow to anger, and forgiving, reflecting Christ's love for humanity.

Jesus is the ultimate example of gentleness. Despite His divine power and authority, He embodied humility and gentleness throughout His earthly ministry. Jesus was gentle in His interactions with the broken and marginalized, but also firm and

uncompromising with the proud and self-righteous. His gentleness was not weakness but power under control, offering grace to those in need while confronting sin.

Here, Jesus invites those who are weary and burdened to find rest in Him, describing His heart as **“**gentle and lowly.” The gentleness of Jesus is not a passive resignation but an active, compassionate outreach to those in need. He provides rest to the soul and healing to the broken. His gentleness is not to be confused with weakness but is a powerful tool for restoring and comforting.

This invitation by Jesus highlights gentleness as a distinguishing characteristic of a Christian's life and witness. Gentleness is often understood as meekness or softness, but in a biblical context, it is much more profound. Gentleness is not weakness or passivity; rather, it is a strength that is under control, a deliberate choice to respond with humility, kindness, and restraint in the face of provocation.

Gentleness is a key attribute of God Himself, and it is something that all believers are called to cultivate through the work of the Holy Spirit. As followers of Christ, we are called to embody gentleness, not just in our interactions with other believers, but with all people. This commentary will explore the biblical foundation of gentleness, its role in the life of a Christian, and how we can cultivate this virtue as we grow in our faith.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Gentleness

Gentleness is a virtue, a personal quality that is established and refined by God in a person’s life and that is found throughout Scripture, particularly in the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. It is not simply a moral trait but a reflection of God**’**s character and an essential part of Christian discipleship.

1.1 Gentleness in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, the word for gentleness is often associated with humility, meekness, and patience. God repeatedly demonstrates His gentleness in His dealings with Israel, even when they were rebellious and stubborn. One of the clearest examples of this gentleness is found in God**’**s relationship with Moses.

- **Numbers 12:3** (AKJV):“ (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were on the face of the earth.)”

Moses is described as the most humble man on earth, yet he was a mighty leader of Israel. His gentleness was not a sign of weakness but of strength under control. He was able to lead the people through difficult circumstances while maintaining a spirit of humility and gentleness toward God**’**s people.

Gentleness, as demonstrated by God and His servants, is a posture of humility, a willingness to be used by God, and an ability to respond with patience and care, even when faced with hardship or provocation.

1.2 Gentleness in the Life of Jesus

- **Matthew 11:28-30** (AKJV):“ Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke on you, and learn of me; for I am meek (gentle) and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. 30For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light..”

1.3 Gentleness in the New Testament

The New Testament continues to emphasize gentleness as an essential Christian virtue. In the letters of Paul and Peter, gentleness is highlighted as a key quality that should define the behavior of believers, especially in their interactions with one another and with outsiders.

- **Galatians 5:23-26** (AKJV):“ But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24And they that are Christ**’**s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.”

Gentleness is listed as a fruit of the Spirit, meaning it is a characteristic that grows in the life of a believer as they are transformed by the Holy Spirit. Gentleness is not something we can manufacture on our own but is the outworking of God**’**s grace in us. It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to respond gently, even in challenging circumstances.

- **Titus 3:2** (AKJV):“ To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness to all men..”

In this passage, Paul calls believers to exhibit gentleness in their relationships with everyone, regardless of their status or position. Gentleness is a witness to the world of the love and grace of God, and it is a testimony of the transformation that the gospel brings.

2. The Command to “Let Your Gentleness Be Known”

Paul**’**s command in Philippians 4:5 is both a directive and a testimony. He instructs believers to let their gentleness be **“**known to all men.” This means that gentleness should be visible in the way we live and interact with others. It should be a characteristic that defines us, a hallmark of our identity as followers of Christ.

2.1 Gentleness as a Christian Witness

Our gentleness is a powerful witness to the world. In a world marked by aggression, harshness, and division, the gentle spirit of a Christian stands out. It reflects the heart of Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve, and to offer peace and reconciliation to a broken world.

- **1 Peter 3:15-16** (AKJV):“ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is

in you with meekness (gentleness) and fear: 16Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ..”

Here, Peter emphasizes the importance of responding to those who challenge our faith with gentleness and respect. Even when facing opposition or hostility, our demeanor should reflect the gentleness of Christ. This is a powerful way to demonstrate the hope and grace we have found in Jesus.

2.2 Gentleness and the Glory of God

When we exhibit gentleness, we are not only following the example of Jesus but also bringing glory to God. Gentleness is an expression of His love, and it points others to His goodness. In a world filled with harshness, gentle Christians can be a light that attracts others to the gospel.

- **Matthew 5:5** (AKJV):“ Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth..”

The meekness (gentleness) spoken of here is the result of strength surrendered to God**’**s will. It is not weakness but a humble reliance on God. The promise of inheriting the earth is a reference to the future Kingdom of God, where gentleness and humility will ultimately triumph.

3. The Role of Gentleness in Christian Relationships

Gentleness plays a crucial role in how we interact with others, both within the church and in the broader world.

3.1 Gentleness in the Church

Within the Christian community, gentleness fosters peace, unity, and understanding. It helps maintain harmony in relationships and enables believers to bear with one another in love. When we respond with gentleness, we create an environment where people feel safe, valued, and respected.

- **Ephesians 4:2** (AKJV):“ With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;.”

Gentleness is a vital component of humility and patience. It helps believers work through differences, misunderstandings, and conflicts in a way that promotes reconciliation rather than division.

3.2 Gentleness in the World

In our interactions with the world, gentleness allows us to be witnesses of Christ**’**s love. We live in a time when there is much division and hostility, but a gentle spirit can break through barriers and open hearts. Gentleness is not about passivity but about choosing to respond to conflict and misunderstanding with humility and grace.

- **2 Timothy 2:24-25** (AKJV):“ And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, 25In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;”

Here, Paul encourages Timothy (and all believers) to approach opposition and disagreement with gentleness and patience, trusting that God can work through such interactions to bring others to repentance.

4. How Christians Can Develop Gentleness

Gentleness is not something that can be obtained through mere willpower; it is a work of God’s Holy Spirit within us and a fruit of the Spirit. As we grow in our relationship with Christ and allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, gentleness will naturally flow from our lives.

4.1 Through Prayer and Dependence on the Holy Spirit

Gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit, meaning it is produced in us as we surrender to the work of God in our lives. Through prayer, we can ask God to develop gentleness in our hearts and make us more like Christ.

- **Galatians 5:22-23** (AKJV):“ But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

We must remain connected to the vine (Jesus) and depend on the Holy Spirit to produce gentleness in us. As we grow in our faith, we will find that gentleness becomes more natural and evident in our interactions with others.

4.2 By Practicing Humility and Patience

Gentleness is closely tied to humility and patience. To cultivate gentleness, we must learn to set aside our pride and personal agenda, choosing instead to serve others with a spirit of meekness. This involves being slow to anger and quick to forgive, responding with grace rather than retaliation.

- **James 1:19-20** (AKJV):“ Why, my beloved brothers, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: 20For the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God. 21Why lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness (Gentleness and humility) the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”

By practicing humility and patience, we allow gentleness to shape our relationships with others.

Conclusion: Living with Gentleness for the Glory of God

Gentleness is not an optional Christian virtue but an essential part of the character of Christ. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, and as believers, we are called to reflect His gentleness in all areas of our lives. Whether within the church or in our interactions with

the world, gentleness has the power to disarm hostility, foster unity, and point others to the grace of God. May we, by the power of the Holy Spirit, cultivate gentleness in our hearts and live it out in our words and actions for the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom.

Scripture References:

Galatians 5:22,23 (AKJV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. ***"****Let your (Gentleness) moderation be known to all men. The Lord is at hand"* – Philippians 4:5 (AKJV)

Reflection: In a world often filled with harshness and impatience, gentleness can seem like a rare and precious quality or virtue. Yet, in this verse from Philippians, we are reminded that gentleness is not just a soft characteristic; it is a powerful testament to our faith and a reflection of God**'**s presence in our lives.

Gentleness involves a choice to respond with kindness, to seek understanding, and to extend grace to those around us. It requires humility and a deep awareness of our own need for mercy. When we embrace gentleness, we not only embody the love of Christ, but we also create an environment where others can feel safe and valued.

Consider the example of Jesus. He approached the weary, the broken, and the marginalized with compassion and a gentle spirit. He taught us that true strength lies not in assertiveness or dominance but in the ability to love and uplift others, even in challenging situations.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for Your gentle spirit that guides and comforts us. Help us to embody gentleness in our interactions with others. May our words and actions reflect Your love and grace, drawing others closer to You. Teach us to be gentle, even when the world around us is not. Amen.

Action Step: Today, look for opportunities to practice gentleness. Whether it**'**s through a kind word, a patient response, or a listening ear, let your gentleness shine as a reflection of God**'**s love in your life.

(71) Kindness:

Text: Ephesians 4:32 (AKJV):" And be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ**'**s sake has forgiven you.."

Kindness in the Bible

Definition

Kindness is a disposition and action that reflects **compassion**, **gentleness**, and **goodwill** toward others—often expressed through helpful, merciful, and generous behavior. In Scripture, it is both a **character trait of God** and a **fruit of the Spirit** in believers.

Hebrew Words (Old Testament)

1. **חֶסֶד(chesed)** – Lovingkindness, steadfast love, covenantal kindness
    - One of the most theologically rich words in the Old Testament.
    - Implies **loyal, covenant-based kindness** often shown by God to His people.
    - Example:
      "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His steadfast love (chesed) endures forever." – Psalm 136:1
2. **טוֹב(tov)** – Good, kind, beneficial
    - General word for goodness or kindness in action.
    - Example:
      "You are good (tov) and do good; teach me your statutes." – Psalm 119:68
3. **חָנַן(chanan)** – To be gracious, to show favor or mercy
    - Often used in prayers asking for God's kindness and compassion.
    - Example:
      "Be gracious (chanan) to me, O God, according to your lovingkindness (chesed)." – Psalm 51:1

Greek Words (New Testament)

1. **χρηστότης (chrēstotēs)** – Kindness, moral goodness, integrity
    - A key word in the New Testament; appears in the **Fruit of the Spirit**.
    - Refers to a heart attitude of **gentle usefulness** and generosity.
    - Example:
      "But the fruit of the Spirit is... kindness (chrēstotēs)..." – Galatians 5:22
2. **χρηστός (chrēstos)** – Kind, gracious, good-natured
    - Describes the **kind nature** of a person or of God.
    - Jesus uses this word to describe God's goodness: "Love your enemies... for [God] is kind (chrēstos) to the ungrateful and the evil." – Luke 6:35
3. **ἐλεός (eleos)** – Mercy, compassion
    - While usually translated "mercy," it often overlaps with kindness in context and function.
    - Example:
      "He has shown mercy (eleos) to our fathers..." – Luke 1:72

Kindness as a Fruit of the Spirit

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, **kindness** (chrēstotēs), goodness, faithfulness...” – Galatians 5:22

Kindness is not merely emotional; it's **action-oriented** and **spirit-empowered**, reflecting God's character through daily life.

Biblical Examples of Kindness

- **God’s Kindness to Sinners** “God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance.” – Romans 2:4
- **David’s Kindness to Mephibosheth** (2 Samuel 9) David shows covenantal kindness (*chesed*) to Jonathan’s son out of love and loyalty.
- **The Good Samaritan** (Luke 10:25–37) A powerful parable of sacrificial kindness to a stranger in need.
- **Ruth’s Kindness to Naomi** (Ruth 1–2) Ruth displays steadfast love and loyalty by staying with Naomi and caring for her.

Theological Significance

- **Rooted in God's Character** “The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.” – Psalm 145:17
- **A Mark of True Discipleship** Believers are commanded to “put on... kindness” (Colossians 3:12).
- **Essential in Christian Relationships** “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another...” – Ephesians 4:32

Introduction: Kindness as a Reflection of God's Love

In Ephesians 4:32, Paul commands believers to **“**be kind to one another,” emphasizing that kindness is a crucial aspect of the Christian life. Kindness is not merely a passive virtue or a fleeting gesture; it is a deep, active expression of love, grace, and compassion. It is the deliberate choice to respond with generosity, understanding, and care in every situation, particularly in relationships with others. Kindness is the outward manifestation of God's love and mercy, which believers are called to reflect in their interactions with the world.

This commentary will explore the biblical understanding of kindness, its role in the Christian life, and how Christians can cultivate this virtue. Kindness is not just an isolated act but a central feature of how Christians are to live, both in their communities and in their relationships with others. By examining the nature of kindness in Scripture, we will discover how kindness can transform our hearts, our relationships, and ultimately, the world around us. kindness is also considered a fruit of the Holy Spirit, as seen in Galatians

5:22-23, where it is paired with virtues like love, joy, peace, and patience. Kindness in Christianity reflects God's nature and His loving, compassionate heart toward humanity. It involves showing care, empathy, and goodwill toward others, whether through words, actions, or attitudes.

Kindness is not just about being nice or polite, but about extending love and grace in a way that mirrors God's love for us. It involves acting selflessly and being considerate of the needs and feelings of others. In Ephesians 4:32, Christians are called to "be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

Jesus modeled kindness throughout His ministry, healing the sick, comforting the grieving, and showing mercy to those who were often overlooked or condemned by society. He taught that acts of kindness are an expression of love, and even small gestures, like offering a cup of cold water to someone in need (Matthew 10:42), are seen by God as acts of love and compassion.

Kindness, therefore, in our faith in Jesus, goes beyond mere good deeds. It's a reflection of God's character, an expression of His love working through us to impact others, and a way to build relationships that reflect His kingdom on earth.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Kindness

Kindness is deeply rooted in the character of God. From the Old Testament to the New, kindness is portrayed as a central quality of God's dealings with humanity. In both His actions and His commands, God reveals that kindness is not just a suggestion but a divine standard for His people.

1.1 Kindness in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, kindness is often associated with God's covenant faithfulness, mercy, and lovingkindness. God's actions toward His people reflect His compassionate heart, and He calls His followers to mirror this same kindness in their interactions with others.

Joseph Forgiving His Brothers

- **Scripture Reference**: *Genesis 45:4-15* After being sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph rises to power in Egypt. When his brothers come to him during a famine, Joseph shows great kindness and mercy, forgiving them for their past actions and providing for their needs.
- **Quote**:
  "And Joseph said to his brothers, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. 5Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that you sold me here: for God did send me before you to preserve life. 6For these two years has the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be ripening

nor harvest. 7And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8So now it was not you that sent me here, but God: and he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. 9Haste you, and go up to my father, and say to him, Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt: come down to me, tarry not: 10And you shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you, and your children, and your children's children, and your flocks, and your herds, and all that you have: 11And there will I nourish you; for yet there are five years of famine; lest you, and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty. 12And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. 13And you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall haste and bring down my father here. 14And he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept on his neck. 15Moreover he kissed all his brothers, and wept on them: and after that his brothers talked with him."

David's Kindness to Mephibosheth

- **Scripture Reference**: *2 Samuel 9:1-13* King David shows kindness to Mephibosheth, the disabled son of Jonathan (David's close friend), by restoring to him the land of his grandfather Saul and inviting him to eat at the king's table, despite the usual animosity between royal families.
- **Quote**:
  "David said, 'Is there no one still alive from the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?' ... Mephibosheth bowed down and said, 'What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?'"

1.2 Kindness in the Life of Jesus

Jesus, as the perfect revelation of God's character, demonstrated kindness in countless ways throughout His ministry. He treated individuals with dignity, compassion, and grace, whether they were the marginalized, the sick, or the sinners. His kindness was never superficial but was always rooted in a deep, sacrificial love that sought to bring healing and restoration.

- **Luke 6:35** (AKJV):" But love you your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and you shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil."

Jesus 'kindness toward the unthankful and the evil reflects the radical nature of His love. He did not reserve His kindness for those who deserved it but extended it even to His enemies. This is a model for Christians, showing that kindness should not be contingent on how others behave but should flow from a heart of grace, just as God's kindness flows toward us.

- **Matthew 11:28-30** (AKJV):" Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke on you, and learn of me; for I am meek

and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. 30For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Jesus **'**invitation to find rest in Him is a demonstration of His kindness—His willingness to come alongside the weary and burdened, offering them relief, comfort, and peace. This is the heart of kindness: to offer help and grace without strings attached.

1.3 Kindness in the New Testament

In the New Testament, kindness is frequently mentioned as a fruit of the Spirit and as an essential virtue that should characterize the life of every believer. Paul**'**s teachings often emphasize the importance of kindness in building strong, loving communities.

- **Romans 2:4** (AKJV):" Or despise you the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? "

Here, Paul points out that God**'**s goodness and kindness are meant to lead people to repentance. The kindness of God is a tool for transformation. It is through His kindness that we are drawn to Him and made aware of our need for salvation. As believers, we are called to be instruments of that same kindness, showing the world the love and mercy of God through our actions.

- **Titus 3:4-5** (AKJV):" But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (Holy Spirit.)"

God**'**s kindness toward us is the foundation of our salvation. It is not something we earn but receive freely through His mercy. God's unmerited love towards us while we were yet sinners is the primarily example of kindness, grace and forgiveness. This understanding of God's kindness compels us to extend that same kindness to others, knowing that we are recipients of His abundant grace.

2. The Command to Be Kind

Paul**'**s command in Ephesians 4:32 is a direct call for followers of Christ Jesus to actively choose kindness in our daily interactions.This command is not merely about feeling kind or having kind intentions but about manifesting kindness in tangible ways toward others. Kindness is to be a hallmark of our relationships, whether with fellow believers or with the wider world.

2.1 Kindness as an Expression of Christian Identity

As Christians, our identity is grounded in the love and grace of God. We have been recipients of His kindness, and it is out of this understanding that we are called to show kindness to others. Paul ties kindness directly to forgiveness, urging believers to forgive one another just as God has forgiven us in Christ. This makes kindness not just an outward action but an inward transformation—a reflection of the change God has worked in our hearts.

- **Colossians 3:12-13** (AKJV):“ Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; 13Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.”

Here, kindness is listed alongside other virtues like humility and meekness, showing that it is integral to the Christian way of life. Just as we **“**put on” kindness daily, it should be evident in all our relationships.

2.2 Kindness as a Witness to the World

Kindness is also a witness to the world. In a world that often values power, self-interest, and harshness, the kindness of believers is a countercultural expression of God's love. Jesus Himself said that the way Christians love one another would be a testimony to the world of His power and truth.

- **John 13:35** (AKJV):“ By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.”

To love one another includes kindness.
Kindness is a powerful tool in evangelism and mission. When we show kindness to those outside the faith, we reflect the heart of God and open the door for conversations about His grace and love. Kindness has the potential to soften hearts and create opportunities for the gospel to be heard.

3. The Role of Kindness in Christian Relationships

Kindness is essential in maintaining healthy, loving relationships, both in the church and in the wider community. It is the oil that lubricates the gears of relationship, smoothing over misunderstandings, encouraging reconciliation, and fostering unity.

3.1 Kindness in the Church Community

Within the church, kindness builds the body of Christ. It helps believers bear with one another, forgive one another, and live in peace with one another. Paul**’**s letters consistently urge believers to be kind to one another, especially in times of conflict or division.

- **1 Thessalonians 5:15** (AKJV):“ See that none render evil for evil to any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.”

Kindness enables Christians to respond to evil with good, to return hatred with love, and to foster an environment of grace and reconciliation within the community of believers.

3.2 Kindness Toward the World

The command to show kindness is not limited to fellow believers. In fact, Jesus teaches that we are to show kindness even to those who do not love us or who may be our enemies. Kindness toward the world is a reflection of God's love for all people and a powerful witness of the gospel.

- **Luke 6:27-33** (AKJV):“ But I say to you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, 28Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which spitefully use you. 29And to him that smites you on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that takes away your cloak forbid not to take your coat also. 30Give to every man that asks of you; and of him that takes away your goods ask them not again. 31And as you would that men should do to you, do you also to them likewise. 32For if you love them which love you, what thank have you? for sinners also love those that love them. 33And if you do good to them which do good to you, what thank have you? for sinners also do even the same. .”

Kindness to others, regardless of their attitude toward us, demonstrates the radical nature of God’s love and opens doors for His grace to be made known.

4. How Christians Can Deveop Kindness

Kindness is a fruit of the Spirit, moreover it is a work of the Holy Spirit meaning it is something that is demonstrated by Jesus, received by us, cultivated, and established in our lives as we walk in the Spirit and depend on God for understanding and development as we purpose to love God and others as Jesus loved us, and taught us what it means to be kind.

4.1 Through Prayer and Dependence on the Holy Spirit

As with all Christian virtues, kindness must be cultivated through prayer , submission to God’s will instructed within His Word and dependence on the Holy Spirit. We cannot produce kindness on our own; it is only through God's work in our hearts that we are able to show true kindness to others.

- **Galatians 5:22-23** (AKJV):“ But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law..”

As we yield to the Spirit, He works in us to produce kindness in our hearts. Through regular communion with God in prayer, we are transformed and equipped to show kindness to others.

4.2 Through Practical Action

Kindness is not just a feeling or an attitude; it requires action. It is expressed through practical deeds of love, service, and generosity. Whether it’s offering a kind word, serving in practical ways, or forgiving someone who has wronged us, kindness is most evident when it is put into action.

- **Hebrews 13:16** (AKJV):“ But to do good and to communicate (share) forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased..”

4.3 By Demonstrating Kindness with a Grateful Heart

A heart of gratitude is foundational to kindness. When we recognize how much God has done for us, we are compelled to extend that same grace and kindness to others.

Cultivating a thankful heart helps us to see others through the lens of grace, making it easier to be kind and generous in our actions.

Conclusion: Living with Kindness for the Glory of God

Kindness is not a passive quality but an active, life changing virtue that reflects the heart of God. It is through kindness that we mirror the love, mercy, and grace that God has shown us in Christ. As believers, we are called to live out this kindness in all our relationships—within the church, with the world, and even with those who oppose us.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we be a people marked by kindness, who reflect the glory of God through our words, actions, and relationships. Let our kindness be a testimony to the world of the transforming love of Jesus Christ and an invitation for others to experience the grace we have received.

Kindness - Continued…

Title: The Heart of Kindness

Scripture References:

- **Ephesians 4:32**:(AKJV) "And be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ**'**s sake has forgiven you.."
- **Colossians 3:12-14**: (AKJV) “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; 13Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you. 14And above all these things put on (love) charity, which is the bond of perfection. "

Reflection:

Kindness is one of the most profound expressions of love that we can offer to the world. It transcends mere politeness; it is a heartfelt response that embodies compassion, empathy, and grace. In a world that often feels harsh and unforgiving, kindness serves as a gentle reminder of the love of Christ.

Ephesians 4:32 encourages us to be kind and compassionate, highlighting that kindness is rooted in our understanding of God**'**s forgiveness towards us. When we grasp how deeply we are loved and forgiven, our hearts naturally overflow with kindness towards others. Reflect on moments in your life where kindness made a difference—whether you were the giver or the receiver.

Colossians 3:12 calls us to **“**Put on/clothe ourselves” with kindness. This suggests that kindness should be an intentional part of our daily lives, just like choosing what to wear each morning. How can you embody kindness today? Perhaps it**'**s a word of encouragement, a small act of service, or simply a smile to a stranger.

Proverbs 11:17 teaches us that kindness benefits not only those we serve but also ourselves. Acts of kindness bring joy and fulfillment, creating a ripple effect that touches

lives beyond our own. As we reach out with kindness, we are reminded that we reflect the heart of God, who is endlessly compassionate and merciful.

Finally, in Luke 6:31, Jesus lays down the greatest comandment: treat others as you wish to be treated. This simple yet powerful principle guides us in all interactions. Consider how you would like to be treated in difficult situations, and let that guide your actions towards others.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank You for the kindness You have shown me. Help me to embody that same kindness in my daily life. Open my eyes to the needs of those around me, and give me the courage to respond with love and compassion. May my actions reflect Your heart and bring glory to Your name. Amen.

Contemplation:

Spend a few moments in silence, reflecting on ways you can practice kindness today. Think of someone who may need an extra dose of kindness and consider how you can reach out to them.

(72) Honor Your Father and Mother: A Commandment of Respect and Blessing

Honor (As in "Honor Your Father and Mother")

Key Command

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you." – *Exodus 20:12* (Also found in Deuteronomy 5:16; quoted in Matthew 15:4; Ephesians 6:2)

This is the fifth commandment and the first one that governs human relationships, forming the foundation for family structure, respect for authority, and godly living.

Original Language Words and Meaning

Hebrew (Old Testament)

כָּבֵד (kābēd) – To honor, to make heavy, to value highly

- Root meaning: *to be heavy*, implying that someone or something is *weighty in worth or importance*.
- To honor your parents means to treat them with great seriousness, respect, obedience, and lasting value.
- This same word is used for honoring God (e.g., Proverbs 3:9).

Example:
"Honor (*kābēd*) your father and your mother…" – *Exodus 20:12*

Greek (New Testament)

τιμάω (timaō) – To honor, to value, to esteem

- Means to assign high value or worth, often used for honoring people, elders, God, or parents.
- Quoted directly by Jesus and Paul in reference to the Fifth Commandment.

Example:
"Honor (*timaō*) your father and mother…" – *Matthew 15:4*, *Ephesians 6:2*

What It Means to "Honor" Parents Biblically

In Childhood

Obedience and Submission

- Children honor their parents by obeying their instructions and submitting to their authority.
- Ephesians 6:1 " –Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

In Adulthood

Respect, Esteem, and Gratitude

- Honor involves showing respect in words and actions, maintaining relationship, and expressing gratitude.
- It includes not speaking harshly or treating parents lightly, even in disagreement.

Support and Care

- Honoring parents includes caring for them in old age, particularly when they can no longer care for themselves.
- 1 Timothy 5:4 " –If a widow has children or grandchildren, they should first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents…"

Biblical Examples and Teachings

- **Jesus affirmed the command to honor parents** and rebuked religious leaders for creating loopholes to avoid caring for them (Matthew 15:3–6).
- **Joseph honored Jacob** by bringing him to Egypt and providing for him during famine (Genesis 45–47).
- **Ruth honored Naomi**, her mother-in-law, through loyalty and care (Ruth 1:16–17; 4:15).
- **Paul reaffirmed the commandment**, calling it "the first commandment with a promise" (Ephesians 6:2–3).

Spiritual Significance

- Honoring parents teaches reverence for authority, gratitude, and covenant faithfulness.
- It models how we are to honor God as our heavenly Father.
- The command comes with a promise: “that your days may be long,” emphasizing that honoring authority leads to a stable and blessed life and society.

Introduction

One of the foundational ethical principles given by God is the command to honor one's father and mother. This command is part of the Ten Commandments, which God gave to the Israelites as part of the covenant law, and it holds significance not only for the family structure but for society as a whole. In both the Old and New Testaments, honoring parents is not simply a matter of obedience but is deeply connected to the broader themes of respect, submission, and the proper relationship between generations. This commandment promises blessings and long life, and its implications extend beyond the family unit, influencing the stability and health of the entire community.

In this commentary, we will explore the biblical teaching on honoring father and mother, the reasons why this command is so significant, and the practical implications it has for Christian life today. We will also examine how this command reflects God's nature and how it plays a key role in the broader narrative of God's kingdom.

1. The Commandment to Honor Parents

The command to honor father and mother is rooted in the biblical understanding of authority and respect. It highlights the importance of recognizing and valuing the roles that parents play in the lives of their children, and it is the first commandment in the Ten Commandments that comes with a specific promise.

1.1 The Command in the Old Testament

Exodus 20:12 (AKJV) – **“**Honor your father and your mother: that your days may be long on the land which the LORD your God gives you. “

The fifth commandment, given to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, emphasizes honoring one**’**s parents as a divine requirement. This command is integral to God**’**s covenant with Israel. It recognizes that honoring parents is essential for maintaining the social and spiritual order. The commandment is tied to the promise of longevity and well-being in the land that God is giving to His people, underscoring the importance of family as the cornerstone of a thriving society.

1.2 Jesus ’Affirmation of the Commandment

Matthew 15:4 (AKJV) – **“***For God commanded, saying, Honor your father and mother: and, He that curses father or mother, let him die the death.””* Jesus reaffirms the importance of honoring one's parents, not as a mere cultural practice but as a command from God. He emphasizes the seriousness of this commandment, even connecting it to the severity of judgment for dishonoring parents. Jesus **’**focus here is on the heart behind the command — that it must not be neglected or undermined by human traditions (see

also Matthew 15:3-9). Jesus ’words reveal that honoring parents is not only about outward behavior but involves a deep respect that flows from the heart.

1.3 The Promise Attached to Honor

Ephesians 6:1-3 (AKJV) – **“**Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2Honor your father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; 3That it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth.*’”* The apostle Paul highlights that honoring one's father and mother is the first commandment that comes with a promise — that it will go well with those who obey it, and they will have long life. This promise, originally given to the Israelites in the land of promise, is now extended to all believers as an expression of God's favor. Honoring parents leads to both practical and spiritual blessings, and the promise of a long and prosperous life emphasizes how vital this command is for individual well-being and the well-being of the family and society.

2. The Significance of Honoring Parents

Honoring one's parents goes beyond simple obedience. It reflects respect for authority, gratitude for the role parents play in the lives of their children, and an understanding of the familial and social order established by God. This command also reveals God's heart for the family unit and for human flourishing.

2.1 Honor as an Expression of Respect for God’s Authority

Ephesians 6:1 (AKJV) – **“***Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right”*

To honor one's parents is to recognize the God-given authority that they hold. While earthly parents are imperfect and fallible, their role as authority figures is established by God. Obeying and honoring parents is, in a deeper sense, a way of submitting to God’s authority. By honoring our parents, we acknowledge the order that God has instituted in the family and society, reflecting the heavenly order on earth. Our respect for parents should flow from our respect for God Himself, who commands it.

2.2 Honoring Parents as a Reflection of God’s Character

God's own nature is one of honor, love, and respect for the family. The command to honor parents is deeply rooted in God’s character, as He Himself is described as a loving Father who cares for His people. Honoring parents is part of reflecting God’s love for His people, and it is part of how we reflect God’s image in our relationships. As children honor their parents, they participate in displaying God’s loving, nurturing nature, which fosters an environment of respect and care.

2.3 Honoring Parents as a Foundation for Society

When children learn to honor their parents, they are learning foundational principles that extend beyond the family. A society where children honor their parents tends to have structures of respect, love, and care for the vulnerable, as the family is the basic building block of any community. Societies where the principle of honoring parents is disregarded tend to experience disorder, disrespect for authority, and moral decay. Thus, honoring parents is not just about personal well-being; it is also essential for the social fabric.

3. Practical Applications of Honoring Your Father and Mother

Honoring parents in today's world can take different forms depending on one's stage of life, cultural context, and family dynamics. However, the principle remains timeless and applies universally.

3.1 Obeying Parents in Childhood

Proverbs 1:8 (AKJV) – **"***My son, hear the instruction of your father, and forsake not the law of your mother: ."* As children, honoring parents begins with obedience. God instructs children to listen to and follow the wisdom and guidance of their parents. This sets the foundation for the rest of the child's life, teaching them to respect authority, develop character, and understand their place in the world. In obeying parents, children learn to honor God and develop the discipline and wisdom necessary for maturity.

3.2 Showing Respect and Gratitude in Adulthood

Proverbs 23:22 (AKJV) – **"***Listen to your father that begat you, and despise not your mother when she is old. ."* As adults, honoring parents is less about obedience and more about respect, gratitude, and care. Even if adult children no longer live under their parents 'roof, they are still called to honor them by respecting their wisdom, offering gratitude for their sacrifices, and providing care when needed. This can take practical forms, such as regularly visiting aging parents, offering financial support, or simply listening to their advice and valuing their life experience.

3.3 Caring for Elderly Parents

1 Timothy 5:4 (AKJV) – **"***But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God."*

As parents age, the command to honor them takes on a more practical and sometimes sacrificial dimension. The Bible commands children to care for their aging parents, ensuring they are not left in neglect or hardship. Honoring parents in their later years involves providing for their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs and showing love and respect for their legacy.

3.4 Forgiving and Healing Broken Relationships

Ephesians 4:32 (AKJV) – **"***And be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.."* In cases where relationships with parents may be strained due to past hurts, honoring them may involve forgiveness and reconciliation. The command to honor parents doesn't mean excusing or ignoring past wrongs, but it does call for healing and restoration where possible. This can be one of the most difficult aspects of the command, but it is also one of the most powerful expressions of God's grace in our lives.

4. Conclusion: The Blessing of Honoring Parents

Honoring your father and mother is not only a command but a blessing. It is a command that comes with a promise of well-being and longevity. When children honor their parents, they participate in God's divine order for the family and society. This command, deeply connected to respect, love, and obedience, is not just an individual duty but a communal and societal foundation. As we honor our parents, we reflect God's love and authority in our lives and contribute to a world marked by respect and flourishing. The blessings of

this command extend far beyond the immediate family, touching generations and societies for the glory of God.

(73) Be Lead By God's Holy Spirit:

Living in the Power of Divine Guidance

Introduction

One of the most profound interaction and relationship for the Christian life is the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding us. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come to lead, empower, and transform those who follow Him. To be "led by the Holy Spirit" is not just a theological concept but a daily reality for the believer who desires to live in the fullness of God's will. It is about yielding to the Spirit's guidance, walking in obedience to God, and being empowered to live a life that reflects the character and mission of Christ.

In this commentary, we will explore what it means to be led by the Holy Spirit, how the Spirit leads us, and the practical implications of living under His direction. We will look at the biblical foundation for Spirit-led living and examine how this powerful truth can shape every area of the Christian's life.

1. The Biblical Foundation for Being Led by the Holy Spirit

The principle of being led by the Holy Spirit is depicted throughout Scripture, from the Old Testament to the New Testament. It speaks to God's desire to have an active, personal relationship with His people, guiding them through the challenges of life and helping them align their lives with His divine purpose.

1.1 The Promise of the Holy Spirit

John 14:16-17 (AKJV) – **"***And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you."*

In these words, Jesus promises the coming of the Holy Spirit, whom He calls the "Helper" or "Comforter." The Spirit would not only be with the disciples but would also dwell in them. This indwelling presence of the Spirit empowers believers to live in the fullness of God's will and provides the direction and strength necessary to walk in obedience to Christ. The Holy Spirit is given to believers to guide them in all truth, leading them in the paths of righteousness for God's glory.

1.2 Being Led by the Spirit in the New Testament

Romans 8:14-17 (AKJV) **" –**For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Paul emphasizes in Romans 8:14 that being led by the Holy Spirit is the mark of a true child of God. The Spirit is not only a guide but also a sign of adoption into God**'**s family. To be led by the Spirit is to walk in a new identity, one that is deeply rooted in the love and purpose of God. This leadership is an ongoing process—daily, moment-by-moment guidance, rather than a one-time experience. It involves a constant yielding to the Spirit's voice and leading in every area of life.

1.3 The Spirit's Role in Guiding and Teaching

John 16:13 (AKJV) – **"***However, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. ."*

The Holy Spirit**'**s primary role is to guide believers into all truth. He helps us understand the mind of God and the will of God, speaking to us in ways that align with the Scriptures and pointing us toward Christ. The Spirit teaches, gives insight, discernment, wisdom, convicts, comforts, and leads, making the complex truths of God's will and our purpose clear and accessible. The Spirit**'**s guidance is always in harmony with God's Word and will, and He never leads us into anything that contradicts Scripture.

2. How the Holy Spirit Leads Believers

Being led by the Holy Spirit is not a vague, mystical experience but a practical reality. The Spirit leads us with a small still voice in specific ways, confirming and according to God's word and that enables us to fulfill his calling and live lives pleasing to God,

2.1 Through the Scriptures

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (AKJV) – **"***All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works.."*

The Holy Spirit primarily reveals the Word of God to the true followers and disciples of Jesus Christ. The Bible is God**'**s inspired Word, and the Spirit illuminates its meaning and applies it to the believer**'**s life. As we read and meditate on God**'**s Word, the Spirit speaks, revealing the truths we need for specific situations, decisions, and spiritual growth. He guides us in the truth of the Word of God, helping us understand and live according to God**'**s will.

2.2 Through the Inner Witness of the Spirit

Romans 8:16 (AKJV) – **"***The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together"*

One of the most intimate ways the Holy Spirit leads believers is through the inner witness of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit testifies to our hearts that we belong to God. This inner assurance brings peace, confidence, and clarity as we face decisions or uncertainties. The Holy Spirit works in the heart to affirm God**'**s truth, give peace in difficult situations, and guide believers in their walk of faith.

2.3 Through Prayer and Seeking God's Will

Romans 8:26-27 (AKJV) – **“***Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we should: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27And he that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. .”*

The Holy Spirit leads us through prayer. There are times when we do not know how to pray or what to ask for, but the Spirit helps us in those moments. He intercedes on our behalf, aligning our desires with the will of God. When we seek God in prayer, the Spirit helps us hear God's voice, discern His will, and respond in obedience. Prayer, guided by the Holy Spirit, is a powerful tool for receiving direction and understanding God's purposes.

2.4 Through Specific Circumstances and Providential Guidance

Acts 16:6-7 (AKJV) – **“***Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, 7After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.”*

Sometimes, the Holy Spirit leads through circumstances. In Acts 16, Paul and his companions were directed by the Spirit not to preach in certain regions, and this providential guidance eventually led them to Macedonia. Circumstances may not always be clear, but the Spirit can use open and closed doors, opportunities, and challenges to guide believers into God's will. Being attentive to these providential circumstances is an important part of being led by the Spirit.

3. The Benefits of Being Led by the Holy Spirit

Being led by the Holy Spirit is not only about receiving guidance but also about experiencing the fruit of that guidance in our lives. The Holy Spirit empowers believers to live in alignment with God**’**s will, producing transformation in every area of their lives.

3.1 Spiritual Growth and Transformation

Galatians 5:22-24 (AKJV) – **“***And they that are Christ**’**s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another..”*

As we are led by the Holy Spirit, He works in us to produce the fruit of the Spirit. This transformation leads to increased Christlikeness and a life that reflects the character of Jesus. The Spirit leads us into holiness, guiding us to live in a way that honors God and blesses others. The result is a life marked by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and all the virtues that God desires to see in His children.

3.2 Empowerment for Service and Mission

Acts 1:8 (AKJV) – **“***But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come on you: and you shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth..”*

Being led by the Holy Spirit is also about being empowered for service and mission. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would empower His disciples to be witnesses to the ends of the earth. The Spirit equips believers with love, spiritual gifts, boldness, strength, endurance and wisdom to fulfill God**’**s mission on earth. Being led by the Spirit involves

not only personal transformation but also active participation in God's mission to share the gospel and build His kingdom.

3.3 Peace and Assurance

Romans 8:6 (AKJV) – **"***For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."*

When we are led by the Holy Spirit, we experience peace and assurance. The Spirit leads us into the life of peace that comes from being aligned with God's will. Even in the midst of trials, the peace of the Spirit assures us that we are walking in the right path, trusting that God is in control and that He will bring good from our circumstances.

4. Conclusion: Living a Spirit-Led Life

Being led by God's Holy Spirit is at the heart of the Christian life. The Holy Spirit guides us in which way that we go, into all truth bringing spiritual growth, effective ministry, and a life that brings glory to God. The Holy Spirit guides us revealing the meaning of God's word, inspires our prayers, and changes circumstances to help led us, empowering us to live according to God's will. As we yield to the Spirit's guidance, we experience the transformation and peace that He brings, enabling us to fulfill the purpose for which we were created.

Living a Spirit-led life requires constant dependence on God, openness to His guidance, and a willingness to obey. When we allow the Holy Spirit to lead, we are not only walking in God's will but also growing in intimacy with Him, becoming more like Christ and advancing His kingdom on earth. The promise of the Holy Spirit is one of the greatest gifts to the believer, and being led by Him is the pathway to a fruitful, fulfilling, and victorious Christian life.

(74) Witness For Christ:

A witness for Christ is a believer and disciple of Christ who shares the Good News of salvation and forgiveness through Jesus. They testify to all that God has done for us, with the emphasis about His precious gift of unmerited divine love and the personal ways God has worked in their life, as well as testifying of the truths that He has revealed in His Word and through the Holy Spirit.

Any Christian becomes a good witness for Christ by the way they live their life; We should demonstrate the truth and love of Jesus Christ in not only our words but also our actions. So being a witness is like 'confessing' our belief of Jesus to the world, with our mouth, however, being a 'witness for Christ' we must also by our actions purpose to live the commandments of Jesus Christ in love.

Every Christian should purpose to be a good witness for Jesus Christ and have a constant profession of the truth of God, so by the proof of God's work in you and by your open witness of God's work, that many other people might believe in God and in Jesus Christ and be saved.

Be a Witness for Jesus Christ

Text: Acts 1:8 (AKJV):“ But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come on you: and you shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth..”

Introduction: The Call to Be a Witness for Jesus Christ

In Acts 1:8, Jesus commissions His disciples to be His witnesses, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to proclaim the good news of His death, resurrection, and the hope of eternal life. This calling is not limited to the apostles in the first century but extends to every believer throughout history. To be a witness for Jesus Christ is to testify to who He is, what He has done, and how He transforms lives. The role of a Christian is not just to live for Christ but to actively share Christ with others.

This commentary will explore the biblical understanding of being a witness for Jesus Christ, who enables us to be effective witnesses, and how we can fulfill this calling in our everyday lives. It will highlight the significance of both our words and actions as we bear witness to the gospel and seek to make disciples of all nations.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Being a Witness

The principle of being a witness for Jesus Christ is deeply rooted in Scripture. The term "witness" (Greek: *martys*) implies not just the sharing of information but a personal testimony of the truth of Jesus, often at great cost. A witness is someone who has seen, heard, and experienced something firsthand, and they are compelled to testify to that reality.

1.1 Witnesses in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, God often called His people to be witnesses of His greatness and His faithfulness. Israel was meant to be a nation that testified to the world about the one true God and His work in history.

- **Isaiah 43:10-12** (AKJV):“ You are my witnesses, says the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. 11I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no savior. 12I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore you are my witnesses, says the LORD, that I am God.”

Israel**’**s calling as witnesses was to declare the exclusive sovereignty of God. Similarly, Christians today are called to witness to the world about the identity and work of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

1.2 Jesus as the Ultimate Witness

Jesus Christ Himself is the ultimate witness to God’s nature and salvation plan. His life, teachings, death, and resurrection all serve as the definitive testimony to God’s love, grace, and truth.

- **John 5:36,37** (AKJV):“ But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father has given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father has sent me. 37And the Father himself, which has sent me, has borne witness of me. You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. ”

Jesus ’actions and works were a testimony to the truth of who He was—the Son of God, sent to redeem humanity. As His followers, we are called to bear witness to Him in the same way by living out His truth and sharing His story with others.

1.3 The Apostles as Witnesses

After His resurrection, Jesus specifically tasked His apostles with being witnesses of the gospel. Their testimony, grounded in their direct experiences with Jesus, laid the foundation for the early church and the spread of Christianity.

- **Luke 24:46-49** (AKJV):“ And said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48And you are witnesses of these things.49And, behold, I send the promise of my Father on you: but tarry you in the city of Jerusalem, until you be endued with power from on high..”

The apostles were chosen not only to witness Jesus ’life and resurrection but also to share that testimony with others. Their writings, as recorded in the New Testament, serve as a lasting witness to the life and work of Jesus Christ.

2. The Power to Be a Witness: The Holy Spirit

One of the key aspects of being an effective witness for Jesus Christ is the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 1:8, Jesus tells His disciples that they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them. This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, and it continues to be relevant for believers today.

2.1 The Role of the Holy Spirit in Evangelism

The Holy Spirit plays a central role in enabling believers to be effective witnesses for Christ. He empowers, equips, and guides us as we share the gospel and live out our faith.

- **Acts 4:31** (AKJV):“ And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit), and they spoke the word of God with boldness..”

When believers are filled with the Holy Spirit, they are emboldened to speak the gospel with courage and clarity. The Spirit works within us, transforming our hearts and giving us the confidence and wisdom we need to witness to others.

2.2 The Spirit’s Conviction of the World

The Holy Spirit also convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, preparing hearts to receive the message of the gospel. As witnesses, we are not responsible for changing people’s hearts; that is the work of the Spirit. Our role is to faithfully share the message, trusting that the Spirit will use our testimony to draw people to Christ.

- **John 16:8-15** (AKJV):“ Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send him to you. 8And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you see me no more; 11Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13However, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. 14He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you. 15All things that the Father has are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it to you.”

As we witness, the Spirit works alongside us, preparing the soil of human hearts to receive the gospel.

3. The Calling to Be Witnesses: To the End of the Earth

Jesus ’commission in Acts 1:8 extends beyond a local mission; it is global in scope. We are called to be witnesses **“**in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” This command encompasses both our immediate surroundings and the farthest reaches of the world.

3.1 Witnessing in Jerusalem: Our Immediate Context

For the early disciples, Jerusalem was their home base. For us, **“**Jerusalem” represents our immediate context—our family, friends, workplaces, and local communities. Being a witness for Jesus begins at home, with the people we encounter daily.

- **Matthew 5:14,15** (AKJV):“ You are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light to all that are in the house. 16Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven..”

As believers, we are called to shine the light of Christ in our everyday lives, whether through our actions, conversations, or attitudes. Our witness in Jerusalem is about being visible, authentic, and faithful to the gospel right where we are.

3.2 Witnessing in Judea and Samaria: Expanding Beyond Our Comfort Zones

Judea and Samaria represent the broader areas beyond our immediate context—places where the gospel may encounter cultural or social barriers. For the early church, this meant moving beyond Jerusalem into surrounding regions. Today, it means reaching out to those who may be different from us, whether ethnically, socially, or ideologically.

- **Acts 8:1-5** (AKJV):“ And Saul was consenting to his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.3As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. 4Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. 5Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ to them.”

The early Christians were scattered due to persecution, yet they carried the gospel with them, testifying to Christ even in places where they were strangers. Similarly, we are called to engage with people and communities that may not share our values or worldview but are still in need of the gospel.

3.3 Witnessing to the Ends of the Earth: The Global Mission

Finally, Jesus **’**command in Acts 1:8 points to the global nature of the gospel mission. The message of salvation through Jesus Christ is meant for all people, regardless of their location, culture, or language. The call to witness **“**to the ends of the earth” is a mandate for global evangelism and mission. Every disciple of Jesus Christ should be a witness of Jesus Christ within wherever God has you, in your communities and for some throughout various countries in the world.

- **Matthew 28:19-20** (AKJV):“ Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and, see, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.”

The Great Commission calls every believer to be involved in the global mission of making disciples. This could mean going to distant lands as missionaries or supporting global mission efforts from our local context.

4. How Christians Can Be Witnesses for Jesus Christ

Being a witness for Jesus Christ is not just about speaking the gospel—it is also about living out the gospel in our daily lives. Our actions, words, and attitudes all contribute to the witness we bear for Christ.

4.1 Through Our Words: Sharing the Gospel

The most direct way to witness is by sharing the message of Jesus Christ—His life, death, and resurrection—with others. This involves speaking openly about our faith and inviting others to trust in Him.

- **Romans 10:14.15** (NKJV):“ How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! ”

Evangelism is central to being a witness. It involves explaining the good news, answering questions, and inviting others to place their faith in Jesus.

4.2 Through Our Actions: Living Out the Gospel

Our actions speak just as loudly as our words. A life that reflects the character of Christ is one of the most powerful testimonies we can give.

- **Matthew 5:16** (AKJV):“ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Being a witness means living with integrity, love, humility, and service. When others see Christ in us, they may be drawn to Him.

4.3 Through Prayer: Partnering with God in His Mission

We cannot witness effectively on our own. Prayer is essential to the work of evangelism. We must pray for opportunities to share the gospel, for boldness and clarity, and for the Holy Spirit to move in the hearts of those we reach.

- **Colossians 4:3-6** (AKJV):“ With praying also for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: 4That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. 5Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. 6Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man”

KEY SCRIPTURES

Acts 1:8 9 (AKJV) “But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come on you: and you shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth.

Explanation: Jesus, speaking to His disciples, outlines their future role as witnesses empowered by the Holy Spirit. This commission signifies the responsibility of believers to testify about Jesus and spread the message of salvation globally.

Matthew 24:14 (AKJV) And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come.

Revelation 11:3 (AKJV) And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth.

John 1:7-8 (AKJV) “The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9That was the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world.” Explanation: This passage refers to John the Baptist as a witness testifying about the

coming of Jesus, who is described as the light. It establishes the role of a witness in pointing others toward the truth found in Christ.

1 John 5:9-13 (AKJV) "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he has testified of his Son. 10He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself: he that believes not God has made him a liar; because he believes not the record that God gave of his Son. 11And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life. 13These things have I written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God.."

Explanation: This passage underscores the significance of accepting and bearing witness to the testimony of God about Jesus. Believers are called to affirm and share the divine testimony regarding the Son of God.

Revelation 19:10 (AKJV):

"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, See you do it not: I am your fellow servant, and of your brothers that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy..'" Explanation: The angel in Revelation emphasizes that the testimony of Jesus is central, and those who hold to this testimony are fellow servants. This verse highlights the collaborative role of believers in bearing witness to Jesus.

In these passages, being a witness is closely tied to testifying about Jesus, spreading the message of salvation, and affirming the divine testimony regarding the Son of God. The concept of being a witness is integral to the Christian mission and the proclamation of the truth found in Jesus Christ.

Matthew 28:18-20 (AKJV):

"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. 19Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and, see, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.'" Explanation: Often referred to as the Great Commission, this passage highlights Jesus instructing His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations. The disciples are to bear witness by baptizing and teaching, spreading the message of Christ to the ends of the earth.

Acts 4:19-20 (AKJV): "But Peter and John answered and said to them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, judge you. 20For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.'" Explanation: In the face of opposition, Peter and John boldly affirm their commitment to witnessing about what they have experienced with Jesus. This reflects the unwavering dedication of believers to share their firsthand experiences and knowledge of Christ.

Acts 22:15 (AKJV):

"For you shall be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard." Explanation: Ananias, speaking to the Apostle Paul, communicates God's purpose for

Paul's life—to be a witness to all people based on his personal experiences with Christ. This underscores the personal and experiential aspect of being a witness.

1 Peter 3:15 (AKJV):

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" Explanation: Be ready to give an account of your faith, serving as witnesses who can explain the reasons for their hope in Christ. The emphasis is on doing so with gentleness and respect.

These passages emphasize the call for of us as believers and followers of Jesus Christ to be active witnesses, sharing the message of Christ with others through personal experiences, teachings, and a commitment to making disciples. The act of witnessing is integral to the Christian mission and the spread of the Gospel.

The exhortation of witnessing involves both words and deeds, and the Apostle Peter emphasizes this dual aspect in 1 Peter 3:15-16. He encourages believers to always be prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks about the hope within them, yet to do so with gentleness and respect. This passage underscores the importance of a winsome and respectful presentation of the Christian faith.

Conclusion: Witnessing for Jesus Christ with Boldness and Love

The call to be a witness for Jesus Christ is a fundamental part of the Christian life. We are called to testify to the truth of who He is and what He has done, both with our words and with our actions. This task requires the power of the Holy Spirit, a heart of obedience, and a willingness to go wherever God leads us.

May we faithfully witness to Jesus Christ in our families, communities, and to the ends of the earth. By doing so, we bring glory to God and invite others into the hope of being born again, receive the grace and forgiveness from God and transformation that comes through faith in Christ alone.

(75) Confess Jesus As Your Lord And Savior

"Confess Jesus as Your Lord and Savior"

Scriptural Basis

The principle of confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior is most directly drawn from **Romans 10:9-10**:

"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord, 'and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved." (NIV)

This passage succinctly captures the heart of the gospel: salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ, and that faith is expressed both inwardly (belief) and outwardly (confession).

1. The Meaning of “Confess”

The Greek word used for “confess” is **ὁμολογέω (homologeō)**, which means *to agree with, to declare publicly, or to acknowledge.* In biblical context, it is more than mere words — it implies a full identification with Jesus, a loyalty that is vocal, visible, and courageous, often in the face of social or political opposition.

Jesus Himself emphasizes the importance of confession in **Matthew 10:32**:

“Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.”

Confession here is a declaration of allegiance. It is not merely ritual, but relational — a commitment to Jesus as both **Savior** (deliverer from sin) and **Lord** (the ruler of one’s life).

2. Jesus as Savior

To call Jesus “Savior” is to affirm the heart of His mission:

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (Luke 19:10)

Jesus' saving work includes:

- Atonement for sin (Romans 5:8)
- Reconciliation with God (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)
- Rescue from death and judgment (John 5:24)

When believers confess Jesus as Savior, they are acknowledging His sacrificial death and victorious resurrection as the only means of salvation. This confession inherently recognizes one’s own sin and need for grace.

3. Jesus as Lord

To confess Jesus as **Lord** (Greek: **κύριος, kurios**) is to submit to His authority. In the New Testament, “Lord” was not just a respectful title; it was often used to signify divinity. For example, **Philippians 2:9-11** declares:

“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name… every tongue [will] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Calling Jesus "Lord" means:

- Acknowledging His **divine nature**
- Yielding to His **rule** over your life
- Living in **obedience** to His teachings

This lordship is not optional or secondary to salvation — it is integral to the gospel message. Salvation without lordship is a contradiction in biblical terms.

4. Confession as Faith in Action

Confession is the outward expression of inward faith. According to Romans 10:10, believing and confessing go hand in hand — the heart believes, and the mouth confirms that belief.

This is why baptism, public testimony, and lifestyle all matter in the Christian walk. Confession is not a one-time event but a daily practice:

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10:23)

5. The Cost and Boldness of Confession

In the early Church, confessing Jesus could mean persecution or death. Even today, in parts of the world, to confess Jesus as Lord is to risk everything. Yet the Bible affirms the eternal reward of such faith:

“If we endure, we will also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.” (2 Timothy 2:12)

True confession demands courage, conviction, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

To confess Jesus as **Lord and Savior** is the foundational act of Christian faith. It is both **personal** (a heart belief) and **public** (a vocal declaration). It affirms:

- Jesus ’saving work on the cross
- His resurrection from the dead
- His rightful authority as Lord of all

This confession, lived out in word and deed, is the beginning of salvation and the journey of discipleship.

(76) Justice:

Micah 6:8 (AKJV)**:** *"He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”*

Justice in the Bible

Definition

Justice is the moral principle of giving people what is right, fair, and due—according to God’s standard. In Scripture, justice is not merely legal correctness but also includes righteousness, equity, mercy, and protection of the vulnerable.

Hebrew Words (Old Testament)

1. מִשְׁפָּט(mishpāṭ) – Justice, judgment, legal decision
   - Refers to both **judicial fairness** and **God's moral order**.
   - Often paired with *righteousness* (*tsedeq*), indicating that justice is relational and rooted in God's character.
   - Example:
     "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice (*mishpāṭ*), and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" – *Micah 6:8*
2. צֶדֶק/ צְדָקָה(tsedeq / tsedāqāh) – Righteousness, rightness, equity
   - While often translated "righteousness," this term is deeply tied to **just behavior**, especially in social and relational contexts.
   - It includes treating others rightly, especially the poor, foreigner, widow, and orphan.
   - Example:
     "The Lord loves righteousness and justice (*tsedāqāh* and *mishpāṭ*); the earth is full of His unfailing love." – *Psalm 33:5*

Greek Words (New Testament)

1. δικαιοσύνη (dikaiosynē) – Righteousness, justice
   - Describes a life aligned with **God's standards** of right and wrong.
   - Often translated "righteousness," but in many contexts it directly implies justice.
   - Example:
     "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (*dikaiosynē*), for they shall be satisfied." – *Matthew 5:6*
2. κρίσις (krisis) – Judgment, decision, justice
   - Refers to acts of judging or legal decisions, either divine or human.
   - Example:
     "Woe to you, Pharisees! For you neglect justice (*krisis*) and the love of God." – *Luke 11:42*

Justice in God's Character

- God is repeatedly described as a **God of justice** who defends the oppressed and judges with equity.
- Example:
  "For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all who wait for him." – *Isaiah 30:18*
- His justice is not partial and is concerned with both legal fairness and moral rightness.
- Example:
  "He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows love for the foreigner." – *Deuteronomy 10:18*

Introduction: The Call for Justice

Justice is one of the central doctrines found in God's word and is deeply instilled into the very nature of God and what He desires to emulate. Throughout the Bible, God calls His people to live justly, not merely in abstract terms but as an active, practical way of living that reflects His righteousness, love, and care for the oppressed. In a world where injustice and inequality seem to prevail, God's command to do justice stands as both a challenge and a guiding principle for us.

Micah 6:8 is one of the clearest expressions of what God requires from His people: to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him. In this verse, God gives a profound yet simple call to righteous living, summing up what it means to embody justice in a way that honors Him. This commentary will explore the biblical understanding of justice, its relationship with mercy and humility, and how believers are called to live justly in a broken world.

1. The Biblical Definition of Justice

Justice, in the biblical sense, is not merely the legal or societal enforcement of laws, but it is rooted in God's character and His desire for fairness, equity, and righteousness. In Scripture, justice is about making things right in God's eyes—particularly in the areas of morality, fairness, and care for the marginalized.

1.1 Justice in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, justice is closely tied to God's covenant with His people and His desire to see them live in right relationship with Him and with one another. Justice is about ensuring that individuals and communities live according to God**'**s standards, especially regarding relationships of power, care for the poor, and the protection of the vulnerable.

- **Justice for the Poor and Oppressed** *Isaiah 1:17 (AKJV): "Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."* Throughout the Old Testament, God continually commands His people to seek justice for the oppressed, the orphan, the widow, and the stranger. God**'**s justice is not simply about fairness in individual interactions but about the community**'**s responsibility to care for those who are vulnerable and marginalized. This reflects God's heart for those who have no voice or power in society.

- **Justice as a Reflection of God's Holiness** *Psalm 33:5 (AKJV): "He loves righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD"* God's justice flows from His holy nature. He is the ultimate standard of what is right, and His justice is always perfect and fair. It is not based on human understanding or societal norms but on His perfect character. Therefore, when God calls His people

to justice, He is inviting them to reflect His holiness and righteousness in their actions.

1.2 Justice in the New Testament

In the New Testament, justice continues to be a vital aspect of the Christian life, with an emphasis on the kingdom of God and the teachings of Jesus. While the New Testament calls for justice, it also emphasizes that God's justice is always tempered with mercy and grace. In the person of Jesus, we see the perfect embodiment of both justice and mercy.

- **Jesus' Teaching on Justice and Mercy** *Matthew 23:23 (AKJV): "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone."* Jesus condemns the Pharisees for their failure to prioritize the weightier matters of justice, mercy, and faith. While they focused on external rituals, they neglected the internal realities of justice and love. This shows that true justice is not merely about outward actions but about a heart that reflects God's righteousness and compassion for others.

- **The Parable of the Good Samaritan** *Luke 10:30-37 (AKJV):*And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. 33But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, 34And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said to him, Take care of him; and whatever you spend more, when I come again, I will repay you. 36Which now of these three, think you, was neighbor to him that fell among the thieves? 37And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus to him, Go, and do you likewise.” In this parable, Jesus illustrates that true justice involves mercy and compassion. When a man was beaten and left for dead, the religious leaders ignored him, but the Samaritan—despised by the Jews—showed mercy and took action to ensure the man**’**s care. Jesus **’**message was clear: justice is not simply about legal matters but involves showing mercy and taking action to address the needs of others.

2. Justice, Mercy, and Humility: A Balanced Approach

In Micah 6:8, God**’**s command to **“**do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God” presents the lifestyle of what it means to live justly. These three virtues—justice, mercy, and humility—are interwoven and cannot be separated. Justice is not simply about enforcing fairness; it is balanced by mercy, and it is done with humility, acknowledging that we ourselves are recipients of God**’**s grace.

2.1 Doing Justice

“Do justly” means to live in accordance with God**’**s righteous standards in all areas of life. This includes upholding laws that promote fairness, protecting the vulnerable, and living in ways that promote peace, equity, and harmony in society. Justice is active—it is something that requires intentional effort, not passive observation.

- **Justice in Social and Economic Issues** God calls His people to live justly in all aspects of life, including how we handle money, resources, and power. The Bible speaks to financial justice, urging the wealthy to care for the poor, the employer to treat employees fairly, and the community to provide for the needs of the marginalized.

- **Justice in Interpersonal Relationships** Justice also plays a key role in how we relate to one another. God calls His people to fair treatment, honesty, and respect in all interactions. This means standing up for what is right, even when it is difficult, and advocating for those who cannot speak for themselves.

2.2 Loving Mercy

“Love mercy” emphasizes the importance of compassion and grace in the pursuit of justice. While justice is about fairness and right action, mercy tempers justice with forgiveness, patience, and care for those who have been wronged. Mercy is not about ignoring justice but rather offering grace to those who are in need of it, just as God has shown mercy to us.

- **Mercy in Action** Mercy goes beyond feeling sympathy for others; it involves tangible acts of care. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, mercy was shown through action—helping the wounded man by taking him to an inn, paying for his care, and ensuring his needs were met. As Christians, we are called to show mercy by meeting both the spiritual and material needs of others.

- **Mercy and Forgiveness** Justice is not complete without mercy. In Matthew 18, Jesus tells the parable of the unforgiving servant, highlighting that mercy should always accompany justice. As believers, we are called to forgive others, even as God has forgiven us. Without mercy, justice becomes harsh and unloving; with mercy, it becomes a reflection of God's loving justice.

2.3 Walking Humbly with God

“Walk humbly with your God” is a reminder that true justice is rooted in a humble relationship with God. Humility acknowledges our dependence on God for wisdom, strength, and understanding. It recognizes that we do not have all the answers but trust in God**’**s guidance to navigate issues of justice.

- **Humility in Justice** Humility in justice means recognizing that our own perspectives and judgments are flawed. It involves seeking God**’**s wisdom and

guidance in the pursuit of justice, trusting that His ways are higher than ours. Humility in justice also involves recognizing our need for mercy—understanding that, like others, we too have received grace and forgiveness from God.

- **Humility in Action** Walking humbly with God also means acknowledging that God is sovereign and just, even when the world seems unjust. It's a posture of trust that, despite the challenges we face, God's justice will ultimately prevail. This humility leads us to patiently wait on God's timing and to trust that His plans are good, even when we don't see the full picture.

3. Justice in the Life of the Believer

As followers of Jesus, we are called to be agents of God's justice in the world. This means not only upholding God's standards in our personal lives but also actively working toward justice in our communities and the world.

3.1 Speaking Out Against Injustice

Christians are called to speak out against injustice wherever it is found. This can mean advocating for the poor, the afflicted, helping victims, supporting the oppressed, and working for systemic change. We are called to be voices for the voiceless and to seek justice in a world that often turns a blind eye to suffering.

3.2 Working for Peace and Reconciliation

Justice is not just about righting wrongs; it is also about promoting peace and reconciliation. Jesus calls His followers to be peacemakers, working to bring people together and heal broken relationships. True justice leads to reconciliation, whether between individuals or entire communities.

Conclusion: Reflecting God's Justice

The call to do justice is doctrine to our Christian faith in Jesus Christ. As we strive to live justly, we must remember that God's justice is not cold and impartial but is always infused with mercy, compassion, and grace. We are called to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God, reflecting His heart for justice in our actions and attitudes. In doing so, we not only bring glory to God but also contribute to His kingdom of true love, holiness, justice, peace, and righteousness on earth.

Continued…

1. God's Justice as the Standard

- **God is Just**: The Bible teaches that God is inherently just and righteous. His justice is perfect, and He is the ultimate judge (Psalm 9:7-8, Isaiah 30:18). His judgments are fair and impartial.

- **God’s Justice is Immutable**: God's justice does not change over time, and His standards are constant. What was just in ancient times is still just today (Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8).

2. Justice and Righteousness

- Justice in the Bible often pairs with righteousness, reflecting God’s holiness. The two concepts are inseparable. Righteousness involves living in accordance with God’s will, while justice often refers to ensuring that the rights of others are respected (Psalm 33:5, Proverbs 21:3).

3. Justice for the Vulnerable

- **Care for the Poor, Widows, Orphans, and Strangers**: A significant emphasis in the Bible is on showing justice and mercy to the marginalized. God commands His people to defend the rights of the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner (Deuteronomy 10:18, Isaiah 1:17, James 1:27). Justice is often framed as advocating for those who have no one else to advocate for them.
- **Micah 6:8**: **“**He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” This verse highlights that justice is not only about legal fairness but also about compassion and humility.

4. Justice and Mercy

- In the Bible, justice is not just about punishment but about mercy, especially in the way God treats humanity. While God is just and punishes sin, He is also merciful and willing to forgive those who repent (Romans 3:26, Micah 7:18-19).
- **Jesus ’Teachings**: Jesus frequently demonstrated a justice that was intertwined with mercy. For example, He forgave sins and reached out to sinners, showing that justice includes reconciliation and forgiveness (John 8:1-11, Luke 19:10).

5. Restorative Justice

- Justice in the Bible is also about restoring relationships, not just punishing wrongdoers. For example, in the Old Testament, the concept of restitution was important—those who wronged others were to make things right (Exodus 22:1-15, Leviticus 6:1-5).
- In the New Testament, Jesus **’**work on the cross is seen as the ultimate restorative act, where He takes upon Himself the punishment for sin in order to restore humanity**’**s relationship with God (2 Corinthians 5:21)

6. The Justice of the Kingdom of God

- **Kingdom of God and Justice**: Jesus proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom of God, where justice will ultimately be established. In this Kingdom, God's will is perfectly fulfilled, and justice reigns supreme (Matthew 6:10, Revelation 21:4).
- **Final Judgment**: The Bible teaches that at the end of time, God will judge the living and the dead, ensuring that perfect justice is done (Matthew 25:31-46, Revelation 20:11-15). In this judgment, people will be judged based on their faith in Christ and their treatment of others, particularly the vulnerable.

7. Human Responsibility to Do Justly

- The Bible calls us to actively proclaim the truth and to act justly in our communities, to correct injustices, and to act with fairness (Isaiah 1:17, Zechariah 7:9-10). Jesus' followers are called to reflect His justice in the world, which includes advocating for the oppressed, standing up for truth, and living with integrity (Matthew 23:23, Luke 4:18-19).

In summary, justice in the Bible are multifaceted spiritual acts of righteousness, fairness, mercy, and care for the marginalized, and for all people both among Christians and with non-believers. Justice is defined according to God's standard and principles within His word, and the truth of Jesus Christ, guided by God's Holy Spirit. It is a reflection of God**'**s own nature and requires His people to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him.

(77) Not by Power Not By Might, but by God's Spirit:

The phrase **"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,"** comes from **Zechariah 4:6**, where the Lord speaks to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, as he faces the monumental task of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. The full verse reads:

"So he said to me, 'This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, 'says the Lord Almighty." (NIV)

Meaning of the Phrase

This verse emphasizes that **human strength** (might) or **human resources** (power) are insufficient to accomplish God's work, especially when it comes to spiritual matters. Instead, it is through the **Holy Spirit**—God's presence and power working in and through believers—that God**'**s purposes are fulfilled.

The key idea is that **spiritual success**—especially in terms of fulfilling God**'**s will and accomplishing work that has eternal significance—does not depend on human strength, intelligence, or material resources. While we may use those things, they are not the ultimate source of power or influence in God's kingdom.

Applying This to Our Lives

1. **Dependence on the Holy Spirit**: As Christians, we are called to recognize that without the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing of eternal value. Jesus Himself said in **John 15:5**, *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."* This is a call to absolute dependence on God's Spirit for our spiritual lives and growth.

2. **The Limits of Human Effort**: In ministry, personal growth, and life in general, we may often try to rely on our own strength, abilities, or clever strategies. However, these things alone cannot bring about lasting, spiritual transformation. It's the Holy Spirit who empowers us to live out God**'**s will and bear fruit that honors God.

3. **God's Sovereign Power**: The phrase also reminds us that **God is the ultimate source of power** in accomplishing anything of lasting value. While we may work, serve, and strive, it is God who enables the work to be effective and fruitful. In 1 Corinthians 3:7, Paul writes, *"So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow."*

4. **Eternal Value**: Any effort that is truly **eternally significant** can only come when God is the one at work through His Spirit. Our achievements in this world—though they might be valuable in the temporal sense—are ultimately of no eternal consequence unless they align with God's will and are empowered by His Spirit.

The Role of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is **the key to spiritual life and effectiveness**. He empowers us to:

- Live according to God**'**s will.
- Speak truth and bear witness to the Gospel.
- Serve others in love and humility.
- Grow in faith, patience, and godliness.
- Be transformed into the likeness of Christ.

Without the Spirit of God, our efforts are limited to human ability and natural resources, which are fleeting. But through the Holy Spirit, we are connected to the **eternal power** and wisdom of God, allowing us to accomplish His purposes on earth.

Conclusion

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit" is a reminder that **spiritual success and eternal fruit** come only through God's empowering presence. We can strive, work hard, and use our abilities, but ultimately, it is **God's Spirit** who brings lasting results and fulfills His purposes in us and through us. Therefore, the Christian life is not about relying on our own efforts or strength but about yielding to the guidance, power, and work of the Holy Spirit.

Thank you God for sending your Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth and help us to do your will and fulfill your purpose.

In the book of Zechariah, we find these powerful words: "Then he answered and spoke to me, saying, This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, said the LORD of hosts." (Zechariah 4:6,). This profound declaration reminds us that our strength and accomplishments do not come from our own efforts or abilities but are instead rooted in the empowering presence of God's Spirit.

As humans, we often rely on our own strength, intellect, and resources to accomplish our goals and overcome challenges. However, the reality is that our human efforts are limited and insufficient without the intervention of God's Spirit. It is His power working within us that enables us to achieve the impossible, to persevere through trials, and to experience victory in every area of our lives.

When we recognize our dependence on God's Spirit, we are liberated from the burden of self-reliance and pride. We humbly acknowledge that apart from Him, we can do nothing of lasting significance. Instead of striving in our own strength, we surrender to the leading and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to work in and through us according to His perfect will.

Living by the Spirit means walking in step with God, allowing His wisdom, guidance, and power to direct our thoughts, words, and actions. It means trusting in His provision and timing, even when circumstances seem bleak or daunting. And it means acknowledging His sovereignty over every aspect of our lives, yielding to His plans and purposes with joyful obedience.

As we embrace the truth that it is not by might nor by power, but by God's Spirit, we are filled with hope, courage, and confidence. We can face each day knowing that the same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead dwells within us, empowering us to live victoriously for His glory.

(78) Share the Truth and Love of Jesus, Plant and Water:

1 Corinthians 3:5-8 (AKJV) Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7So then neither is he that plants any thing, neither he that waters; but God that gives the increase.8Now he that plants and he that waters are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.

Every disciple of Jesus Christ is called to actively "plant" the seeds of God's Word—whether through speaking, teaching, or testifying to others—so that it may take root in their hearts and minds. Additionally, disciples are to "water" these seeds by nurturing and expounding on the Word, helping others to better understand and apply it. This may involve following up with those who have already received the message and providing further insight or encouragement. However, it is always God who ultimately causes the growth and brings about spiritual maturity in the lives of those who receive His Word

The call to "Share the love of Jesus, plant and water" encapsulates the essence of Christian discipleship and evangelism. This phrase emphasizes the importance of spreading the Gospel, nurturing faith, and trusting in God's sovereignty for growth.

The Command to Share Jesus ’directive to His disciples is clear in Matthew 28:19-20, known as the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." This command is not merely an invitation; it is a mandate for active engagement in evangelism. The love of Jesus compels us to share the hope found in Him with others, reflecting His love through our words and actions.

Planting the Seeds of Faith In 1 Corinthians 3:6-7, Paul emphasizes the collaborative nature of ministry: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth." Here, "planting" refers to sharing the initial sharing God’s word to both non-Christians in hopes that they might be saved and also to Christians who are babes in Christ learning certain biblical truths for the first time, and throughout our lives growing up in Christ. “Watering" signifies further explaining the Word of God to anyone after they have heard certain truths, and nurturing the faith of fellow Christians. Every disciple of Jesus Christ has a role in this process, and it’s essential to recognize that the ultimate source of growth is God Himself. Our responsibility is to faithfully share and nurture; the outcome rests with Him.

Nurturing with Love Galatians 5:22-23 lists the fruits of the Spirit, with love at the forefront: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." As we effectively plant God’s word and water it in the lives of others, God starts to produce all kinds of good spiritual fruit in our lives, particularly love. It is the foundation upon which we build relationships and share the message of Christ. Our actions should reflect His love, making our witness more effective. As we nurture others in their faith, we should do so with patience. humility and kindness, creating an environment where they can grow.

Sharing and Receiving the Word of God with Humility

The attitude with which we approach the Word of God is crucial for our spiritual growth and understanding. Sharing and receiving Scripture with a spirit of humility, rather than self-pride, allows us to open our hearts and minds to God’s truth. This mindset is supported throughout the Bible, providing a clear framework for how we should interact with God’s Word.

The Call to Humility James 1:21 instructs us, "Therefore, put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and **receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.**" Here, James emphasizes the importance of meekness—a humility that recognizes our need for God's guidance. This attitude prepares our hearts to receive His truth effectively. When we approach the Scriptures with humility, we acknowledge our limitations and our dependence on God’s wisdom.

The Danger of Pride Proverbs 11:2 warns, "When pride comes, then comes disgrace, **but with the humble is wisdom.**" Pride can blind us to our shortcomings and lead to a false sense of self-sufficiency. When we allow pride to govern our approach to Scripture, we risk missing out on the transformative power of God’s Word. Instead of seeking growth and understanding, pride leads to defensiveness and resistance to change.

Anyone sharing (planting and watering) God’s Word to others, must do so with a spirit of humility. Speaking the truth in love, but not being demanding, contentious,

obnoxious, nor rude yet speaking only as the Holy Spirit gives you utterance, no more, no less. Be wise as a serpent gentle as a dove, that you may win some for Jesus. Therefore with non-Christians and babes in Christ have more patience towards any errors or foolish things they say , correcting them graciously and if they are not receptive to hearing God's word, don't cast your pearls before swine. Don't try to force or try justify the issue. Let God, in His way and time. However with believers who have been going to church and have heard God's word for some time, bring more correction, edification, reproof and rebuke when biblically appropriate and needed. This all has significance on how we plant and water God's Word in the lives of others, by God's Holy Spirit and God's way, and not by human emotion, under the false pretense of our own religious self righteousness.

The Example of Jesus In Matthew 11:29, Jesus invites us to learn from Him: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." Jesus embodies humility, and as His followers, we are called to emulate that characteristic. Recognizing the gentle nature of Christ helps us understand that humility is not a weakness but a strength that opens the door to deeper spiritual insights.

The Role of the Holy Spirit John 16:13 states, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth." The Holy Spirit plays a vital role in helping us understand and apply the Word of God. Approaching Scripture with humility allows the Spirit to work in our hearts, revealing truths we might overlook in our pride. When we remain open to His leading, we are more likely to receive God**'**s Word as it was intended.

Developing a Humble Heart Philippians 2:3 encourages us, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves." Developing a humble heart involves putting aside our egos and recognizing the value of others. This not only enriches our relationships but also enhances our understanding of Scripture. When we view the Word through the lens of humility, we become more receptive to its lessons, recognizing that we are part of a larger community of believers.

Trusting God for Growth In John 15:5, Jesus reminds us of our dependence on Him: "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." This verse underscores our need to remain connected to Christ, drawing strength and sustenance from our relationship with Him. It is through this connection that we can effectively plant seeds of faith and nurture them. Our efforts alone are insufficient; it is only through Christ that we can bear fruit.

The Power of Prayer James 5:16 emphasizes the importance of prayer: "The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." Prayer is a vital part of planting and watering. It invites God into our efforts, seeking His guidance and blessing. By praying for those we seek to reach, we partner with God in His work. This spiritual discipline not only strengthens our faith but also intercedes for others, helping them open their hearts to the message of Jesus.

In the Church, fellowship of Christians and beyond in Missions Hebrews 10:24-25 highlights the significance of the body of Christ, the church: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing

near." Fellow Christians gathering is essential in the process of planting and watering, of God's Word. The early church exemplified this as they gathered together, encouraging one another in their faith. By participating in a community of believers, we can support each other in sharing the love of Jesus and nurturing one another's spiritual growth.

In Christian mission outreaches sometimes we are the initial ones to plant God's word into the minds and hearts that God brings us to, at other times we are ones to water God's word that was previously planted by others. In both cases, our role is essential, whether we are sowing the seeds of faith or nurturing the growth of those seeds. It is God who gives the increase, and through our efforts, His Word takes root in the lives of individuals, transforming hearts and drawing them closer to Him. Whether planting or watering, we are partners with God in the work of evangelism, trusting Him to use us in His perfect timing and according to His will.

Conclusion "Share the love of Jesus, plant and water" serves as a powerful reminder of our mission as Christians. We are called to actively engage in sharing the Gospel, nurturing the faith of others, and trusting God for the growth that follows. By embodying love, remaining connected to Christ, engaging in prayer, and working within community, we fulfill our calling to be vessels of His love and grace.

As we go forth, let us be diligent in planting and watering, knowing that our labor is not in vain when we work alongside the Lord. May we always remember that it is God who ultimately gives the increase, and in that, we can find both comfort and motivation.

(79) Understanding the Parable of the Sower: Planting and Watering God's Word:

The Parable of the Sower, found in Matthew 13:1-23, serves as a profound illustration and metaphor of how we receive and respond to the Word of God. This parable not only depicts the various conditions of the heart in relation to God's message but also emphasizes the importance of planting, watering, sharing, and abiding in His Word with care and sincerity.

The Parable Explained

In this parable, Jesus describes a sower who scatters seed, which represents the Word of God. The seed falls on four different types of soil, each illustrating how different people respond to the Gospel:

1. **The Path (Matthew 13:4, 19)**: Some seed falls along the path, where it is eaten by birds. Jesus explains that this represents those who hear the Word but do not understand it. The enemy, consisting of Satan's evil spirits and principalities, seeks to snatch away what was sown in people's hearts, preventing them from accepting God's Word and being transformed. This is clearly illustrated in the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:19, where Jesus says, *"When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart."* This teaches us that a hardened heart, resistant to God's message, fails to receive and embrace God's Word. (Jesus)

Pride, lack of humility, and an unwillingness to be open to the truth often block God's transformative power. This hinderance is not God's inability but rather a person's own stubbornness. When individuals insist on doing things their own way—rejecting God's guidance in favor of their own ideas—they close themselves off from the life-changing message of the Gospel and the work of God's Holy Spirit. Therefore, cultivating humility and a receptive heart is essential to allowing God's Word to take root and bear fruit in one's life.

2. **Rocky Ground (Matthew 13:5-6, 20-21)**: Other seed falls on rocky soil, where it springs up quickly but withers in the sun due to a lack of root. This symbolizes those who receive the Word with joy but fall away when trials come. Here, we learn the importance of deep roots in faith, cultivated through humility, fellowship with other Christians, discipleship and perseverance. Trusting in God and what He says and promises. In the midst of our daily trials, it is sometimes hard to trust God; We begin to worry and even become angry when our needs are not met in the ways that we have determined best. Rather we should understand and believe, that God's timing and His way of answering our prayers, far exceeds our expectations and is perfect according to His plan. As we further reflect on God's faithfulness towards others in the past and today, it is those testimonies of Jesus Christ that encourage us, and strengthen us to trust God, so that we can overcome the trial by God's Spirit, and receive the actual blessing that God intended.Trusting in God is not a mere sentiment but a profound reliance on the unchanging character and promises of Almighty God, an anchor steadfast in Jesus Christ as we go through life's unpredictable situations, trials and tribulations. Faith comes by hearing the word of God, and allowing the Holy Spirit to deeply root God's Word and ways in our lives.
3. **Thorns (Matthew 13:7, 22)**: Some seed falls among thorns, which choke the plants. This represents those who hear the Word but are overwhelmed by the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches. This warning emphasizes the need to prioritize spiritual growth over worldly distractions.
4. **Good Soil (Matthew 13:8, 23)**: Finally, some seed falls on good soil, yielding a bountiful harvest. This soil represents those who hear the Word, understand it, and bear fruit. To be this good soil, we must approach God's Word with a receptive heart, nurturing our faith and allowing God to produce the growth.

Planting and Watering God's Word

Understanding the various types of soil in this parable highlights our responsibility to plant and water God's Word in ourselves and others.

- **Planting the Word**: This involves sharing the Gospel with others, much like the sower spreading seed. As Christians, we are called to disseminate God's Word, ensuring it reaches the hearts of those around us. This requires boldness and faith, trusting that God will use our efforts to bring others to Him.
- **Watering the Word**: Just as plants need water to thrive, so too do our spiritual lives require nurturing. This can be achieved through prayer, study, and community. We are encouraged to meditate on Scripture, pray for understanding, and engage with fellow believers to help us grow in our faith.

Receiving and Abiding in God’s Word

To receive God**’**s Word effectively, we must approach it with the right heart, characterized by humility and openness. This means:

- **Avoiding Hardness of Heart**: Like the seed that fell on the path, we must guard against becoming indifferent or resistant to the Gospel. This involves regularly examining our hearts, confessing any pride or bitterness that may inhibit our receptivity.
- **Cultivating Depth**: To avoid the rocky ground experience, we need to develop deep roots in our faith. This can be accomplished through regular prayer, studying Scripture, and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us. The deeper our roots, the better we can withstand trials and challenges.
- **Prioritizing Spiritual Matters**: To avoid being choked by thorns, we must consciously prioritize our spiritual lives over worldly distractions. This may mean setting boundaries around our time and commitments, ensuring that we dedicate time to God**’**s Word and fellowship with other believers.
- **Abiding in Christ**: John 15:4-5 reminds us of the importance of abiding in Christ: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me." Abiding in Him ensures that we remain connected to the source of our strength and nourishment.

The Parable of the Sower teaches us critical lessons about how we plant and water God**’**s Word in our lives and the lives of others. By receiving the Word with humility, nurturing it through prayer and community, and avoiding the distractions of the world, we cultivate a heart that can bear fruit for God**’**s Kingdom. As we engage with Scripture, let us strive to be good soil—receptive, fruitful, and abiding in the love and truth of Christ. In doing so, we fulfill our calling to share His love and grace with others.

Conclusion Sharing and receiving the Word of God with a spirit of humility is essential for spiritual growth. It allows us to fully engage with God’s word, fostering an openness to the transformative work of the Holy Spirit. By setting aside pride and approaching God**’**s Word with meekness, we position ourselves to learn, grow, and be changed. As we cultivate this humble spirit, we can experience the fullness of what God has for us through His Word, leading us to a deeper relationship with Him and with one another.

(80) Prayer:

Isaiah 56:7 AKJV 7 Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

PRAYER Contents

- What is Prayer -
- Kinds of Prayers:

- Does God always Answer our Prayers?
- What should we pray for ?
- For whom should we pray ?
- How should we pray ? In what manner and ways ?
- When should we pray?
- Where has God's people prayed?
- Why should we pray ?
- Why should we intercede for others in prayers ?
- What should we pray for ? When we are interceding for others ?
- What should we pray for?
- In what circumstances should we pray?
- Under what conditions will our prayers be heard by God & more likely to be granted?
- Prayers answered in the Bible Under what conditions will our prayers ' not' be heard by God, nor granted?
- Last Prayer of the Bible
- More reflections about Prayer

What is Prayer ?

Prayer is the act of addressing thanksgiving, adoration, supplication, or intercession to God.

Prayer is the act of communication with God, both verbal and silent.

Prayer is one of the first and sweetest duties of the Christian toward God. By prayer we as Christians can approach our Creator, and pour out our thanks for life, preservation, and salvation, glorifying God, asking aid, assistance, grace, or strength, or making intercession for some other person.

Prayer should not be vain repetitions, but sincere petitions of our own intentions and desires of our hearts and minds to God.

In asking God for things we must never forget that His knowledge and wisdom are infinitely greater than ours, and that we must not expect Him to grant our desires if in His sight they are not beneficial or will be harmful to us, or if it not His timing, or even if He has something else planned for our life.

God's wisdom and decisions of what is best for the future, not only for our life, but for those around us, is without question eternally

We should pray to God the Father in the precious name of God the Son, Jesus Christ.

God does want us to continue in prayer in all essential matters, by faith, trusting Him without doubt to answer all of prayers perfectly in His timing and ways.

Kinds of Prayers:

Adoration - Praising God's nature and attributes (e.g., Psalm 95:6).

Confession - Acknowledging and repenting for sins (e.g., 1 John 1:9).

Thanksgiving - Expressing gratitude for God's blessings (e.g., Philippians 4:6).

Supplication - Asking for God's help or intervention (e.g., Philippians 4:6).

Intercession - Praying on behalf of others (e.g., Job 42:10).

Lament - Expressing sorrow or mourning (e.g., Psalm 22).

Dedication - Committing oneself or something to God (e.g., Romans 12:1).

Petition - Specifically asking God for personal needs or desires (e.g., Matthew 7:7).

Blessing - A prayer for blessing and peace (e.g., Numbers 6:24-26).

Meditative Prayer - Reflecting deeply on God**'**s word and presence (e.g., Psalm 1:2).

Praise - Celebrating God's deeds and greatness (e.g., Psalm 150).

Covenant Prayer - Praying in alignment with God's promises and covenants (e.g., Genesis 15:6).

Imprecation for enemies: This type of prayer asks for divine justice or judgment against those who are perceived as enemies. It often seeks intervention from God to address wrongs or injustices inflicted by others. Psalm 109:6-15 - The psalmist asks God to bring judgment upon those who have wronged him.

Forgiveness Prayer: Requesting the ability to forgive one's enemies and seeking forgiveness for any bitterness or anger towards them. This type of prayer helps in letting go of resentment and fostering peace Matthew 6:12 - "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Blessing enemies: Asking God to bless one**'**s enemies, wishing for their prosperity and well-being. This prayer reflects Jesus' teaching on loving and praying for those who oppose us. Luke 6:28 - "Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."

Deliverance Prayer: Seeking protection or deliverance from the harm caused by enemies, asking God to shield oneself from their malicious intents and to provide safety.Psalm 34:17 - "The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles."

Prayer for Reconciliation: Requesting God to bring about reconciliation between oneself and those who are enemies, seeking a resolution and restoration of relationships. Matthew 5:23-24 - Encourages reconciliation with others before offering gifts at the altar.

Prayers for Justice: Asking for God**'**s justice to prevail in situations where wrongs have been done, trusting Him to handle the situation in accordance with His will and righteousness. Psalm 7:6-7 - "Arise, Lord, in your anger; rise up against the rage of my enemies. Awake, my God; decree justice."

Adoration for God and His Love: Praising God's infinite love and the nature of His enduring affection for His creation. This prayer focuses on recognizing and celebrating God**'**s loving nature. Psalm 136:1 - "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."

Petition: Specifically asking for the grace of God in times of need, such as during trials or for personal struggles, and seeking His saving power. Ephesians 2:8 - "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."

Thanksgiving: Expressing gratitude for the grace given through salvation, and celebrating the assurance of eternal life Colossians 3:16 - "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly... with gratitude in your hearts to God."

Prayer for Wisdom: Requesting divine insight to make decisions in alignment with God's will, seeking guidance in navigating life's challenges and choices. James 1:5 - "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."

Supplication: Asking for God's help and intervention in specific situations, seeking His guidance to resolve issues or navigate difficult circumstances, Philippians 4:6 - "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

Dedication: Committing one's life or specific aspects of life to God's direction and purpose, seeking His plan and alignment with His will. Romans 12:1 - "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."

Meditative Prayer: Reflecting deeply on God's word and His presence to gain clarity and direction for one's life. Psalm 1:2 - "But whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night."

Spontaneous Prayer - Unscripted, heartfelt prayer expressing immediate thoughts and feelings (e.g., Nehemiah 2:4-5).

Blessing - Invoking God's favor or protection on someone (e.g., Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

Deliverance Prayer - Asking for God's help in overcoming specific dangers or troubles (e.g., Psalm 34:17).

Petitional Intercession - Praying specifically for the needs of others, asking God to intervene in their lives (e.g., 2 Corinthians 1:11).

Healing Prayer: Asking for physical or emotional healing (e.g., James 5:14-15).

Forgiveness Prayer: Requesting forgiveness for oneself or extending forgiveness to others (e.g., Matthew 6:12).

Deliverance Prayer for Spiritual Warfare: Asking for release from spiritual oppression or demonic influence (e.g., Mark 16:17).

Prayer for Spiritual Gifts: Asking God to bestow specific gifts for ministry and service (e.g., 1 Corinthians 12:7-11).

Prayer for Wisdom: Requesting divine insight and understanding for guidance in decisions and life (e.g., James 1:5).

Does God always Answer our Prayers?

" Yes " is His perfect answer to our prayers when it's according to His will, when He knows what is right and good for all, and His answer of " No " to any of our prayers is also perfect because He has a better plan, or what we asking for is against His Will. The more we continue in God's Word we learn more what the Will of God is. He also answers sometimes by desiring us to " Wait " till He orchestrates the spiritual or world's circumstances within our life or that are around us. So in effect, God does answer all of our prayers but not always in ways that we expect. Never be disappointed or angry with God when He doesn't answer or prayers in the way we wanted or expected. Learn to fully trust God, in every situation, He knows what's best, and His ways are higher than our ways.

God does answer many of our good prayers that are according to His will, far beyond our expectations, so that He would receive the glory, that the fruit of His Love and goodness would be further magnified.

In the Bible, prayer emerges as a profound means of establishing a connection and communication with God the Father. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, underscores the significance of maintaining an open dialogue with God. He encourages believers to approach the Almighty with their requests, offering thanksgiving as they lay their hearts bare before Him. This act of prayer is depicted as a personal and intimate conversation, one that fosters a deep and profound relationship with our Creator.

In the Book of James, prayer is presented as a transformative practice that allows individuals to seek divine wisdom and discernment. God's Word teaches the importance of requesting guidance from God, emphasizing His generous bestowal of wisdom without judgment. This portrayal of prayer demonstrates its role in seeking understanding and insight from God, particularly in times of uncertainty and decision-making.

Throughout the epistles, the theme of prayer as a vehicle for seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with God resonates deeply. The apostle John's words in his first letter reveals the redemptive nature of prayer, emphasizing the significance of acknowledging one's faults before the Almighty. He assures believers that through sincere repentance and confession, God remains faithful and just, ready to cleanse them from all wrongdoing and restore their spiritual well-being.

Amid the trials and tribulations of life, the Book of Psalms offers solace through the portrayal of prayer as a source of comfort and strength. The Psalmist articulates the idea that the Lord is attuned to the cries of the afflicted and is near to those who are brokenhearted. This depiction underscores the consoling and reassurance aspect of prayer, portraying it as a refuge for those facing trials, tribulation, adversity and emotional turmoil.

Additionally, the apostle Paul's exhortation to Timothy emphasizes the significance of intercessory prayer for the well-being and salvation of all. He calls on believers to lift others' needs before God, emphasizing the selfless and compassionate nature of prayer. This portrayal underscores prayer's capacity to foster empathy, unity, edification, and communal support as believers intercede on behalf of other Christians.

In God's Word, prayer emerges as a profound and multifaceted practice, serving as a vital conduit for believers to establish a deep and intimate connection with God the

Father through our relationship with Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, emphasizes the significance of maintaining an ongoing dialogue with God, urging believers to approach Him with their requests and concerns, while expressing gratitude for His providence and grace. This portrayal of prayer underscores its role as a means of fostering a personal and heartfelt relationship with the Almighty, rooted in trust and reverence.

Throughout the Book of James, prayer is depicted as a transformative and enlightening experience, facilitating the seeking of divine wisdom and discernment. James highlights the importance of seeking guidance from God, affirming His benevolence in granting wisdom to those who earnestly seek it. This portrayal illuminates prayer's role in navigating life's uncertainties and complexities, underlining its capacity to provide clarity and insight through communion withGod .

The apostle John's first letter echoes the redemptive nature of prayer, emphasizing its pivotal role in seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with God. By urging believers to confess their sins and shortcomings, John underscores the importance of genuine repentance and humility before the Almighty. This portrayal illustrates prayer as a pathway to spiritual renewal and restoration, fostering a profound sense of grace and mercy that emanates from God's unending love and compassion.

Echoing throughout the Psalms is the comforting and empowering nature of prayer, depicted as a source of solace and strength during times of tribulation and adversity. The Psalmist's poignant verses convey the idea that God is attuned to the plight of the suffering and provides refuge for the brokenhearted. This portrayal emphasizes prayer's role in providing consolation, hope, and reassurance, serving as a guiding light in the midst of life's darkest moments.

In the pastoral exhortations of the apostle Paul to Timothy, prayer is portrayed as a selfless and compassionate act of intercession for the well-being and salvation of others. Paul encourages believers to lift the needs of all people before God, emphasizing prayer's role in fostering empathy, unity, and communal support within the body of believers. This portrayal underscores the transformative power of prayer in nurturing a spirit of solidarity and compassion, reflecting the essence of Christian love and service to others.

The understanding of Prayer in God’s Word speaks of a profound and transformative practice taught and demonstrated by Jesus Christ, that extends beyond personal supplication, encompassing communal intercession and spiritual communion with God. It is depicted as a means of establishing a deep and intimate relationship with God, seeking wisdom and discernment, finding forgiveness and redemption, drawing strength and comfort, and fostering empathy and unity among believers.

Through the apostles' teachings and the heartfelt expressions of the Psalmists, the essence of prayer is unveiled as a bridge that connects believers of Jesus Christ, to the boundless love and mercy of our Creator, offering solace in times of distress, guidance in moments of uncertainty, and redemption in the face of transgression.

This testament of prayer serves as enduring significance and transformative power in the lives of believers. It is an invitation to seek God and commune with Him, to petition God directly in times of need, and to trust God completely to answer our prayers according to His perfect Wisdom, Will and Love.

What should we pray for ?

- For God to fully His Love within our lives
- For God's Holy Spirit in come into our lives
- For wisdom from God;
- For God to enlighten our eyes of understanding
- For direction; for God to show us His ways
- To teach us; To lead us; To lead us in His truth; To answer us
- For God to hear our prayers;
- That our words would be acceptable in God's sight
- For God's loving kindness
- For deliverance
- For God to do spiritual warfare
- For mercy
- For forgiveness
- For God not to remember our sins
- For God not to rebuke us
- For God to remove reproach & contempt
- For our daily needs and to fulfill the needs of others
- For our spiritual and physical healings

What should we pray for ?

- For **Wisdom,** understanding, enlighten eyes:

Psalm 13:3, 119:73, 119:17,19, 119:125, 119:144, 119:169, 2 Kings 6:17, James 1:5, Ephesians 1:15-23, Colossians 1:9

- For God's **loving kindness:** Psalm 17:7, 17:8, 25:6, 26:2, 36:10, 51:1, 119:88, 143:8
- For God to **maintain our cause:**1 Kings 8:49, 1 Kings 8:45
- To **bless food:**Mat. 15:36, Jn. 6:11, Acts 27:35
- For God to **plead our cause:** 1 Kings 8:49, Proverbs 31:8-9, Psalm 119:154, 35:1, 43:1
- To **dwell** in the house of the Lord: Psalm 26:8, 27:4, 71:3
- Make me hear **joy & gladness:** Psalm 51:8, 51:12
- To **bless the upright:** Proverbs 11:11
- To **bless enemies** & pray for those who spitefully use us: Luke 6:28, Matthew 5:44
- For the **Government to have wisdom:** 1 Timothy 2:1,2

- For **direction from God** - For God to show us His ways, to teach us, to lead us in His truth, to answer us: Psalm 16:11, 20:1, 20:9, 25:4, 24:5, 27:11, 31:3, 43:3, 61:2, 36:11, 102:2, 119:33, 119:35, 119:64,68, 119:24, 119:133, 119:135, 119:108, 143:1, 143:8, 143:10, 143:7, Jer. 42:3, 1 Kings 8:22-36
- For God to **hear our prayers** - That our **words** would be **acceptable** in God's sight: Psalm 13:3, 17:1, 17:6, 19:14, 20:4, 20:3, 27:7-8, 28:2, 31:2, 141:1,2, 142:6, 143:1, 38:16, 51:11, 55:1, 54:1,2, 64:1, 71:2, 80:1, 79:11, 84:8, 86:1, 86:6, 88;2, 102:1, 119:169-170, 119:145, 119:149, 1 Kings 8:22-36, 53, 8:22-43, 53 (Foreigners-Us), 8:52, 8:49, 8:42, 8:28,29, 18:37
- For **Deliverance -** Psalm 6:4; 7:1; 25:17; 25:20; 25:20; 25:22; 17:13; 18:3-19; 31:1,2; 43:1; 59:1; 70:5; 71:2,3; 79:9; 120:2; 119:170; 116:4; 140:1; 142:6: 143:9; 144:7,8,11; 2 Corinthians 1:10,11
- For **God to do spiritual warfare -** Psalm 20:1,2; 25:2; 35:1-4; 17:13; 36:11; 59:1; 70:2; 83:1,2; 83:13-17; 79:12; 74:22; 94:1; 108: 12,13; 119:76; 119:77

What should we pray for ?

- For **mercy:** Psalm 6:2,4, 25:6, 25:16, 26:11, 27:7, 9:13, 51:1, 56:1, 57:1, 86:3, 86:16, 90:14, 79;8, 123:3, 143:12, 119:124, 119:124, 119:132, 119:41,119:76, 119:77
- To **forgive us:** Psalm 25:18, Joel 2:17, 1 Kings 8:22, 36-53, 8:39,50, 8: 30
- For God **not to remember our sins:** Psalm 25:7, 51:1,9, 79:8, Isaiah 43:25-26
- For God **to keep us from sin & temptation:** Psalm 19:13, Luke 22:40-46, Mark 14:37,38, Mat. 26:36-46
- For **compassion:** 1 Kings 8:50
- For God **not to rebuke us:** Psalm 6:1, 38:1
- To **remove reproach & contempt:** Psalm 119:22
- For God **to cleanse us ; purge us:** Psalm 19:12, 51:7
- For God **not to cast us away or to forsake us** Psalm 27:8, 51:11, 71:18
- For God **to set a guard over our mouth:** Psalm 141:3
- For God **to create in us a new heart:** Psalm 51:10
- For God **not to take us away:** Psalm 102:24
- For God **not to forget the humble:** Psalm 10:12
- For God **to establish His word come true :** Psalm 119:38, 1 Kings 8:26
- For God **to allow our soul to live to praise**: Psalm 119:175
- For God **to restore & revive us**: Psalm 51:12, 80:7,19, 80:18, 119:25, 119:37, 119:40, 119:88, 119:107, 119:156, 119:159

What should we pray for ?

- **For protection** by God to preserve: Psalm17:8,9,16:1,25:2,71:3, 17:11, 86:2, 140:1, 140:4
- For God **to uphold us :** Psalm 51:12, 119:116, 119:117

- For God **to strengthen us :** Psalm 119:28, 86:16, 105:4, 1 Chron. 16:11
- To **acknowledge trust** in God : Psalm 7:1, 17:1, 25:20, 31:1
- Acknowledge in prayer **that God is our strength :** Psalm 46:1, 18:1,2, 19:14, 27:1, 28;7, 28;8, 43:2, 59:17, 73:26, 118:14, 140:7, 144:1, Jer. 16:19, Isa. 12:2, 26:4, 49:5, Hab. 3:19
- For God **to save & redeem us:** Psalm 20:9,26:11,25:22,69:1, 79:9, 106:4, 106:47, 119:134

For WHOM should we pray ?

- Basically for everyone that God's Holy Spirit leads a person
- For those who need salvation (everyone)
- For those who are sick
- For those who need forgiveness
- For those who persecute you Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:28
- For your enemies; For those who spitefully use you- Matthew 5:44
- For the government & all men -1 Timothy 2:2
- For the sick -James 5:14-16

How should we pray ? In what manner and ways ?

- Jesus Continued in prayer - Lk. 6:12
- Fervently - Col. 4:12, James 5:16
- Continue earnestly vigilant - Col. 4:2, Acts 6:4
- Prayed more earnestly - Luke 33:44
- Constant prayer - Acts 12:5
- Pray without ceasing - 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Eph. 1:16
- Pray always & not lose heart - Luke 18:1-18
- Continued steadfastly - Acts 2:42, 6:4
- Continued with one accord - Acts 1:14
- I kept prostrating myself - Deuteronomy 9:25
- Continued praying - 1 Samuel 1:12-18
- Hannah spoke in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice wasn't heard. Eli thought she was drunk, but she wasn't drunk with wine but was a woman of sorrowful spirit. "Poured out my soul before the Lord."
- Poured out a prayer, as a woman with child- Isaiah 25:17,18
- Lifting up Holy Hands - Psalm 77:2, 63:4, 28:2,
- 1 Timothy 2:8, 1 Kings 8:22, 8:38,54

- Without wrath - Lamentations 3:41
- Without doubt Mark - 11;23, 1 Timothy 2:8
- Laid hands on - Acts 28:8, Acts 6:6, Matthew 19:13-15

How should we pray ? In what manner and ways ? Continued…

- Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive them Mark 11:25
- Believe whatever you say will come to pass & you will have whatever you say Mark 11:23
- With vehement cries & tears - Hebrews 5:7
- Confessing, weeping, bowing down - Ezra. 10:1,2
- Calling on the name of the Lord - Acts 22:16
- Pray to the Father through Jesus - Hebrews 7:25
- In Jesus **'**name - John 14:13,14, 16:26, 16:23
- In Spirit - Ephesians 6:18, Romans. 8:26, Jude 1:20, 1 Corinthians 14:13-15
- Through the love of the Holy Spirit- Romans 15:30
- Ask, seek, knock- Matthew 7:7, John 14:13, Psalm 27:4
- Whatever you ask, when you pray, believe that you receive, and you will have - Mark 11:24
- Lift up you soul to God - Psalm 143:8
- Cast your burden on the Lord - Psalm 55:22
- Meditate - Psalm 1:1-3, 4:4, Psalm 5
- Wait on the Lord - Waited patiently - Listen - Psalm 40:1
- Silently waits- Psalm 62:1,5
- With your voice -Psalm 142:1, 77:1, (Mouth Psalm 66:17)

How should we pray ? In what manner and ways ? Continued…

- Cry aloud - Psalm 55:17
- Cry out - Psalm 107:28, 119:145, 146:147, 77:1, 66:17, 142:1,5, 40:1, 61:1, 57:2, 56:9, 27:7, 28:1,2, 30:2,8
- With your whole heart seek God - Psalm 119:10, 145
- Pour out your heart before Him - Psalm 62:8
- Pour out your complaint - Psalm 142:2
- Declare your ways to God - Psalm 119:26
- Pray not with deceitful lips - Psalm 17

- Be anxious for nothing (self gratification) - Philippines 4:6,7
- Pray with supplications & thanksgiving - Philippines 4:6, Colossians 4:2, Neh. 11:17
- Speaking out a prayerful command
- Acts 9:40 "Tabitha arise"
- Acts 9:34 "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you, Arise, make your bed "
- We - knelt down - Acts 21:5, 20:36
- Strive together in prayer - Romans 15:30
- Pray over (another) anointing - Matthew 26:36, James 5:14
- With the church - Acts 12:5
- With others - Acts 1:13, 20:36, 21:5
- Alone - knelt down -
- 1 Kings 8:54, Acts 9:40, Daniel 6:10, Luke 22;41

How should we pray ? In what manner and ways ? Continued…

- Pray alone; Go into you room, pray in secret - Matthew 6:6
- Freely sacrifice - Psalm 5
- Fell on His face - Mathew. 26;39, 14:35
- With fasting - Acts 13:3, 14:23
- Toward Jerusalem & the Temple - 1 Kings 8:29,30,38, 9:3,
- 2 Kings 20:2, Psalm 138:2, Daniel 6:10
- Foreigner - 1 Kings 8:41,42,44,48

When should we pray ?

- At all times, in everything, unceasing
- Romans 12:12, 1 Thessalonians. 5:17, Ephesians 6:18,
- Lk. 18:1, Col. 1;9, 1:3, 2 Thessalonians. 1:11, Acts 10:2
- Morning, at noon & evening - Psalm 55:17
- Three times a day - Daniel 6:10
- Morning - 3rd hour - Psalm 5:3, 88:13, Acts 2:15
- Midday - 6th hour - Acts 10:9 Acts 10:3, 3:1, 10:30, Daniel 9:31
- Evening - 9th hour Morning & evening
- Day & night - 1 Chronicles 23:30 Nehemiah 4:9, Psalm 88:1
- As long as you live - Psalm 116:2
- Always - Acts 10:2

- At midnight - Psalm 119:62
- Before preaching - Mark 1:35-39
- Before the dawning of the morning - Psalm 119:147
- Seven times a day - Psalm 119:164
- All day long - Psalm 86:3
- In the night without ceasing - Psalm 77:2
- Night watches - Psalm 63:6
- Early - Psalm 63:1

In the morning having risen a long while before daylight - Mark 1:35

In a time when you may be found - Psalm 32:6

"How long? Could you not watch with me one hour?" Matthew 26:40, Mark. 14:37

Where have God's people prayed ?

- Everywhere - 1 Timothy 2:8
- Go into your room, pray in secret - Matthew 6:6
- House top - Acts 10:9
- In the Temple - Acts 22:17, 3:1
- On the shore - Acts 21:5
- Upper Room home - Daniel. 6:10, Acts 1:13
- On our bed - Psalm 119:62, 63:6
- From the end of the earth - Psalm 61:1
- Solitary place - Mark 1:35
- Withdrew Himself into the wilderness - Luke 5:16
- Up on the mountain - Luke 9:28

Why should we pray ?

- So the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. - Philippines 4:6,7
- To build yourself up on faith (To overcome the world.) Jude 1:20, 1 John 5:4
- So that the Father may be glorified in the Son John 14:13
- To be saved - Acts 2:21, Philippines 1:19, Psalm 116:3,4
- To pull down strongholds of demonic powers & vain imaginations - 2 Corinthians 10:4
- That the evil thoughts of our heart may be forgiven - Acts 8:22
- To raise the dead - Acts 9:40
- For God to lead us forth by the right way - Psalm 107:7

- Lest you fall into temptation - Matthew 26:41

Why should we intercede for others in prayers ?

- So that they may stand perfect & complete; that they can do the will of God. - Colossians 4:12
- So that the Father may be glorified in the Son - John 14:13
- So that they may have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him.
- So that they would be fruitful in every good work. So that they would increase in the knowledge of God. So that they would be strengthened with all might according to His glorious power. To have all patience. To have long-suffering with joy.

Colossians 1:9 -11 AKJV , (What to Pray)

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10That you might walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, to all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness;

Ephesians 1:16-19 AKJV (What to Pray)

"Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

1 Timothy 2:1-4 AKJV - I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; 4Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Philippines 1:9-11 AKJV (For what to pray) -And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10That you may approve things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ. 11Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

What should we pray for ? When we are interceding for others ?

- That the love of others may abound still more & more in knowledge and all discernment. Philippines 1:9 (Why should we pray - See Phil. 1:10-11)
- For wisdom; that God's people would receive a spirit of wisdom. Ephesians 1:15-17, 23, Colossians 1;9, James 1:5, Psalm 13:3 (See why? Colossians 1:10, 14)
- That their faith should not fail - Luke 22:32

- That they may be filled with knowledge of His will - Col. 1:9
- That they may receive the Holy Spirit - Acts 8:15
- That the unconfessed & unrepented sins of God's people & even those who persecute us, accuse us & spitefully use us, will be forgiven. That God would have mercy on them.
- "Father forgive them for they know not what they do..." Luke. 23:34
- We should also pray God will bless them with favor & strength. We should pray that God would forgive all their iniquities & transgressions, and not just the faults which they've made against us personally. We should pray and intercede for others...
- As Jesus Christ did - Luke 23:34
- As David did - Psalm 51
- As Stephen did - Acts 7:59-60
- As Paul did - 2 Tim. 4:16
- As Moses did - Deuteronomy 9:25, 26
- As Hezekiah did - 2 Chronicles 30:18-20
- "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them, if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." John 20:23
- "If anyone sees his brothers sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask & He will give him life for those who commit sin..." 1 Jn. 5:16

What should we pray for ?

- For God to heal - James 5:13, 1 Kings 8:37, 17:21
- For God's selection of church elders - Acts 1:24, 6:6
- For the lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest -Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2
- For God to seek for the lost - Psalm 119:176
- For God to remove lying - Psalm 119:29
- For the peace of Jerusalem - Psalm 122:6
- To be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass & to stand before the Son of man - Luke 21:36
- For children - to have - 1 Samuel 1:11, Genesis 20:17, Genesis 21
- For God to bless others - 2 Sam.7:18-29
- To justify the righteous - 1 Kings 8:32
- For God to remove famine, pestilence, blight, locusts- 1 Kings 8:37-39
- To magnify God - To thank God- 2 Samuel 7:18-29, (David)
- For the people to know that God is the Lord God - 1 Kings 18:20-37, 40

In what circumstances should we pray to God ?

In all situations, whether we're in adverse situations or not. Moreover, we should pray to God in adoration to Him and thanksgiving for everything and always with intercessions for others, daily, in all circumstances.

Also when...

- When we're suffering; affliction- James 5:13, Jonah 2:1-9
- When we're in distress; troubled - Psalm 4, Psalm 6, Psalm 18:6, 107:6,19,28, 86:7, 77:2, 50:15
- When we've sinned & transgressed - Psalm 6
- When we're oppressed - Psalm 9:9-10, 10:17,18
- When we're accused - Psalm 22:19-21
- When we're held captive; persecuted - Psalm 7, Psalm 18:16-19, 22:4,5

Under what conditions will our prayers be heard and granted by God while having great effect ?

- When we humble ourselves- Luke 18:10-14,2 Chronicles 33;12, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 9:12, 10:17, 18:27, 34:18
- When we keep God's commandments - 1 John 3:22-23
- When we do things pleasing in His sight - 1 John 3:22-23
- When we diligently seek Him by faith - Hebrews 11:6, 2 Chronicles 7:14
- When we have Godly fear (Reverence) - Hebrews 5:7, Acts 10:2
- When we share our bread, bring poor to your house, cover the naked Isaiah 58:6-14

Under what conditions will our prayers be heard and granted by God while having great effect ?

- When we 'take away', pointing our fingers at others & speaking wickedness (gossip) & satisfy the afflicted soul
- Isaiah 58:9-10, Psalm 15:1,3
- When we pray according to His will -1 John 5:14
- When we 'do' the will of God - Mat. 7:21, 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- When we pray fervently - James 5:16
- When we are righteous - 1 Pet. 3:12, James 5:16, Psalm 34:15,17
- When we pray in our room, in secret (Not just to be seen by men) Matthew 6:6
- When we 'believe' that we'll receive that which we pray for Mark 11:23,24
- When we confess & repent from (turn away) our sins & abide in the grace of Christ; trust in the Lord's mercy 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 18:25, Mark 11:25,26

Prayers Answered

- Hezekiah's prayer against Sennacherib, King of Assyria Isaiah 37:15-20, 2 Kings 19:14-19
- Lord's answer - Isaiah 37:22-35, 2 Kings 19:20-34, Isaiah 37:36 The angel of the Lord went out, killed 185,000 Assyrians;
- Sennacherib's sons then killed Sennacherib with a sword. 2 Kings 19:35-37
- Jeremiah prays for understanding, Jeremiah 32:16-25 Lord's answer - Jeremiah 32:26-40, 44, 33:1-18 (Everlasting covenant)
- Hezekiah's prayer when sick & near death, "Remember me." 2 Kings 20:1-3, Isaiah 38:3, 5 Lord's answer - 2 Kings 20:5-6 Add to your days fifteen years Figs used to heal; 2 Kings 20:7. A sign from God; 2 Kings 20:9-11
- Hezekiah's prayer for atonement for everyone - those who did not sanctify themselves 2 Chron. 30:18-20 Mannasseh, the king of Jerusalem reigned 55 years; Mannasseh set up idols & did evil; taken captive by the king of Assyria. Prayer for deliverance 2 Chronicles 33:11-13
- Daniel's prayer for God to forgive, listen and act - Daniel 9:4-19
- Jonah for deliverance - Jonah 2:1-9
- Hannah's prayer for a child (Samuel) - 1 Samuel 1:11,27
- Samuel's prayer for Israel to be saved from the Philistines -1 Samuel 7:8-12
- The Lord thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day & so confused them that they were overcome before Israel.
- Abraham prayed; God healed Abimelech, his wife, & his maidservants; they bore children. Genesis 21 - Sarah conceived.

Prayers Answered

- Moses prayed for Aaron & Israel for forgiveness of their idolatry -Deuteronomy 9:25
- The Lord chose not to destroy you - Deuteronomy 10:10
- The raising of the Shunammite's son (Woman's faith)
- Elisha prayed - 2 Kings 4:8-33,37 Layed twice on the dead 2 Kings 4:34,35
- Elisha prayed; opened eyes; 18 struck with blindness 2 Kings 6:17

Under what conditions will our prayers not be heard by God? Nor granted?

- When we don't confess & turn away from our sins & iniquities Isaiah 59:2,3, 1 Peter 3:12
- When we have spoken lies & muttered perversity; deceitful lips Isaiah 59:3, Psalm 17:1
- When we have pride - Luke 18:10-14, Psalm 5:5, Psalm 12:3
- When we pray amiss - James 4:3,

- When we pray like hypocrites - Matthew 6:5-8
- When we doubt we'll receive that which we prayed for & have no faith - James 1:5-7,
- When we have unforgiveness towards anyone - Mark 11:25,
- When we pray like hypocrites, or standing in synagogues & on the street corners Luke 18:11, Matthew 6:5
- When we follow after other gods - Jeremiah 11:10,11
- If we regard iniquity in our heart - Psalm 66:18

Under what conditions will our prayers not be heard by God? Nor granted ?

"They cry out but He does not answer, because of the heart of evil men." Job 35:12

James 4:1-4 (AKJV)"From where come wars and fights among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? 2You lust, and have not: you kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: you fight and war, yet you have not, because you ask not. 3You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it on your lusts. 4You adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.."

Last Prayer of the Bible >

Rev 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, **"**Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

More reflections about Prayer:

Prayer is direct communication between believers and followers of Jesus Christ and God the Father, where one can express their thoughts, feelings, desires, and concerns. The Bible is replete with references to prayer, offering guidance on its significance and how it should be approached.

Prayer as Communication with God: One of the foundational aspects of prayer for us, as Christians and disciples of Jesus Christ, is its role as a means of communication with God. Scripture emphasizes the importance of bringing our petitions and supplications before Him. In Philippians 4:6, we are encouraged to present our requests to God with thanksgiving. This underscores the idea that prayer is a way for us to share our hearts, joys, and struggles with our Heavenly Father. It**'**s a dialogue that fosters a deeper connection and understanding of His will in our lives.

Prayer for Guidance and Wisdom: As disciples of Jesus Christ, we recognize the significance of seeking guidance and wisdom through prayer. James 1:5 tells us that if any of us lacks wisdom, we should ask God, who gives generously without finding fault. This verse highlights how prayer serves as our avenue to receive divine insight, especially in moments of uncertainty on our journey through life.

Prayer for Forgiveness and Repentance: In our walk of faith, prayer also plays a significant role in seeking forgiveness and repentance. 1 John 1:9 reminds us that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all

unrighteousness. This verse emphasizes the importance of approaching God with a repentant heart, acknowledging our shortcomings, and seeking His forgiveness through prayer. It's a powerful reminder of the grace and mercy that God extends to us as His children.

Prayer for Strength and Comfort: During times of hardship and distress, we find that prayer can provide us with strength and comfort. Psalm 34:17-18 reassures us that the Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. This passage highlights how, through prayer, we can find solace and strength in God's presence, even amidst life's challenges.

Prayer for Intercession: As believers, we are called to intercede on behalf of others through prayer. In 1 Timothy 2:1, we are encouraged to pray for all people, including those in authority. This highlights the role of prayer in advocating for the needs and well-being of others, demonstrating the selflessness and compassion that we are called to express as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Prayer for Thanksgiving: As Christians, we understand that prayer isn't solely about requesting; it is also a means of expressing gratitude. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, we are urged to give thanks in all circumstances. This verse emphasizes the importance of maintaining a thankful heart and using prayer to acknowledge and appreciate God's blessings and provisions in our lives.

Prayer as a Weapon in Spiritual Warfare: Ephesians 6:18 reminds us that prayer is an essential part of wielding our spiritual armor. It is a way for us to call upon God's power and protection in spiritual warfare, recognizing that our battles are not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces. Through prayer, we stand firm in our faith and rely on God's strength.

Prayer as a Direct Line of Communication with God: For us, prayer serves as a direct line of communication with God, allowing us to express our deepest thoughts and emotions. Philippians 4:6 encourages us to bring our requests to God with thanksgiving, highlighting the significance of maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the divine. Prayer is not merely a one-sided conversation but a way for us to establish a personal relationship with the Almighty.

Prayer for Seeking Guidance and Direction: In our lives, we are urged to seek wisdom from God through prayer, as noted in James 1:5. This scripture highlights the role of prayer in seeking divine guidance and direction amid life's challenges and uncertainties. We turn to God for discernment and understanding, acknowledging His omniscience and sovereignty over all matters.

Prayer for Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Prayer is instrumental for us in seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with God. 1 John 1:9 emphasizes the importance of confession, assuring us that God is faithful and just to forgive our sins. It underscores the significance of acknowledging our wrongdoings before God and seeking His mercy and grace through heartfelt repentance.

Prayer for Strength and Comfort in Times of Need: During times of adversity and distress, we turn to prayer as a source of strength and comfort. Psalm 34:17-18 conveys the truth that the Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in

spirit. This verse highlights the comforting and empowering nature of prayer, demonstrating its ability to provide solace and assurance amidst life's trials and tribulations.

Prayer as Intercession for Others: As Christians, we understand that intercessory prayer is an essential aspect of seeking God's intervention on behalf of others. 1 Timothy 2:1 encourages us to pray for all people, including those in positions of authority. This verse emphasizes the significance of selflessly lifting the needs of others before God, reflecting our spirit of compassion, empathy, and communal support through heartfelt prayer.

Prayer as an Act of Gratitude and Thanksgiving: For us as disciples of Jesus Christ, prayer is not only a means of supplication but also a profound expression of gratitude and thanksgiving. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, we are urged to give thanks in all circumstances, highlighting the importance of maintaining a grateful heart regardless of life's challenges. This verse underscores the transformative power of gratitude in fostering a deeper appreciation for God's blessings and provisions in every aspect of our lives.

Prayer as a Means of Establishing a Relationship with God: Prayer serves as a crucial medium for us to establish and nurture our relationship with God. Philippians 4:6 encourages us to bring our requests to God through prayer and supplication, emphasizing the significance of maintaining a continual and open dialogue with Him. This passage highlights how prayer enables us to cultivate a personal and intimate connection with the divine.

Prayer for Seeking Divine Wisdom and Discernment: In our journey of faith, James 1:5 underscores the pivotal role of prayer in seeking divine wisdom and discernment. It encourages us to ask God for wisdom, assuring us that He generously grants it without reproach. This scriptural reference emphasizes the importance of seeking God's guidance through prayer, particularly in times of uncertainty and decision-making, showcasing the transformative power of divine wisdom in navigating life's complexities.

Prayer for Repentance and Reconciliation: As believers, we recognize that prayer plays a vital role in seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with God. 1 John 1:9 emphasizes the importance of confession, assuring us that God is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This passage highlights the transformative nature of prayer, illustrating its capacity to facilitate spiritual renewal and restoration through genuine repentance and acknowledgment of wrongdoing.

Prayer as a Source of Strength and Comfort: During moments of hardship and distress, we turn to prayer as a source of strength and comfort. Psalm 34:17-18 conveys the truth that the Lord is attentive to the cries of the oppressed and is near to the brokenhearted. This scripture underscores the comforting and empowering nature of prayer, highlighting its ability to provide solace, hope, and assurance, especially in times of adversity and emotional turmoil.

Prayer as a Means of Intercession for Others: Intercessory prayer holds significant importance for us as we lift the needs of others before God. In 1 Timothy 2:1, we are encouraged to intercede for all people, emphasizing our role in advocating for the well-being and salvation of others. This passage underscores the selfless and compassionate

nature of prayer, demonstrating its ability to foster communal support, empathy, and unity among us through heartfelt intercession.

Prayer in Private for Authentic Connection: As disciples of Jesus Christ, we also heed His instruction in Matthew 6:6 about the importance of praying in private, away from the public eye. This guidance encourages us to cultivate an authentic and personal connection with God. By seeking solitude for heartfelt communication with the Almighty, we can deepen our relationship with Him and ensure our prayers are sincere and meaningful.

- **Philippians 4:6-7:** The Apostle Paul underscores the importance of prayer in fostering a sense of peace amidst life's challenges. By presenting requests and supplications to God with thanksgiving, believers can experience a transcendent peace that surpasses human understanding. This passage emphasizes the transformative power of prayer in bringing about inner peace and tranquility in the face of trials and tribulations.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:17:** Paul urges believers to pray without ceasing, emphasizing the continual and unbroken communication with God that characterizes a devout life of faith. This passage encourages believers to maintain an ongoing connection with the Divine, fostering a lifestyle of constant dependence on and relationship with God through prayer.
- **Luke 18:1:** Jesus shares the parable of the persistent widow, highlighting the importance of persistent and unwavering prayer. Through this parable, believers are encouraged to persevere in prayer, consistently seeking God's intervention and guidance in their lives. It underscores the transformative power of persistence and faithfulness in prayer, showcasing its ability to elicit God's response and intervention.
- **James 5:16:** James emphasizes the efficacy of fervent and righteous prayer, emphasizing its power in achieving healing and restoration. By sharing with one another and praying for each other, believers can experience healing and restoration, underscoring the significance of communal prayer and intercession within the Christian community.
- **Ephesians 6:18:** Paul emphasizes the importance of praying in the Spirit, highlighting its role as an essential component of spiritual warfare. By praying in the Spirit, believers can actively engage in spiritual battle, fortifying themselves against spiritual forces of evil and darkness. This passage underscores the role of prayer as a spiritual weapon and defense in the life of a believer.

Through these passages, the Bible underscores the multifaceted role and importance of prayer in the life of every Christian, emphasizing its significance in fostering intimacy with God, developing trusting God amidst trials, nurturing continual dependence on Jesus Christ, invoking God’s intervention, in numerous ways and circumstances. It's a means of communication, guidance, repentance, strength, intercession, thanksgiving, and spiritual warfare. Prayer serves as a vital channel for every follower of Jesus to communicate with God, express their hearts' deepest longings, and align themselves with God**’**s will.

(81) Quiet Time With Jesus: Be Still

“Be Still” in the Bible

Key Verse

“Be still, and know that I am God.” – *Psalm 46:10 (ESV)*

This well-known verse is often quoted for comfort and reflection. But its biblical meaning is richer and more powerful than simple quietness.

Original Hebrew Word

רָפָה(raphah) – Be still, let go, cease, relax

- Literally means: to slacken, to loosen, to let drop.
- In context, it’s a command to stop striving, to cease resisting or fighting, and to surrender trustfully to God’s control.

Psalm 46:10 (Hebrew context):

“Cease striving, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

This is not just a call to peaceful meditation, but a **rebuke to anxious effort**, telling God's people to **stand down and watch His deliverance**.

New Testament Parallel (Greek)

While there’s no direct Greek equivalent to “be still” in the exact sense of Psalm 46:10, similar ideas appear:

σιγάω (sigaō) – To be silent, to hold one’s peace

- Used when Jesus **calms the storm**:“ Then He arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still! ’(*siōpa*, imperative form). And the wind ceased...” – *Mark 4:39*

Here, **“be still”** demonstrates **Jesus' authority** over nature and chaos, reinforcing the truth of Psalm 46:10—God is in control.

Spiritual Meaning and Application

1. Stop Striving

- Trust God to act. Surrender your efforts to fix everything yourself.
- Psalm 46 describes **nations raging**, **mountains falling**, and **chaos everywhere**—yet God says: “Be still.”

2. Recognize God's Sovereignty

- “Know that I am God.” This isn’t just intellectual knowledge—it’s an active acknowledgment of His **supreme authority**, power, and trustworthiness.

3. Wait on the Lord

- Stillness reflects **faithful waiting**, not laziness or apathy.“ For God alone my soul waits in silence...” – *Psalm 62:1*

4. Peace in His Presence

- Even in storms, God's command is: “Be still.” Like Jesus calming the sea, **He brings peace where there is fear** (Mark 4:39–41).

Scriptural Reference: Psalm 46:10 (AKJV) - **“**Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth..”

Introduction

Quiet time is a great opportunity to draw near to Jesus, setting aside the busyness of life to focus on His presence. It**’**s a moment to pause, reflect, and deepen our relationship with Him. In the stillness, we can hear His voice more clearly and align our hearts with His.

Creating a Space

1. **Find Your Spot:** Choose a comfortable and quiet place where you can sit without distractions. This could be a corner of your home, a park, or even a quiet room at work.
2. **Set a Time:** Designate a specific time each day for your quiet time. Consistency helps develop a habit and signals to your mind that it**’**s time to meet with Jesus.
3. **Prepare Your Heart:** Before you begin, take a moment to pray. Ask God to quiet your mind and open your heart to what He wants to reveal during this time.

Engaging with God

1. **Scripture Reading:** Start by reading a passage of Scripture. Let the words soak in. You might choose a Psalm, a story from the Gospels, or a verse that speaks to your current situation. **Example Passage:** John 15:4 - **“**Abide in me, and I in you…”
2. **Meditation:** Reflect on the verses. What is God saying to you? How can you apply it to your life? Allow thoughts and images to linger, letting God speak into your heart.
3. **Journaling:** Write down your thoughts, prayers, or any revelations you receive. Journaling helps solidify your reflections and keeps a record of your journey with Jesus.
4. **Prayer:** Spend time in prayer, expressing your thoughts, concerns, and gratitude. Don**’**t just speak—listen. Sit quietly and allow God to respond in the silence.

Closing

As you conclude your quiet time, take a moment to thank Jesus for His presence. Carry the peace and insights you've gained into your day. Remember, quiet time isn't just about the minutes spent in solitude; it's about developing a continual awareness of His presence in every moment of each day.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for inviting me into a deeper relationship with You. Help me to be still and recognize Your voice in the chaos of life. May my quiet times be filled with Your peace and guidance, and may I carry the love I receive from You into my interactions with others. Amen.

Conclusion

Spending quiet time with Jesus is a precious time that we can worship Him and express our love and thanksgiving to Him for all that He has done for us. Further still it essential for all of us to receive His guidance apart from all of the world's distractions. As you make it a regular part of your life, you'll find strength, direction, and a renewed sense of purpose. Remember that many times in those quiet moments , He reveals His greatness revelations and wisdom and invites you to abide and rest in His unfathomable love and goodness.

(82) Blessing God and Others:

Blessing in the Bible

Definition

A **blessing** is a declaration of favor, approval, or divine goodness—either spoken by God, bestowed by a person, or experienced as a result of obedience to God. In the Bible, blessings are both **spiritual and material**, and they originate from **God as the ultimate source**.

Hebrew Words (Old Testament)

1. בָּרַךְ(bārak) – To bless, to kneel, to show favor
   - Root verb meaning **"to bless"**, but also related to the idea of **kneeling**, symbolizing submission or reverence.
   - This word is used of God blessing people, people blessing God, and people blessing each other.

Examples:

- "The Lord bless (*bārak*) you and keep you..." – *Numbers 6:24*
- "Bless the Lord, O my soul..." – *Psalm 103:1* (blessing God in praise)

2. בְּרָכָה(berākhāh) – Blessing, gift, favor, benefit
   - Noun form, often refers to **a spoken blessing**, **prosperity**, **fertility**, or **God's provision**.

- Blessings are seen as **covenant benefits**—linked to obedience and faithfulness.

Example:

- "I will pour out a blessing (*berākhāh*) that there shall not be room enough to receive it." – *Malachi 3:10*

Greek Words (New Testament)

1. εὐλογέω (eulogeō) – To bless, to speak well of, to praise
   - From *eu* (well) and *logos* (word), literally means **"to speak well"** or **to declare favor**.
   - Used of both God blessing people and people blessing God or others.

Examples:

- "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..." – *Ephesians 1:3*
- "Bless those who persecute you; bless (***eulogeō***) and do not curse them." – *Romans 12:14*

2. εὐλογία (eulogia) – Blessing, benefit, praise
   - The noun form, used for both **spiritual blessings** and **generosity** (as in giving to others).

Example:

- "Every spiritual blessing (*eulogia*) in the heavenly places in Christ." – *Ephesians 1:3*

Types of Blessings in Scripture

1. Divine Blessings from God
   - Life, provision, peace, fruitfulness, spiritual favor
   - Examples: Genesis 12:2–3; Psalm 5:12; James 1:17
2. Spoken Blessings
   - Priestly blessing (Numbers 6:24–26)
   - Parental blessings (Genesis 27 – Isaac blesses Jacob)
3. Blessing Others
   - Jesus: "Bless those who curse you." – Luke 6:28
   - Giving generously (2 Corinthians 9:5–6)
4. Blessing God
   - Not giving something to God, but praising and exalting Him

- “Bless the Lord, O my soul...” – Psalm 103:1

5. Covenantal Blessings
    - Linked to obedience and faithfulness to God’s commands
    - Deuteronomy 28:1–14 outlines blessings for obedience

Biblical Themes of Blessing

- Blessing is rooted in relationship with God and others.
- **Spiritual blessings** in Christ surpass material ones (Ephesians 1:3).
- **Blessings are meant to be shared**, not hoarded (Genesis 12:2 “ –You will be a blessing”).
- **Jesus reverses the world’s idea of blessing**: the meek, poor in spirit, and persecuted are blessed (Matthew 5:3–12).

Introduction

Blessing both God and others is a deeply spiritual practice that reflects the heart of Jesus Christ and our faith, in worshipping God. It involves offering praise, gratitude, and goodwill to God, as well as extending kindness, encouragement, and support to others.

Blessing God

To **bless God** means to praise, honor, and give thanks to Him for His goodness, mercy, and grace. It is an acknowledgment of His greatness and a way to express love and reverence toward Him. The Bible frequently calls believers to bless the Lord, particularly in the Psalms:

- **Psalm 103:1** says, *"Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name."*
- **Psalm 34:1** says, *"I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth."*

Blessing God involves offering prayers of worship, acknowledging His sovereign role in our lives, and surrendering to His will. It**’**s not about giving something to God that He lacks but about recognizing His greatness and returning that love with worship and gratitude.

Blessing Others

To **bless others** in the Christian context is to extend God's love, grace, and favor toward them. This can take many forms—prayer, acts of kindness, encouragement, support, and speaking words of life and affirmation over others. Blessing others is about seeking the well-being of those around us, just as God seeks our well-being.

- **Numbers 6:24-26** contains the famous *Priestly Blessing*: *"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace."*

- **Matthew 5:44** teaches us to bless others, even those who may not treat us well: **“***But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”*

By blessing others, We reflect the heart of God, who desires us bless all people, in hopes that they might be saved and/or have a better life. This can involve showing love through actions or praying for others' physical, emotional, or spiritual needs. Jesus, in His life, frequently blessed others through His teachings, healing, and compassionate acts.

Blessing God and others is mentioned throughout Scripture, as a very essential aspect that we all as Christians, emulate in our daily walk . To bless means to speak well of, to show favor, or to bring about goodness and well-being. In the Bible, blessing is not only a verbal expression but also an action that reflects God's love, grace, and will for humanity. This commentary will explore the biblical understanding of blessing God and others, drawing upon key Scriptures to highlight its significance.

1. Blessing God

Blessing God begins with the acknowledgment of His greatness and goodness, to glorify Him with thanksgiving and appreciation. In Scripture, blessing God is a natural response to His greatness, faithfulness, and mercy. While God does not need our blessing, blessing Him aligns us with His purposes and reminds us of His sovereignty over all creation.

1.1 The Call to Bless God

The Psalms, especially, are full of exhortations to bless God. These exhortations are often found in the context of God's sovereignty, power, and goodness.

- **Psalm 34:1** (AKJV)— "I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. ."
    - This verse emphasizes the continuous nature of blessing God. It is not a one-time act but a lifelong commitment to recognizing God's goodness in every season of life.
- **Psalm 103:1-6** (AKJV)— "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. 2Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: 3Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases; 4Who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies; 5Who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle**’**s. 6The LORD executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. ."
    - Here, blessing God is an act of intentional remembrance. The Psalmist calls his soul to bless the Lord, urging himself to not forget God's countless benefits, including forgiveness, healing, redemption, and love.
- **Psalm 145:1-5 (AKJV)**— "I will extol you, my God, O king; and I will bless your name for ever and ever. 2Every day will I bless you; and I will praise your name for ever and ever. 3Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. 4One generation shall praise your works to another, and shall

declare your mighty acts. 5 I will speak of the glorious honor of your majesty, and of your wondrous works. ."

    - The emphasis on "forever and ever" highlights the eternal nature of God's worthiness to be praised. Blessing God is not just for a moment, but is a continuous expression of our relationship with Him.

1.2 The Purpose of Blessing God

Blessing God is an act of worship and reverence. It is an acknowledgment of His greatness and a declaration of our dependence on Him. By blessing God, we place ourselves in a posture of humility and gratitude, recognizing that all good things come from Him (James 1:17). Furthermore, our blessing God reflects our desire to honor and glorify Him, aligning our hearts with His divine will.

- **Revelation 4:11** (AKJV)— "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for you have created all things, and for your pleasure they are and were created.."
    - This passage reminds us that God alone is worthy of blessing because He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things.

2. Blessing Others

The Bible also speaks extensively about blessing others. Just as we are called to bless God, we are commanded to bless others, both believers and non-believers alike. To bless others is to speak words of encouragement, to act with kindness, and to desire the best for their well-being, following the example of God's love for us.

2.1 The Command to Bless Others

In the Old and New Testaments, God's people are repeatedly commanded to bless others. This command is rooted in God's covenant with His people and reflects His desire for His followers to be a blessing to the world.

- **Genesis 12:2-3** (AKJV)— "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing: 3And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you: and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed"
    - Here, God promises to bless Abraham not for his own sake alone but so that he might be a channel of blessing to others. This theme of being a conduit of blessing continues throughout Scripture.
- **Matthew 5:44** (AKJV)— "But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you;"
    - Jesus extends the command to bless others beyond those who are easy to love. We are called to bless even those who oppose us, showing them God's love and mercy through our actions and prayers.
- **Luke 6:28** (AKJV)— "Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which spitefully use you."

- Again, Jesus challenges His followers to bless those who do not deserve it, reflecting the grace and mercy God has shown us.

2.2 The Nature of Blessing Others

Blessing others in the biblical sense involves more than just speaking well of them; it encompasses actions that promote their well-being, peace, and spiritual growth. This includes offering forgiveness, showing kindness, praying for others, and helping meet their material needs.

- **Romans 12:14** (AKJV)— "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. ."
  - Blessing is closely tied to love and forgiveness. When we bless those who wrong us, we reflect the heart of God, who shows mercy even to His enemies.
- **Ephesians 4:29** (AKJV)— "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers."
  - Our words should be used to bless others, building them up and encouraging them, rather than tearing them down. This is especially important within the body of Christ, where mutual edification is a key component of our relationships.
- **1 Peter 3:9** -10 (AKJV) — "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that you are thereunto called, that you should inherit a blessing. 10For he that will love life, and see good days,…"
  - This passage reminds us that when we bless others, even in the face of mistreatment, we are participating in the call to be a blessing to the world. In doing so, we receive God's blessing in return.

2.3 The Results of Blessing

In addition to promoting the well-being of others, blessing others has spiritual influence upon our lives. To bless someone is to invoke God's favor on their lives. Just as God has blessed His people throughout Scripture, He calls us to be vessels of His blessings to others.

- **Numbers 6:24-26** (AKJV)— "The LORD bless you, and keep you: 25The LORD make his face shine on you, and be gracious to you: 26The LORD lift up his countenance on you, and give you peace. 27And they shall put my name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.."
  - This well-known blessing, known as the Aaronic Benediction, is a prayer for God's protection, grace, and peace to be upon the people of Israel. It serves as a model for how we can bless others with words that call upon God's favor.
- **Matthew 10:41** (AKJV)— "He that receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet**'**s reward; and he that receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man**'**s reward. ."

- Blessing others by receiving them in the name of the Lord opens the door for God's reward to flow into their lives.

3. Conclusion: The Call to Be a Blessing

The biblical call to bless God and others is foundational to the life of a disciple and follower of Jesus Christ. We bless God because He is worthy of all praise, and in doing so, we are reminded of His greatness and goodness. We bless others because it is God's will that His love and mercy be extended to everyone, regardless of their position or circumstance. Blessing others is a way to reflect God's nature, show kindness, and bring peace into a broken world.

In our daily lives, we are invited to live as vessels of blessing—first, blessing God through worship and praise, and second, blessing others through words, deeds, and prayers. As we do so, we participate in God's redemptive work in the world, becoming agents of His blessing to those around us.

Key Scriptures:

- Psalm 34:1-3
- Psalm 103:1-2
- Genesis 12:2-3
- Matthew 5:44
- Luke 6:28
- Romans 12:14
- Ephesians 4:29
- 1 Peter 3:9
- Numbers 6:24-26
- Revelation 4:11

In all things, we bless because we have first been blessed by God. May we continually seek to bless the Lord and be a blessing to those He has placed in our lives.

(83) Blessing is Better Than Cursing Others, Including Our Enemies:

Introduction

The Word of God, Jesus, consistently teaches that blessing others, including our enemies, is not only the right thing to do, but it reflects God's character and heart for reconciliation and mercy. Blessing is the antidote to hatred, division, and violence. It promotes peace, healing, and goodwill. In contrast, cursing—whether in word or action—

destroys relationships and brings about harm. This biblical principle is foundational to how we are called to live as followers of Christ.

1. The Biblical Command to Bless Our Enemies

While the world often encourages revenge or retaliation against those who harm us, Scripture takes a radically different approach. Jesus, in particular, calls His followers to bless, not curse, their enemies.

1.1 Jesus' Teachings on Blessing Enemies

- **Matthew 5:43-48 (AKJV)** — "You have heard that it has been said, You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy. 44But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you; 45That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46For if you love them which love you, what reward have you? do not even the publicans the same? 47And if you salute your brothers only, what do you more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.."
    - Jesus challenges conventional wisdom here by teaching that our love and care should extend beyond those who love us back. Loving and blessing our enemies is an expression of the kingdom of God, where grace and mercy triumph over judgment and revenge. Blessing is the ultimate sign of Christ-like love.
- **Luke 6:27-30 (AKJV)** — "But I say to you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, 28Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which spitefully use you. 29And to him that smites you on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that takes away your cloak forbid not to take your coat also. 30Give to every man that asks of you; and of him that takes away your goods ask them not again. 31And as you would that men should do to you, do you also to them likewise. 32For if you love them which love you, what thank have you? for sinners also love those that love them. 33And if you do good to them which do good to you, what thank have you? for sinners also do even the same. 34And if you lend to them of whom you hope to receive, what thank have you? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35But love you your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and you shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil. 36Be you therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. 37Judge not, and you shall not be judged: condemn not, and you shall not be condemned: forgive, and you shall be forgiven: 38Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you mete with it shall be measured to you again.."
    - In this passage, Jesus gives practical instructions on how we can bless those who harm us: by doing good to them, blessing them verbally, and praying for them. This is not just a theoretical teaching but a call to tangible, life-altering actions that reflect God's kingdom values.

1.2 The Power of Blessing Over Cursing

Blessing has the power to break the cycle of violence and hate. When we choose to bless instead of curse, we participate in God's redemptive work, allowing His peace and reconciliation to replace the enmity and division that the world often fosters.

- **Romans 12:14** (AKJV)— "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. ."
    - The apostle Paul echoes Jesus' teaching here, underscoring the importance of blessing those who harm us. When we bless those who oppose us, we refuse to retaliate and instead allow God to work through our response. Blessing becomes a testimony of God's power to transform hearts and situations.
- **Romans 12:17-21** (AKJV)— "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men. 19Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord. 20Therefore if your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head. 21Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."
    - In these verses, Paul provides a practical way to bless our enemies: by meeting their needs and doing good toward them. In doing so, we "overcome evil with good." The act of blessing becomes a form of resistance to the cycle of hatred and violence, offering the possibility of healing and reconciliation.

1.3 Blessing as a Reflection of God’s Nature

God**’**s nature is to bless, even those who are His enemies. This is clearly seen in the way God treats sinners and enemies of the cross, offering them grace and forgiveness rather than judgment.

- **Luke 23:34** (AKJV)— "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. '"
    - Even while being crucified by those who rejected Him, Jesus prays for His enemies, asking God to forgive them. This profound act of blessing in the face of hatred models the kind of blessing believers are called to extend to others.
- **Romans 5:10** (AKJV)— "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."
    - Here, Paul reminds us that we were once enemies of God, yet He chose to bless us through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. This ultimate act of blessing should compel us to bless others, even those who may be hostile toward us.

2. The Danger of Cursing and Retaliation

The Bible repeatedly warns against the temptation to repay evil with evil, as it leads to further destruction and division.

2.1 Cursing Harms Relationships and Leads to Conflict

- **James 3:9-10** (AKJV)— "Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. 10Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not so to be.."
    - James teaches that our words have the power to either bless or curse, and he warns that cursing others—especially those made in God**'**s image—contradicts the nature of Christian faith. Cursing fosters division and prevents healing, while blessing brings unity and peace.
- **Proverbs 18:21** AKJV)— "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."
    - The words we speak have power. When we curse others, we invite harm and destruction into our lives and relationships. But when we speak blessings, we cultivate life, peace, and reconciliation.

2.2 Cursing Is a Cycle of Revenge and Destruction

Cursing often perpetuates a cycle of anger and retaliation that only escalates conflict. When we respond to harm with cursing or revenge, we keep the cycle of hurt going. But blessing can break that cycle.

- **Proverbs 25:21-22** (AKJV)— "If your enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: 22For you shall heap coals of fire on his head, and the LORD shall reward you.
    - This passage highlights the power of showing kindness to our enemies. While the "heaping coals" imagery may suggest a kind of conviction or discomfort for the enemy, the main point is that blessing—offering food, water, and kindness—can lead to their heart being softened and potentially reconciled.

3. The Example of Christ and the Early Church

Jesus and the early church offer powerful examples of blessing over cursing. In each case, the act of blessing was not just about avoiding harm, but about intentionally doing good and pursuing reconciliation.

3.1 Jesus' Example of Blessing His Persecutors

- **1 Peter 2:21-23** (AKJV)— "For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps: 22Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judges righteously: "
    - Jesus **'**life exemplifies the practice of blessing others, especially those who persecuted Him. He did not retaliate with curses or threats, but entrusted Himself to God, who is the ultimate judge. This is the model for how we are

to respond to mistreatment—with trust in God's justice and a commitment to blessing.

3.2 The Early Church's Practice of Blessing

The early Christians also followed this teaching. They faced persecution, yet they responded with prayer, blessing, and love toward their enemies.

- **Acts 7:59-60** (AKJV)— "And they stoned Stephen, calling on God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.."
    - As Stephen was martyred, he echoed the words of Jesus on the cross, asking God to forgive those who were killing him. This is a powerful example of blessing in the face of intense opposition and violence.

4. Conclusion: The Call to Bless, Not Curse

The biblical command to bless rather than curse is a call to imitate the heart of God, who has shown mercy and grace to us, even when we were His enemies. Jesus 'teachings, the example of His life, and the instructions of the apostles all point to the radical, countercultural truth that blessing others—especially our enemies—is the way of peace, reconciliation, and life.

When we bless those who curse us, we break the cycle of hatred and violence. We reflect the character of God and testify to the world that there is a better way—a way of love, mercy, and redemption.

May we, empowered by the Holy Spirit, be a people who choose blessing over cursing, loving over hating, and peace over conflict, as we follow in the footsteps of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Key Scriptures:

- **Matthew 5:43-44** (Love and bless your enemies)
- **Luke 6:27-28** (Bless those who curse you)
- **Romans 12:14** (Bless those who persecute you)
- **Romans 12:17-21** (Overcome evil with good)
- **James 3:9-10** (Blessing and cursing cannot come from the same mouth)
- **Proverbs 18:21** (The power of the tongue)
- **1 Peter 2:21-23** (Christ's example of blessing in suffering)
- **Acts 7:59-60** (Stephen's prayer for his persecutors)

(84) Believing in the Promises of God and His Word:

The Promises of God

Definition

A promise of God is a declaration of His will and intention to act in accordance with His character—bringing blessing, judgment, protection, provision, salvation, or guidance. God's promises are always **true, reliable, and grounded in His unchanging nature**.

"God is not a man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it?" – *Numbers 23:19*

Original Language Words

Hebrew – דָּבָר(*dābār*)

- Meaning: Word, statement, declaration, promise
- God's spoken word is binding and powerful.
- "Not one word (*dābār*) has failed of all his good promise…" – *1 Kings 8:56*

Greek – ἐπαγγελία (*epangelia*)

- Meaning: A promise, assurance, divine pledge
- Used frequently in the New Testament for God's covenantal and redemptive promises.
- "For all the promises (*epangeliai*) of God find their Yes in him [Christ]…" – *2 Corinthians 1:20*

Characteristics of God's Promises

1. True and Trustworthy
    - "The Lord is faithful to all His promises." – *Psalm 145:13*
2. Based on His Character
    - God's promises reflect His faithfulness, mercy, justice, and love.
3. Unconditional or Conditional
    - *Unconditional:* Promises that depend solely on God (e.g., Noahic covenant – Genesis 9:11).
    - *Conditional:* Linked to obedience or faith (e.g., Deuteronomy 28).
4. Fulfilled in Christ
    - "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes 'in Christ." – *2 Corinthians 1:20*

Categories of God's Promises in Scripture

1. Salvation

- “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” – *Romans 10:13*
- “Whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” – *John 3:16*

2. Presence and Peace
   - “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” – *Hebrews 13:5*
   - “You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast.” – *Isaiah 26:3*
3. Provision
   - “My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory.” – *Philippians 4:19*
   - “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” – *Psalm 23:1*
4. Guidance
   - “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go.” – *Psalm 32:8*
   - “Trust in the Lord… and He will direct your paths.” – *Proverbs 3:5–6*
5. Forgiveness
   - “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us.” – *1 John 1:9*
6. Victory and Strength
   - “No weapon formed against you shall prosper.” – *Isaiah 54:17*
   - “Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.” – *Isaiah 40:31*
7. Eternal Life
   - “And this is the promise He made to us—eternal life.” – *1 John 2:25*

Examples of God’s Promises Fulfilled

- **To Abraham**“ – I will make you a great nation” (Genesis 12:2). Fulfilled in Israel and through Christ.
- **To Israel** – Deliverance from Egypt, entrance into the Promised Land (Joshua 21:45).
- **To David** – A lasting kingdom through his offspring (2 Samuel 7:12–16), fulfilled in Jesus (Luke 1:32–33).
- **To the Church** – The Holy Spirit as a promised Helper (Acts 1:4–5; John 14:16–17).

How Believers Should Respond to God's Promises

1. Believe Them by Faith
   - “Being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised.” – *Romans 4:21*
2. Hold Fast in Hope

- “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” – *Hebrews 10:23*

3. Obey and Walk in Alignment
    - Some promises are tied to obedience, righteousness, or waiting on the Lord.
4. Pray with Confidence
    - God’s promises can form the foundation of bold, faith-filled prayer (1 John 5:14–15).

Introduction

One of the most profound aspects of the Christian faith is our belief in God**’**s promises and the trust that His Word is true and reliable. Throughout Scripture, God makes promises to His people—promises of blessing, protection, provision, salvation, and eternal life. To believe in God's promises is to trust in His character, His faithfulness, and His ability to fulfill every word He has spoken. This belief is foundational to the life of every believer, providing hope, strength, and confidence in God's ongoing work in our lives.

This commentary will explore the biblical concept of believing in the promises of God, examining what it means to trust His Word, why it is important, and how we can live by those promises.

1. The Nature of God's Promises

God's promises are not like human promises, which can be broken or fail. God's promises are certain, unwavering, and unchangeable because they are rooted in His perfect nature and character. When God makes a promise, it is a declaration of His will, and He is fully capable of bringing it to pass.

1.1 God's Promises Are Based on His Character

- **Numbers 23:19** (AKJV)— "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: has he said, and shall he not do it? or has he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"
    - This verse highlights that God is trustworthy. Unlike human beings, who may fail to keep their promises, God is faithful to fulfill every word He speaks. His character is perfect, and His promises are guaranteed because He is unchanging and true.
- **2 Corinthians 1:20** (AKJV)— "For all the promises of God in him are yes, and in him Amen, to the glory of God by us.."
    - Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of God**’**s promises. Every promise made by God in the Old Testament finds its ultimate fulfillment in Christ. Through Him, we can say **“**Amen” to God**’**s promises, affirming that God**’**s Word is true and reliable.

1.2 God's Promises Are Given for Our Good

God makes promises to bless His people, guide them, and ultimately bring them into eternal fellowship with Him. His promises are a reflection of His love, care, and desire to see His people prosper spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

- **Jeremiah 29:11** (AKJV)— "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."
    - Even in the midst of exile and hardship, God assures His people that His plans are for their ultimate good. This promise is a reminder that God is always working for our well-being, even when circumstances seem difficult.
- **Romans 8:28-30** (AKJV) — "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."
    - This verse reveals that God's promises extend to our daily lives, assuring us that every situation, no matter how challenging, is ultimately for our good and His glory.

2. The Importance of Believing in God's Promises

To believe in God's promises is to live in confidence, knowing that God's Word is true, and that He will never fail to do what He has said He will do. Faith in God's promises is central to our relationship with Him, because it demonstrates trust in His power and faithfulness.

2.1 Belief in God’s Promises Strengthens Our Faith

Faith is built on the assurance that God's promises will come to pass. Believing in what God has said—even when we cannot see immediate evidence of it—strengthens our trust in His timing and His sovereignty.

- **Hebrews 11:1** (AKJV)— "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. "
    - Faith involves trusting in the promises of God, even when circumstances seem contrary. The people of faith in Hebrews 11 acted on God's promises, even when they had not yet seen the fulfillment of those promises.
- **Romans 4:20-21** (AKJV)— "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.."
    - Abraham’s example is a powerful demonstration of how belief in God’s promises strengthens our faith. Abraham trusted that God could fulfill His promises, even when it seemed impossible. This is the kind of faith we are called to have.

2.2 Believing in God's Promises Brings Peace and Hope

When we trust in God's promises, we experience a deep peace, knowing that God is in control and will fulfill His Word. Belief in His promises anchors our souls and gives us hope, especially in times of trial or uncertainty.

- **Isaiah 26:3-4** (AKJV)— "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you: because he trusts in you. 4Trust you in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:"
    - Trusting in God’s promises brings peace. When our minds are fixed on God’s faithfulness and His ability to deliver on His promises, we experience a peace that transcends our circumstances.
- **Romans 15:13** (AKJV)— "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."
    - Believing in God's promises results in joy, peace, and hope. When we trust that God will do what He has promised, our hearts are filled with anticipation and confidence, no matter what we face.

3. How to Live by God's Promises

Living by God’s promises involves not only believing in them but also applying them in our daily lives. We are called to trust God’s Word and live according to His instructions, knowing that He will provide, guide, and fulfill His promises in His time.

3.1 Trusting God’s Timing

God’s promises are often given in His perfect timing, which may differ from our own desires or expectations. Part of living by God’s promises involves trusting that He will bring about His promises at the right time.

- **Psalm 27:14** (AKJV)— "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart: wait, I say, on the LORD!”
    - Patience is a key aspect of living by God's promises. We must trust that He knows what is best for us and that He will fulfill His promises when the time is right.
- **Habakkuk 2:3** (AKJV)— "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."
    - This verse teaches that God’s promises, though sometimes delayed, will surely come to pass. Waiting is an act of faith, trusting in God's perfect timing.

3.2 Praying and Believing God’s Promises as He wills

We are invited to pray and believe God’s promises by faith, as He wills and further “How” and “When” He wills, for perfect reasons and far better results than our expectations and limited understanding. Prayer is the way we communicate with God, expressing our trust in His Word and seeking His help in fulfilling His promises.

- **2 Corinthians 1:20** (AKJV)— "For all the promises of God in him are yes, and in him Amen, to the glory of God by us.."

    - In Christ, all of God's promises are confirmed. When we pray and claim God's promises in faith, we are aligning ourselves with God's will, trusting that He will fulfill His Word.
- **Matthew 7:7** (AKJV)— "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you:."
    - Jesus encourages us to actively seek God's promises through prayer. When we ask in faith, we position ourselves to receive the fulfillment of God's promises in our lives.

4. Examples of Faith in God's Promises

Scripture is filled with examples of individuals who trusted in God**'**s promises and saw them fulfilled. These stories serve as models for our own faith and belief in God's Word.

4.1 The Faith of Abraham

- **Romans 4:18-22** (AKJV)— "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall your seed be. 19And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah**'**s womb: 20He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.."
    - Abraham**'**s unwavering faith in God**'**s promise of a son, despite the impossibility of his circumstances, is a powerful testimony of trusting in God's promises.

4.2 The Faith of the Israelites

- **Joshua 21:45** (AKJV)— "There failed not anything of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel; all came to pass."
    - The faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promises to the Israelites serves as a reminder that God always keeps His Word. His promises to His people—both then and now—are reliable and true.

5. Conclusion: Living in Confidence in God's Promises

Believing in the promises of God and His Word is a cornerstone of the Christian faith. It is through belief in God's promises that we find peace, hope, and strength for the journey ahead. God's promises are sure and unchanging, and His Word is the firm foundation upon which we build our lives. When we trust in His promises, we are reminded of His goodness,

(85) Trusting In God:

Trust in the Bible

Definition

Trust in Scripture means a deep reliance on the character, promises, and power of God. It involves **confidence**, **dependence**, and **commitment** to God—often in the absence of visible answers. Trust is not passive; it is a firm, active faith.

Hebrew Words (Old Testament)

1. בָּטַח(bāṭaḥ) – To trust, feel secure, be confident
   - Refers to putting full confidence in someone or something, often contrasted with fear or self-reliance.
   - It implies **bold, unwavering security** in God's protection and faithfulness.

Examples:

- "Trust (*bāṭaḥ*) in the Lord with all your heart…" – *Proverbs 3:5*
- "Some trust in chariots… but we trust in the name of the Lord our God." – *Psalm 20:7*

2. חָסָה(ḥāsāh) – To take refuge, to seek shelter
   - Often translated as "trust," especially in poetic passages.
   - Picture of **finding shelter** in God's protection like a bird under wings or a person fleeing into a stronghold.

Examples:

- "Blessed are all who take refuge (*ḥāsāh*) in Him." – *Psalm 2:12*
- "In the shadow of your wings I will take refuge…" – *Psalm 57:1*

Greek Words (New Testament)

1. πίστις (pistis) – Faith, trust, belief
   - While commonly translated "faith," it often includes the idea of **trusting commitment**—a belief that leads to dependence.
   - Trust in God through Christ is a central theme in the New Testament.

Example:

- "The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith (*pistis*) in the Son of God..." – *Galatians 2:20*

2. πέποιθα (pepoitha) – I am confident, I trust firmly
   - A perfect tense verb showing **settled confidence** or deep assurance.
   - Paul often uses it to express confidence in God's work and character.

Example:

- "I am confident (*pepoitha*) of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion…" – *Philippians 1:6*

What Trust Looks Like in Scripture

1. Reliance on God's Character
   - God is trustworthy because He is faithful, good, unchanging, and true.
   - “Those who know your name put their trust in you.” – *Psalm 9:10*
2. Not Leaning on Self
   - Trust means abandoning self-reliance.
   - “Lean not on your own understanding…” – *Proverbs 3:5*
3. Confidence in Times of Uncertainty
   - Trust is often tested in trials and suffering.
   - “When I am afraid, I will trust in You.” – *Psalm 56:3*
4. Obedience That Flows From Trust
   - Trust is seen in action—waiting, obeying, surrendering.
   - “Abraham believed God…” – *Romans 4:3*

Examples of Trust in the Bible

- **Abraham** – Trusted God’s promise against all odds (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:18–22)
- **David** – Repeatedly trusted God for protection and deliverance (Psalm 27; Psalm 56)
- **Job** – Maintained trust in God’s sovereignty amid suffering (Job 13:15)
- **Jesus** – Entrusted Himself to the Father even unto death (Luke 23:46; 1 Peter 2:23)

Reflection

To **trust in God** is to rest in His sovereignty and goodness, even when we don't understand the outcome. It's a quiet surrender that produces peace, confidence, and obedience. In a world of uncertainty, trust anchors the soul.

“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.” – *Isaiah 26:3*

" In God We Trust;" This motto should not be written on money, (As USA does) but rather it should be inscribed on our very hearts. Every Christian should purpose in their mind and heart to fully rely on and put their confidence in God, in His abilities, and in His faithfulness. With all assurance, we should completely rest our minds, and lives, upon God's strength, love, wisdom, justice, mercy, truth, integrity and protection; and commit all of our plans and problems into His hands through prayer.

Some men trust in earthly riches, some trust in human power and knowledge. Yet all human efforts and abilities will most certainly fail at one time or another, because of their imperfect nature, however as we put our trust in God, all of our burdens and troubles

seem to pass away, and godly peace will fill our heart. God is perfect and as we put our trust in Him, we will have perfect success.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Proverbs 3:5,6 (AKJV)- "Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not to your own understanding. 6In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths.."

Psalm 28:7 (AKJV)- " The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoices; and with my song will I praise him. "

Psalm 20:7- (AKJV) Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

Psalm 13:5,6- (AKJV) But I have trusted in your mercy; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. 6 I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

Psalm 25:1-3- (AKJV) To you, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. 2O my God, I trust in you: let me not be ashamed, let not my enemies triumph over me. 3Yes, let none that wait on you be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

Psalm 37:3-6 -(AKJV) Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and truly you shall be fed. 4Delight yourself also in the LORD: and he shall give you the desires of your heart. 5Commit your way to the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. 6And he shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday.

(86) Trusting and having Faith In God and Jesus Christ:

In the midst of our daily trials, it is sometimes hard to trust God; We begin to worry and even become angry when our needs are not met in the ways that we have determined best. Rather we should understand and believe, that God's timing and His way of answering our prayers, far exceeds our expectations and is perfect according to His plan. As we further reflect on God's faithfulness towards others in the past and today, it is those testimonies of Jesus Christ that encourage us, and strengthen us to trust God, so that we can overcome the trial by God's Spirit, and receive the actual blessing that God intended.

Trusting in God is not a mere sentiment but a profound reliance on the unchanging character and promises of Almighty God, an anchor steadfast in Jesus Christ as we go through life's unpredictable situations, trials and tribulations.

(87) Trusting God in Decision Making:

Correct and good decisions comes from yielding our mind, body, and spirit over to God, to fully trust in Him, by following His word and the direction of His Holy Spirit over our own reasoning.

When we are seeking direction for our lives or making certain critical decisions, too often we remain stagnating as we are and lose hope and faith because we base our thoughts and actions solely on our own limited human understanding and abilities. The results will always fall short of where God desires us to be or receive from from Him. In Proverbs 3:5-6 God's Word advises us to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." As we entrust our lives in God with all of our heart, we will be exactly where God wants us to be in His perfect timing, and receive anything that God wills for us to have or attain. By trusting in God, we rely on God who's wisdom and abilities surpasses human comprehension and logic.

Now as we encounter various problems, trials and tribulations we should not be discouraged nor lose hope or faith because God knows how to change everything around for good for those who love Him. Romans 8:28 states "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." This verse serves as a comforting assurance for those who love God that beyond every twist and turn in life, beyond every hardship, or bad circumstance, God will purposefully and eventually make all things right.

Trusting in the sovereign rule and power of God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is essential in order to spiritually succeed in God's plan and calling for our lives, rather than trusting just in ourselves or others. Jeremiah 29:11 declares, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." This promise becomes a compass guiding believers through the unknown, assuring them that God has a divine good plan even though we don't recognize it when we are in a particular troubling event. God has a better future for us and a hope that does not disappoints, as we Trust in Him.

Trust is not a passive resignation but an active reliance on God's promises. Adversity often tests the authenticity of trust.

In the face of challenges, we should always put our trust in God and give careful attention to His instructions; For in so doing we will blessed and prosper in the way God's knows best, not always in the way that we wanted, but far greater for concerned. In Proverbs 16:20 God's Word says: "Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord."

Daily problems and challenging troubles will come in this fallen world, however we should not worry, nor be dismayed, and overwhelmed. Guard your mind and heart from anxiety by leaning on Jesus Christ. God assures us as we put our trust in Him and His provisions, it is sufficient just to focus in what the day brings and what God gives us for that day and not be overly concerned about tomorrow. Worrying accomplishes nothing nor produces anything, just be patient, pray, follow God and His Word, and trust in Him; by so doing God will help us and bring the appropriate solution in His way and in His timing along with a peace that surpasses all understanding.

Matthew 6:25-34. "Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

Philippines 4:6 and 7 " Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God,

which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

(88) BIBLICAL EXAMPLES Of Trusting and having Faith In God and Jesus Christ:

One striking example is found in the life of Joseph, whose story unfolds in Genesis. Sold into slavery by his own brothers, falsely accused and imprisoned, Joseph's journey epitomizes the resilience of trust in God amid adversity. Despite the hardships, Joseph maintained his faith, eventually rising to a position of great influence and providing for his family during a severe famine. His words to his brothers in Genesis 50:20 encapsulate the redemptive power of trust: "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good."

Another poignant illustration is the story of Job, a man who experienced the loss of family, wealth, and health. Job's unwavering trust in God shines through his profound statement in Job 13:15, "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him." Job's circumstances teaches that trust is not contingent on a life free from adversity but is a steadfast anchor amid life's storms.

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul becomes a compelling example of trusting God through trials. Despite enduring imprisonments, beatings, and various hardships, Paul writes in Philippians 4:12-13, "I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Paul's life demonstrates that trust in God empowers believers to navigate the highs and lows with unwavering faith.

The journey of the Israelites through the wilderness is a collective narrative of trust amid uncertainty. From the parting of the Red Sea to the provision of manna, their story attests to God's faithfulness even when the path seemed obscured. Deuteronomy 31:8 encapsulates this theme: "It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."

The ultimate example of trust in the face of adversity is Jesus Himself. In the Garden of Gethsemane, facing the impending agony of the cross, Jesus prayed, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). Jesus' trust in the Father's plan, even unto death, became the cornerstone of redemption for humanity.

These biblical examples resonate across generations, offering a timeless testimony that trusting God through difficult times is not only a commendable virtue but a transformative attitude that shapes the narrative of our faith in Jesus Christ.

As these men and women whom are recorded in the Bible, leaned on the steadfast character of God, believers today are encouraged and learn to anchor their trust also in God, finding hope, strength and answers in the midst of life's storms.

1. Noah - Genesis 6:22; 7:5

Noah trusted God's word and built the ark, demonstrating unwavering faith amid a world filled with skepticism and impending judgment.

2. Abraham - Genesis 15:6; Hebrews 11:8-12

Abraham's trust in God's promise led him to leave his homeland and believe in the birth of a son in his old age, becoming the father of many nations.

3. Moses' Parents - Exodus 2:2-3; Hebrews 11:23

The parents of Moses defied Pharaoh's order to kill male infants, trusting God's protection for their child who would later lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

4. Joshua and Caleb - Numbers 13:30; 14:6-9

Amid the negative report of the spies, Joshua and Caleb trusted God's ability to give them victory in the Promised Land, despite the giants in their way.

5. Gideon - Judges 7:15-22; Hebrews 11:32-34

Gideon's trust in God's guidance allowed him to lead a small army against a vast enemy, resulting in a miraculous victory.

6. Ruth - Ruth 1:16-17

Ruth's trust in the God of Israel led her to remain loyal to her mother-in-law, Naomi, and embrace a new life in a foreign land.

7. David - 1 Samuel 17:37; Psalm 23

David's trust in God empowered him to face Goliath and navigate the challenges of kingship, as expressed in his psalms.

8. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego - Daniel 3:16-18

These three young men trusted God in the face of a fiery furnace, declaring their allegiance to the Lord regardless of the consequences.

9. Daniel - Daniel 6:10; Hebrews 11:33-34

Daniel's trust in God led him to defy the king's decree and continue praying, resulting in God's miraculous deliverance from the lion's den.

10. Esther - Esther 4:16

Esther trusted God's providence as she approached the king to intercede for the Jewish people, risking her own life for their salvation.

11. Mary, the Mother of Jesus - Luke 1:38

Mary's humble acceptance of God's plan, despite societal expectations, showcased profound trust in God's purpose for her life.

12. The Centurion - Matthew 8:5-13

The centurion demonstrated extraordinary faith, trusting Jesus' authority to heal his servant even without a physical presence.

13. The Woman with the Issue of Blood - Mark 5:25-34

Her trust in Jesus' healing power led her to touch the hem of His garment, resulting in instantaneous healing.

14. The Apostle Paul - 2 Timothy 1:12; Acts 20:24

Paul's life exemplifies unwavering trust in God amid persecution, shipwrecks, and various trials, declaring, "I know whom I have believed."

These examples span the Old and New Testaments, showcasing a diverse tapestry of individuals who, in different circumstances, entrusted their lives to the faithful character of God.

15. Job - Job 1:21; 13:15

Job, in the midst of intense suffering, demonstrated trust in God's sovereignty and declared, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

16. The Apostles Facing Persecution - Acts 5:41-42; 16:25

The apostles rejoiced and prayed amidst persecution, trusting God's plan even when faced with imprisonment and beatings.

17. Stephen - Acts 7:59-60

Even as he faced martyrdom, Stephen trusted God, forgiving those who stoned him and committing his spirit into the hands of the Lord.

18. The Philippian Jailer - Acts 16:30-34

The jailer, in the midst of a crisis, trusted Paul and Silas' message, leading to his conversion and the salvation of his household.

19. Lydia - Acts 16:14-15

Lydia's heart was opened by the Lord to respond to Paul's message, demonstrating trust in God's leading toward faith.

20. Timothy - 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15

Timothy's trust in the teachings of his mother and the Scriptures equipped him to serve faithfully in the midst of challenges.

21. The Woman Caught in Adultery - John 8:1-11

Jesus' response to the woman caught in adultery showcased mercy and forgiveness, inviting her to trust in His transformative power.

22. The Blind Man - John 9:25

The man born blind, healed by Jesus, stood firm in his testimony, demonstrating trust in the One who gave him sight.

23. The Samaritan Woman - John 4:28-30, 39-42

The Samaritan woman's encounter with Jesus led her to trust Him as the Messiah, becoming an influential witness in her community.

24. The Leper - Mark 1:40-42

The leper trusted Jesus' ability to heal, saying, "If you are willing, you can make me clean," and Jesus responded with compassion.

25. Cornelius - Acts 10:1-48

Cornelius, a Roman centurion, trusted God's guidance, leading to his conversion and the recognition of Gentiles receiving salvation.

These biblical examples illustrate diverse situations in which individuals placed their trust in God, demonstrating that faith is not a passive belief but an active reliance on God's character and promises. From Old Testament patriarchs to New Testament believers, the Bible provides a rich tapestry of faith in action, encouraging Christians to trust God in every circumstance of life.

26. Paul's Thorn in the Flesh - 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Paul, facing a thorn in the flesh, trusted God's grace to be sufficient, teaching us the strength found in relying on God in weakness.

27. The Centurion's Faith - Matthew 8:5-13

The centurion displayed remarkable trust, acknowledging Jesus' authority over sickness and recognizing the power of His spoken word.

28. The Woman with the Issue of Blood - Mark 5:25-34

In desperation, the woman with the issue of blood trusted in the healing power of Jesus, reaching out to touch His garment and receiving restoration.

29. Elijah at the Brook Cherith - 1 Kings 17:2-6

During a drought, Elijah trusted God's provision at the brook Cherith, where ravens brought him bread and meat each morning and evening.

30. Paul and Silas in Prison - Acts 16:22-26

Despite being imprisoned, Paul and Silas trusted God, praying and singing hymns, leading to a miraculous earthquake and their eventual release.

31. David's Trust in God's Protection - Psalm 23:1-4

David, the shepherd-king, expressed profound trust in God's care and guidance, portraying the Lord as a shepherd leading His flock.

32. Hannah's Faith in God's Answered Prayer - 1 Samuel 1:9-20

Hannah, facing barrenness, trusted in God's ability to answer her prayer for a child, dedicating her son Samuel to the Lord.

33. The Faithful Three in the Fiery Furnace - Daniel 3:13-30

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego trusted God's deliverance even in the face of a fiery furnace, exemplifying unwavering faith.

34. Paul's Shipwreck - Acts 27:21-26, 41-44

In the midst of a storm and shipwreck, Paul trusted God's promise of safety, assuring the crew and passengers of God's providential care.

35. The Widow's Offering - Mark 12:41-44

The widow, with only two small coins, trusted God's provision, offering her all, and Jesus commended her sacrificial faith.

36. Abraham's Faith in God's Promise - Genesis 12:1-4; 15:1-6; 21:1-7

Abraham, known as the father of faith, trusted in God's promise of descendants even when circumstances seemed impossible due to old age.

37. The Israelites Crossing the Red Sea - Exodus 14:21-31

Trapped between the Red Sea and pursuing Egyptian forces, the Israelites trusted God's miraculous intervention, and the sea parted for their escape.

38. Gideon's Trust in God's Guidance - Judges 6:11-16; 7:1-25

Gideon, though initially hesitant, trusted God's guidance and led a victorious army against the Midianites with only a small group of men.

39. The Healing of Naaman - 2 Kings 5:1-14

Naaman, a commander with leprosy, trusted God's unconventional healing method through Elisha, dipping seven times in the Jordan River and being cleansed.

40. Esther's Courageous Trust - Esther 4:10-17

Queen Esther, facing a perilous situation, trusted God's guidance and chose to risk her life to save her people from destruction.

41. The Feeding of the Five Thousand - Matthew 14:13-21

In a remote place, Jesus' disciples trusted Him to provide food for the multitude, and with five loaves and two fish, He miraculously fed thousands.

42. Jehoshaphat's Trust in God's Victory - 2 Chronicles 20:1-30

Facing a vast enemy alliance, Jehoshaphat trusted God's promise of victory, leading the people in worship, and witnessing God's intervention.

43. Elisha's Floating Axe Head - 2 Kings 6:1-7

When an axe head fell into the water, Elisha's trust in God's power led to the miraculous floating of the axe head, demonstrating divine provision.

44. The Faith of the Canaanite Woman - Matthew 15:21-28

A Canaanite woman trusted Jesus for the healing of her demon-possessed daughter, showcasing unwavering faith even in the face of cultural barriers.

45. Mary's Surrender to God's Plan - Luke 1:26-38

Mary, chosen to bear the Messiah, trusted God's extraordinary plan, responding with humility and submission to become the mother of Jesus.

46. Paul and Silas in Prison - Acts 16:16-40

Paul and Silas, imprisoned for their faith, trusted God through prayer and praise, resulting in a miraculous earthquake and the salvation of their jailer.

47. Peter's Release from Prison - Acts 12:1-19

Peter, imprisoned by King Herod, experienced divine intervention as an angel freed him, highlighting the power of trusting God in dire situations.

48. Job's Endurance Through Trials - Job 1:13-22; 2:7-10; 42:10-17

Job, facing immense suffering, maintained his trust in God's sovereignty, ultimately experiencing restoration and blessings.

49. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the Fiery Furnace - Daniel 3:8-30

These three friends, facing execution for refusing to worship a golden image, trusted God's deliverance and emerged unharmed from the fiery furnace.

50. The Widow's Offering - Mark 12:41-44

A poor widow's sacrificial offering demonstrated trust in God's provision, drawing Jesus' attention and praise for her faith.

51. Jesus Calming the Storm - Mark 4:35-41

In the midst of a storm, Jesus' disciples trusted Him to calm the sea, revealing His authority over nature and the importance of faith in challenging times.

52. The Healing of the Paralytic - Mark 2:1-12

Friends of a paralyzed man demonstrated trust in Jesus' healing power by lowering him through the roof, leading to both physical and spiritual restoration.

53. The Woman with the Issue of Blood - Mark 5:25-34

A woman suffering from a chronic condition trusted Jesus' ability to heal and, through touching His garment, experienced immediate restoration.

54. The Centurion's Faith - Matthew 8:5-13

A Roman centurion displayed remarkable faith, trusting Jesus to heal his servant even from a distance, prompting admiration from Jesus Himself.

55. The Blind Bartimaeus - Mark 10:46-52

Blind Bartimaeus, hearing about Jesus, trusted in His ability to restore sight, persistently calling out for mercy and receiving miraculous healing.

56. The Healing of the Leper - Mark 1:40-45

A leper approached Jesus with trust, believing in His ability to heal, and experienced both physical healing and spiritual transformation.

57. The Canaanite Official's Faith - John 4:46-54

A royal official, desperate for his son's healing, trusted Jesus' words and witnessed the miraculous recovery of his son without Jesus physically being present.

58. Jesus Feeding the Four Thousand - Mark 8:1-10

In a remote area, Jesus' compassion led Him to feed a large crowd with a few loaves and fish, emphasizing the importance of trusting in His provision.

59. The Healing of the Demon-Possessed Boy - Mark 9:14-29

A father, desperate for his son's deliverance, trusted Jesus' power over evil spirits and received healing through faith.

60. The Samaritan Woman at the Well - John 4:1-42

The Samaritan woman encountered Jesus at the well, trusted in His revelation of living water, and became a witness to her entire community.

61. The Woman Caught in Adultery - John 8:1-11

A woman caught in adultery found forgiveness and grace from Jesus, illustrating the transformative power of trusting in His mercy.

62. The Healing of the Ten Lepers - Luke 17:11-19

Ten lepers trusted Jesus for healing and cleansing, but only one returned to express gratitude, emphasizing the importance of trusting and giving thanks.

63. The Widow's Son Raised by Jesus - Luke 7:11-17

A widow grieving her son's death witnessed Jesus' compassion and trusted in His authority, experiencing the miraculous resurrection of her son.

64. The Rich Young Ruler - Mark 10:17-22

A wealthy young man, seeking eternal life, struggled to fully trust Jesus by letting go of his possessions, highlighting the challenges of genuine surrender.

65. The Conversion of Zacchaeus - Luke 19:1-10

Zacchaeus, a despised tax collector, trusted Jesus' transformative power, leading to both his salvation and a commitment to restitution.

66. The Woman with the Alabaster Jar - Matthew 26:6-13

A woman poured expensive perfume on Jesus, trusting in His worthiness, and received commendation for her sacrificial act of worship.

67. The Healing of the Man Born Blind - John 9:1-41

Jesus healed a man blind from birth, illustrating the transformative power of trusting in the Light of the World for both physical and spiritual sight.

68. The Healing of the Hemorrhaging Woman - Luke 8:43-48

A woman with a prolonged bleeding issue trusted in Jesus' healing power, reaching out to touch His garment and experiencing immediate restoration.

69. The Prodigal Son - Luke 15:11-32

The prodigal son, after squandering his inheritance, trusted in his father's mercy and returned home to a loving and forgiving reception.

70. The Faithful Centurion - Luke 7:1-10

Another account of a centurion, this time seeking healing for his servant, displayed exemplary faith, trusting in Jesus' authority over sickness.

71. The Blind and Mute Man Healed - Matthew 12:22-23

A man possessed by a demon and rendered blind and mute found deliverance through Jesus, emphasizing the importance of trusting in His authority.

72. The Feeding of the Five Thousand - Matthew 14:13-21

In a miraculous provision, Jesus fed five thousand men, along with women and children, showcasing the abundance that results from trusting in His care.

73. Paul's Shipwreck - Acts 27:13-44

Amidst a perilous storm, Paul, a prisoner on a ship, trusted in God's promise of safety, encouraging others to trust in God's plan despite challenging circumstances.

74. Abraham's Trust in God's Promise - Genesis 22:1-19

Abraham's obedience to sacrifice Isaac demonstrated profound trust in God's promise of descendants, leading to God's provision of a ram for sacrifice.

75. Moses and the Red Sea - Exodus 14:1-31

Moses and the Israelites, trapped between the pursuing Egyptians and the Red Sea, trusted in God's miraculous intervention for their deliverance.

76. Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath - 1 Kings 17:8-16

Elijah, sent by God to a widow during a severe famine, demonstrated the trustworthiness of relying on God's provision even in seemingly desperate situations.

77. Hezekiah's Prayer for Deliverance - 2 Kings 19:14-36

King Hezekiah, facing a formidable threat, trusted in God's intervention, leading to the miraculous defeat of the Assyrian army.

78. David and Goliath - 1 Samuel 17:1-58

David, a young shepherd, trusted in God's strength, defeating the giant Goliath against all odds and exemplifying the power of trusting in God's sovereignty.

79. Rahab's Faith - Joshua 2:1-24

Rahab, a prostitute in Jericho, trusted in the God of Israel, resulting in the preservation of her family during the conquest of Jericho.

80. The Healing of the Syrophoenician Woman's Daughter - Mark 7:24-30

A Gentile woman, pleading for her demon-possessed daughter's healing, displayed persistent trust in Jesus' mercy, leading to her daughter's deliverance.

These biblical examples gives us insight to help understand trust in various circumstances, emphasizing the importance of relying on God's guidance, provision, and promises. Whether in moments of personal need, national crises, or individual callings, these biblical examples inspire believers to cultivate unwavering trust in God's character and sovereignty.

Those whom have gone before us, inspire us to develop steadfast trust in our relationship with God even in the midst of life's uncertainties, God will be faithful.

(86) Trusting In God’s Timing:

Scripture: "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."- Ecclesiastes 3:1

One of the most challenging aspects of our Christian walk is trusting in God's timing. In a world that values instant gratification and immediate results, waiting patiently

for God's timing can be difficult. Yet, Scripture reassures us that God operates according to His perfect timetable, orchestrating events and fulfilling His purposes in due season.

In Ecclesiastes 3:1, we're reminded that there is a time for everything—a season for every matter under heaven. This profound truth speaks to the sovereignty of God over time and His meticulous plan for our lives. While we may long for answers, breakthroughs, or blessings right away, God knows the perfect moment to bring them to fruition.

Throughout the Bible, we see countless examples of individuals who had to wait upon the Lord's timing. Abraham waited years for the fulfillment of God's promise of a son. Joseph endured betrayal and imprisonment before God elevated him to a position of authority. The Israelites wandered in the wilderness for forty years before entering the Promised Land. In each of these stories, we witness the faithfulness of God in His timing, bringing about redemption, provision, and deliverance at just the right moment.

Trusting in God's timing requires faith and patience. It means relinquishing our need for control and surrendering to His sovereign plan. It's about believing that God's timing is always perfect, even when it doesn't align with our expectations or desires.

As we wait upon the Lord, we can take comfort in His promises. Psalm 27:14 encourages us to " Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart: wait, I say, on the LORD. ". In the waiting, God is at work, preparing us, refining us, and aligning circumstances according to His will.

Today, if you find yourself in a season of waiting, take heart. God sees your circumstances, He hears your prayers, and He is working behind the scenes for your good. Trust in His timing, for He is faithful to fulfill His promises in His perfect way and time.

Trusting in God's Timing - Continued…

Text: Ecclesiastes 3:1 (AKJV):" To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."

Introduction: Trusting in God's Perfect Timing

In Ecclesiastes 3:1, King Solomon reminds us that everything in life has its appointed time, under the authority and purpose of God. This verse highlights the reality that God's timing is not only important but is also perfectly orchestrated according to His divine will and purpose. Trusting in God's timing is a fundamental aspect of the Christian walk, as it challenges us to release control, wait patiently, and align their lives with God's sovereign plan.
This commentary will explore the biblical understanding of God's timing, its role in the life of a believer, and how Christians can cultivate trust in God's timing amidst the challenges of life. Trusting in God's timing requires faith, patience, and a willingness to surrender to His perfect plan, recognizing that He sees the beginning from the end.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Trusting in God's Timing

Trusting in God's timing is deeply rooted in the character of God. Throughout Scripture, we see God working in His own perfect timing—never too early and never too late. His divine timing is not arbitrary; it is always purposeful, whether we fully understand it or not.

1.1 Trusting in God's Timing in the Old Testament

The Old Testament provides multiple examples of individuals who had to trust in God's timing, even when it seemed contrary to human expectations. From Abraham's waiting for the promise of a son to Israel's prolonged exile in Babylon, God's timing was always sovereign, and His purposes were accomplished at the appointed time.

Abraham and Sarah's Waiting for Isaac Scripture Reference: Genesis 17:15-19 Abraham and Sarah waited many years for the promise of a son, Isaac. In their impatience, they tried to fulfill God's promise through their own actions, resulting in the birth of Ishmael. However, God's plan was fulfilled in His perfect timing, and Isaac was born when Abraham and Sarah were well beyond childbearing age.

Quote:
"*Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.*" (Genesis 18:14) God reminded Abraham that He alone was in control of time and that His timing was perfect, even if it did not align with human expectations.

1.2 Trusting in God's Timing in the Life of Jesus

In the New Testament, we see that Jesus Himself, though fully divine, walked in obedience to the Father's perfect timing. Even as He performed miracles, He often said, "My time has not yet come," showing His submission to God's divine schedule.

Jesus' Timing in Raising Lazarus Scripture Reference: John 11:1-44 When Jesus received word that His friend Lazarus was sick, He did not immediately rush to his side, but waited until Lazarus had died. Jesus knew that His delay would reveal God's glory in a powerful way—Lazarus was raised from the dead in God's perfect timing.

Quote: "*This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*" (John 11:4) Jesus 'delay demonstrated that God's timing transcends human understanding and is always designed to bring about His glory.

1.3 Trusting in God's Timing in the Early Church

The Apostle Paul, in his ministry, consistently referred to God's perfect timing in his own life and in the growth of the church. The spread of the gospel was not something that could be rushed; it had to unfold according to God's perfect plan.

Paul's Ministry and Timing Scripture Reference: Acts 16:6-10 Paul and his companions were prevented by the Holy Spirit from going into certain regions to preach the gospel, which they might have seen as a setback. However, God had another plan for them, and

they were eventually led to Macedonia, where God opened the door for the gospel to spread.

Quote:
“*And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.”* (Acts 16:9) This illustrates the importance of trusting in God**’**s guidance and timing in the direction of our lives.

2. The Challenge of Trusting in God’s Timing

In a world that demands immediate gratification and quick results, trusting in God**’**s timing can be incredibly difficult. We often find ourselves wanting things to happen on our own schedule, and the delay of God's plan can feel like a denial. However, the Bible teaches that waiting on God is an essential aspect of the Christian life.

2.1 The Struggle with Patience

Patience is often a struggle because we desire to see results quickly. Yet, God uses the waiting period to mold our character, deepen our faith, and prepare us for what He has planned. Trusting in God's timing is not just about waiting but about trusting that He is working even in the waiting.

Psalm 27:14 (AKJV): “*Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.”* This verse encourages believers to wait patiently on God with trust that He will strengthen us during the waiting process. God is not idle in our waiting; He is working in us and for us.

2.2 Trusting When God’s Timing Seems Delayed

There are times when God's timing may seem delayed, especially when we are in seasons of struggle or uncertainty. However, it is essential to remember that God sees the bigger picture, and He is never late in fulfilling His promises.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (AKJV): “*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”* God**’**s ways and timing are beyond our comprehension, and His delay is not a denial but a sign of His perfect understanding of what is truly best for us.

3. The Blessing of Trusting in God’s Timing

Although trusting in God**’**s timing can be challenging, it is ultimately a source of great blessing. When we submit ourselves to God**’**s schedule, we open ourselves to the fullness of His plans for our lives.

3.1 God’s Timing Brings Greater Fulfillment

When we trust in God's timing, we experience greater fulfillment in the long run. Often, our impatience can lead us to take shortcuts or make decisions that are not aligned with God’s best plan. However, when we wait for His timing, we find peace in knowing that we are walking in His perfect will.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (AKJV): “*Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”* By trusting in God’s timing, we acknowledge that He knows what is best for us and that His path for us is one of purpose and peace.

3.2 God's Timing is Always for Our Good

One of the most reassuring truths for believers is that God’s timing is always for our good. No matter how difficult or confusing the waiting season might be, we can trust that God is working all things together for our good and His glory.

Romans 8:28 (AKJV): “*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”* Even when we do not understand the reasons for a delay or challenge, we can trust that God is orchestrating our lives according to His sovereign plan.

4. How Christians Can Cultivate Trust in God’s Timing

While trusting in God's timing may seem difficult, it is something that can be cultivated through prayer, surrender, and focus on God's character.

4.1 Prayer and Surrender

Through prayer, we express our dependence on God and acknowledge that His timing is perfect. Surrendering our desires and timelines to Him opens the door for peace and trust to replace our anxiety.

Philippians 4:6-7 (AKJV): “*Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

4.2 Reflecting on God’s Faithfulness

As we reflect on God’s past faithfulness, we can build trust that He will continue to be faithful in His timing. When we look back at the ways He has provided and fulfilled His promises, we are encouraged to trust that He will do so again in the future.

Conclusion: Trusting in God’s Timing for Our Good and His Glory

Trusting in God's timing is not always easy, but it is essential for the Christian life. It requires faith, patience, and surrender, but it also brings incredible blessings. By trusting in His perfect timing, we acknowledge His sovereignty over our lives and allow Him to work in and through us for His glory. As we wait on the Lord, we can rest in the confidence that His timing is always perfect, and His plans are always for our ultimate good.

(90) Trusting In The Lord’sWisdom:

Introduction

In a world full of confusion, uncertainty and conflicting voices, trusting in the Lord**’**s wisdom is an essential practice for every Christian. While human wisdom is limited and often flawed, God**’**s wisdom is perfect, eternal, and unsearchable. The Bible repeatedly calls us as His disciples to trust in God**’**s wisdom, knowing that He alone is the source of true understanding and guidance. Proverbs 3:5-6 famously reminds us: **“***Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”* This passage encapsulates the essence of trusting in the Lord**’**s wisdom: reliance on His understanding, acknowledging His sovereignty, and submitting to His guidance.

This commentary will explore what it means to trust in the Lord**’**s wisdom, the benefits of doing so, and how we can apply this trust in our daily lives.

1. The Nature of God's Wisdom

1.1 God's Wisdom is Perfect and Unfathomable

- **Romans 11:33-36** (AKJV)– *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34For who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been his counselor? 35Or who has first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? 36For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."*
    - God's wisdom is beyond human comprehension. Paul marvels at the depth and perfection of God's wisdom, acknowledging that no one can fully understand His ways. Unlike human wisdom, which is limited and prone to error, God's wisdom is perfect, all-encompassing, and never-changing. When we trust in God**’**s wisdom, we are acknowledging that His understanding far exceeds our own, and His plan is always good, even when we cannot see the full picture.

1.2 God’s Wisdom is the Foundation of Creation

- **Proverbs 3:19-20** (AKJv)– *"The LORD by wisdom has founded the earth; by understanding has he established the heavens. 20By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.."*

- God’s wisdom is not just theoretical but the very foundation of the universe. Everything in creation, from the physical world to the intricacies of life itself, was designed according to God’s wisdom. This foundational truth reinforces the idea that God’s wisdom is the most reliable and trustworthy guidance available. Just as He designed the world with wisdom, He can guide our lives with that same wisdom.

1.3 God’s Wisdom is Revealed Through His Word

- **James 1:5-8 (AKJV)** – *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. 6But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."*
  - God’s wisdom is available to those who seek it. He is generous with His wisdom, offering it freely to anyone who humbly asks for it. In particular, God’s wisdom is found in His Word—the Bible. Through Scripture, the believer can gain insight into the heart of God and His purposes for life. As we meditate on God’s Word, we begin to see the world through His eyes and align our thoughts and decisions with His wisdom.

2. The Importance of Trusting in the Lord’s Wisdom

2.1 Trusting in God’s Wisdom Prevents Foolishness

- **Proverbs 3:5-7** (AKJV)– *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not to your own understanding. 6In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths. 7Be not wise in your own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil."*
  - The wisdom of God stands in stark contrast to the folly of human wisdom. Proverbs calls us to reject reliance on our own understanding, which is often limited, self-centered, and fallible. When we trust in our own wisdom, we open ourselves to confusion, misguided decisions, and ultimately, sin. By trusting in God’s wisdom, we avoid the pitfall of leaning on our own flawed reasoning and turn instead to His perfect guidance. True wisdom involves acknowledging God’s authority in every aspect of life, trusting that He knows what is best.
- **Isaiah 55:8-9** –(AKJV) *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD. 9For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."*
  - God’s wisdom is infinitely higher than human wisdom. Our understanding is finite and often clouded by personal biases, emotions, and limited experience. In contrast, God’s wisdom is perfect, and His ways are always higher than our own. Trusting in God’s wisdom means submitting our limited understanding to His infinite understanding, acknowledging that He knows what is best even when we don’t fully understand it.

2.2 Trusting in God’s Wisdom Brings Peace and Stability

- **Isaiah 26:3** – (AKJV)*“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you: because he trusts in you."*
    - When we trust in God**’**s wisdom, it brings peace to our hearts. Trusting in God**’**s understanding frees us from the anxiety of trying to control every situation or figure out every problem on our own. It gives us the confidence that God is in control, and that His plans are always good. This peace is a direct result of trusting in God**’**s wisdom, as we learn to rest in His sovereignty and perfect plan.
- **James 3:17** (AKJV)– *"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.."*
    - The wisdom of God leads to peace. Unlike the world**’**s wisdom, which can be divisive, selfish, and contentious, the wisdom that comes from God produces unity, harmony, and peace. When we trust in God's wisdom, we are not only guided in our actions but also transformed in our character to reflect more of His peace and gentleness in our relationships with others.

2.3 Trusting in God’s Wisdom Leads to Righteous Living

- **Psalm 111:10** (AKJV)– *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endures for ever. "*
    - The foundation of all true wisdom is the fear of the Lord. This reverence for God and His authority leads us to live in alignment with His will. Trusting in God**’**s wisdom helps us make decisions that reflect His righteousness, leading us to live lives that are pleasing to Him. When we acknowledge God**’**s wisdom in our lives, we are more likely to avoid sin and walk in His ways.

3. How to Trust in the Lord’s Wisdom

3.1 Ask for Wisdom Through Prayer

- **James 1:5-8 (AKJV)** – **“***If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. 6But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8A double minded man is unstable in all his ways”*
    - Trusting in God**’**s wisdom begins with asking for it. In prayer, we can humbly ask God to grant us His understanding and guidance in our decisions. God delights in giving wisdom to those who seek it, and He does so generously. We can trust that when we ask, He will give us the wisdom we need, according to His will and timing. And it is essential to believe and not doubt, when you you ask God for His wisdom that He’ll be faithful and true to give you His Wisdom, and direction.

3.2 Meditate on God’s Word

- **Psalm 119:105** (AKJV)– *"Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.*

- God’s Word is a primary source of His wisdom. As we read and meditate on Scripture, we gain insight into God’s character and will for our lives. Trusting in God’s wisdom involves immersing ourselves in the Bible, allowing it to shape our thoughts, actions, and attitudes. By doing so, we learn to discern His guidance and recognize His will in the midst of life’s challenges.

3.3 Seek Counsel from Wise Believers

- **Proverbs 12:15** (AKJV)– *"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that listens to counsel is wise"*
  - Another way we trust in God’s wisdom is by seeking counsel from other wise believers. God often uses other members of the Body of Christ to speak His wisdom into our lives. By humbly listening to those who are grounded in God’s Word and mature in their faith, we gain valuable perspective and direction. Seeking wise counsel is not a sign of weakness but an acknowledgment that we need the collective wisdom of the community of believers.

3.4 Submit to God’s Guidance

- **Proverbs 3:6** (AKJV)– **“***In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths..”*
  - Trusting in God’s wisdom requires submission to His guidance. This means acknowledging Him in every area of our lives—whether in relationships, work, or personal decisions—and following His lead. Trusting in God involves surrendering our own desires and agendas to His higher purposes and allowing Him to direct our steps.

4. Conclusion: Trusting in God’s Wisdom Brings Blessing

Trusting in the Lord’s wisdom is not only a command but a pathway to peace, stability, and righteousness. When we trust in God’s perfect, unfathomable wisdom, we acknowledge His sovereignty over our lives and submit to His guidance in all things. As we ask for wisdom, meditate on His Word, seek counsel, and submit to His leading, we find that He directs our paths and blesses us with His peace. Though we may not always understand His ways, we can trust that His wisdom is always good, and His plan for our lives is better than anything we could devise on our own.

May we continually choose to trust in the Lord’s wisdom, confident that He will lead us in paths of righteousness and bring about His perfect will for our lives.

Trusting in God's Wisdom - Continued…

Text: Proverbs 3:5-6 (AKJV): *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."*

Introduction: Trusting in God’s Wisdom Above Our Own Understanding Proverbs 3:5-6 calls believers to place complete trust in God's wisdom, urging us to relinquish our own limited understanding and embrace His infinite knowledge and direction. This verse

emphasizes the importance of acknowledging God in all aspects of life and relying on His wisdom to guide us. Trusting in God's wisdom is a vital part of the Christian journey, as it transforms the way we approach life, decisions, and challenges.

This commentary will explore the biblical principle of trusting in God's wisdom, how His wisdom surpasses human understanding, and how Christians can cultivate trust in God's guidance. The Bible frequently reminds us that God's wisdom is far greater than anything we could achieve on our own, and by trusting in Him, we can live with confidence, knowing that He leads us in the best possible direction.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Trusting in God's Wisdom

The Bible teaches that God's wisdom is foundational to the life of a believer. His wisdom is far beyond human understanding, and we are encouraged to trust in His perfect guidance rather than relying on our own limited perspectives.

1.1 God's Wisdom is Unfathomable

In the Old Testament, the wisdom of God is often described as unfathomable and immeasurable. Isaiah 55:8-9 declares that God's thoughts and ways are higher than ours. His wisdom is not constrained by time or human limitations. This understanding encourages believers to trust in His direction, even when it seems contrary to what we would expect.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (AKJV): *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

In moments of confusion or difficulty, we can find peace in knowing that God's wisdom is beyond our comprehension, yet it is always good and perfect.

1.2 The Wisdom of God Revealed in Christ

The ultimate revelation of God's wisdom is found in the person of Jesus Christ. Through His life, teachings, and sacrifice, Jesus embodies God's wisdom and shows us how to live according to it. The Apostle Paul describes Christ as "the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:24). In trusting in Christ, believers are aligning themselves with the ultimate wisdom, as He is the perfect reflection of God's understanding and direction.

1 Corinthians 1:24 (AKJV): *"But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."*

By trusting in the wisdom of Christ, we acknowledge that His guidance in our lives is not just reliable but also perfect. Jesus shows us how to live with eternal perspective, and His wisdom offers clarity in our everyday choices.

1.3 God's Wisdom in Creation

The Bible also speaks of God's wisdom in the creation of the world. His intricate design of the universe is a testimony to His profound wisdom. In the Book of Job, God answers Job's questions about suffering by pointing to His creation as a demonstration of His wisdom. Understanding God's sovereignty over creation encourages believers to trust in His wisdom, especially when we do not fully understand the circumstances we face.

Job 38:4 (AKJV): *"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if you have understanding."*

This verse emphasizes that God's wisdom is seen in His creation. His infinite knowledge governs the world, and because of that, we can trust that He will guide us through life with the same wisdom.

2. The Command to Trust in God's Wisdom

Proverbs 3:5-6 provides a clear command: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding." This is not just a recommendation but a divine directive. God calls His people to trust in Him fully, abandoning the reliance on our own finite understanding. This trust is not based on our ability to comprehend everything, but on the certainty that God's wisdom is perfect and reliable.

2.1 Trusting in God's Wisdom Requires Humility

To trust in God's wisdom, we must first acknowledge our own limitations. The temptation to rely on our understanding often comes from pride—the desire to control situations and outcomes. Proverbs 3:5-6 calls us to humble ourselves and admit that we do not know everything. Humility is the foundation of trust, as it allows us to let go of self-reliance and surrender to God's plan.

Proverbs 11:2 (AKJV): *"When pride comes, then comes shame: but with the lowly (humble) is wisdom."*

A humble heart seeks God's wisdom rather than depending on one's own understanding. True wisdom comes when we submit to God's superior knowledge and guidance.

2.2 Trusting in God's Wisdom is an Act of Faith

Faith is an essential component of trusting in God's wisdom. Even when the path ahead is unclear, we are called to walk by faith, believing that God's wisdom will guide us in the right direction. Trusting God's wisdom means we rely on His faithfulness, even when we cannot see the outcome.

Hebrews 11:1 (AKJV**):** *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."*

This verse reminds us that faith is trusting in God’s promises even when we don’t have all the answers. Trusting in God’s wisdom is an act of faith, believing that His plan is greater than anything we could conceive.

3. The Benefits of Trusting in God’s Wisdom

When we choose to trust in God’s wisdom, we receive numerous benefits that affect our lives both practically and spiritually.

3.1 Guidance for Our Paths

Proverbs 3:6 promises that when we trust in God and acknowledge Him, He will direct our paths. God’s wisdom provides guidance in decisions, relationships, and life choices. When we submit our plans to God, we can be confident that He will lead us in the best direction.

Psalm 32:8 (AKJV): *"I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."*

God’s wisdom provides clear direction, even when life seems uncertain. As we trust in Him, He guides our steps and leads us to the fulfillment of His purpose for our lives.

3.2 Peace Amidst Uncertainty

Trusting in God’s wisdom brings peace, especially in times of uncertainty. When we rely on our own understanding, anxiety often arises as we try to figure everything out. But when we trust in God, we experience peace, knowing that He is in control and that His wisdom will guide us through every situation.

Isaiah 26:3 (AKJV): *"Trust you in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD YaHWeH is everlasting strength:."*

This peace is not dependent on external circumstances but on the internal trust we place in God’s wisdom. In all situations, God's wisdom offers calm and assurance.

3.3 Protection and Blessing

When we trust in God’s wisdom, we are also protected and blessed. Trusting God means aligning our lives with His will, which leads to protection from harm and blessings that come from following His ways.

Psalm 119:105 (AKJV)**:** *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."*

God’s wisdom shines a light on the best path to take, preventing us from making decisions that might lead to harm or regret. As we trust in Him, we are blessed with His guidance and protection.

4. How Christians Can Cultivate Trust in God’s Wisdom

Cultivating trust in God’s wisdom is an ongoing process that involves growing in faith and surrendering to His will. Christians can take several practical steps to deepen their trust in God’s wisdom.

4.1 Through Prayer and Study of Scripture

Regular prayer and Bible study are key to understanding God’s wisdom. Through prayer, we invite God to guide us and reveal His wisdom. Studying Scripture helps us to learn how to apply His wisdom to our daily lives.

James 1:5 (AKJV): *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who will give to all men liberally, and rebuke him not; and it shall be given him."*

God promises to give wisdom generously to those who ask. Prayer and Scripture open the door to receive His guidance.

4.2 Through Obedience

Trusting God’s wisdom is demonstrated through obedience. When we act on the wisdom God provides, we show that we believe His way is best. Obeying God’s commands leads to growth in trust and understanding.

John 14:15 (AKJV): *"If you love me, keep my commandments."*

Obedience strengthens our relationship with God and reinforces our trust in His wisdom.

Conclusion: Living by Trust in God’s Wisdom

Trusting in God's wisdom is not just a one-time decision but a lifelong journey. By surrendering our own understanding and relying on God’s perfect guidance, we allow Him to direct our paths and give us peace. Through prayer, study of His Word, and obedience, we can cultivate trust in His wisdom and experience the abundant life He has promised.

May we continually trust in God’s wisdom, knowing that He will guide us in the best direction and lead us to His perfect will.

(91) Have Patience:

Patience in the Bible

Definition

Patience is the God-given capacity to endure delay, hardship, or opposition with a calm and faithful spirit, without complaint or retaliation. It involves **trusting God's timing**, **bearing with others**, and **remaining steadfast under pressure**.

Hebrew Words (Old Testament)

1. אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם('erekh appayim) – Slow to anger, longsuffering
   - Literally means: *"long of nostrils"*—an idiom for being slow to get angry.
   - This is often used to describe God's character: **His patience with sinners**.

Examples:

- "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger (*'erekh appayim*) and abounding in steadfast love." – *Psalm 103:8*
- "The Lord is slow to anger and great in power..." – *Nahum 1:3*

2. קָוָה(qāwā) – To wait, to hope expectantly
   - While often translated "wait," it carries a deep sense of **hopeful patience**, especially in trusting God's promises.

Example:

- "But they who wait (*qāwā*) for the Lord shall renew their strength..." – *Isaiah 40:31*

Greek Words (New Testament)

1. μακροθυμία (makrothymia) – Longsuffering, forbearance
   - From *makros* (long) and *thymos* (anger), meaning **long-tempered**.
   - Refers to enduring offense or hardship without seeking revenge; often used of God's patience with sinners.

Examples:

- "The fruit of the Spirit is... patience (*makrothymia*)..." – *Galatians 5:22*
- "The Lord is not slow... but is patient (*makrothymei*) toward you." – *2 Peter 3:9*

2. ὑπομονή (hypomonē) – Endurance, steadfastness, perseverance
   - Literally means *"remaining under"* pressure.
   - Refers to **steadfastness in trials**, not giving up under adversity.

Examples:

- "Let us run with endurance (*hypomonē*) the race that is set before us." – *Hebrews 12:1*
- "You have need of endurance…" – *Hebrews 10:36*

Biblical Examples of Patience

- **Job** – Endured suffering while remaining faithful (James 5:11)

- **Abraham** – Waited patiently for God's promise (Romans 4:20–21; Hebrews 6:15)
- **Jesus** – Patiently endured the cross for the joy set before Him (Hebrews 12:2–3)
- **God** – Demonstrates incredible patience toward sinners (Romans 2:4; 1 Peter 3:20)

Patience as Spiritual Fruit

Patience is not simply a virtue—it is **a fruit of the Holy Spirit**:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, **patience**, kindness, goodness, faithfulness..." – *Galatians 5:22*

As fruit, it is:

- Produced by the Spirit, not mere willpower
- **Cultivated over time**, especially through trials
- Reflected in how we treat others (Colossians 3:12–13)

How Patience Is Lived Out

1. **Toward God** – Waiting for His timing without complaint (Psalm 37:7; Romans 8:25)
2. **Toward Others** – Bearing with their faults and offenses (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13)
3. **In Trials** – Remaining steadfast under hardship (James 1:2–4)
4. **In Ministry** – Serving with endurance and grace (2 Timothy 4:2; 2 Corinthians 6:4–6)

Love is Patient … 1 Corinthians 13:4

Scripture: Romans 12:12 "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;"

Patience is a virtue that is often tested in the trials and challenges of life. It is the ability to endure hardships, delays, or difficulties with a calm and steadfast attitude, trusting in God's timing and wisdom. As followers of Christ, we are called to cultivate patience in every season and circumstance, knowing that God is faithful and His plans are perfect.

The Bible teaches us that patience is a fruit of the Spirit, produced in us as we abide in Christ and allow His Spirit to work in our lives. It is through the refining process of trials and tribulations that our patience is strengthened, enabling us to persevere and endure with unwavering faith. As we wait on the Lord, we are reminded of His promises and assured of His faithfulness to fulfill them in His perfect timing.

Moreover, patience is closely linked to trust and hope in God. When we face trials or uncertainties, we are called to place our confidence in the Lord and His promises,

knowing that He is sovereign and in control of all things. Our hope in God's goodness and faithfulness sustains us through the waiting period, giving us the strength to persevere and endure with patience.

Furthermore, patience is demonstrated through our interactions with others, especially in times of conflict or misunderstanding. It involves bearing with one another in love, showing grace and forgiveness even when provoked or wronged. By exercising patience in our relationships, we reflect the character of Christ and demonstrate His love to those around us.

In addition, patience is essential in the pursuit of spiritual growth and maturity. It takes time and perseverance to develop the fruits of the Spirit, such as love, joy, peace, and self-control. As we yield to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and remain steadfast in prayer and obedience, we experience transformation and growth, becoming more like Christ in character and conduct.

In conclusion, patience is a vital aspect of the Christian life, reflecting our trust and reliance on God's wisdom and sovereignty. As we cultivate patience in every circumstance, we demonstrate our faith in God's goodness and faithfulness, knowing that He is working all things together for our good and His glory.

Key Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (AKJV) (Love)Charity suffers long (Is Patient), and is kind; charity envies not; charity brags not itself, is not puffed up, 5Does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; 6Rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.In this famous passage about love, patience is highlighted as a fundamental aspect. True love involves being patient and kind, which reflects its deep and enduring nature.

James 1:3-4 (AKJV) *"*Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. 4But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing..*"* This verse explains that challenges and trials test our faith, leading to perseverance. When we allow this perseverance to develop fully, it matures us spiritually, making us complete and lacking nothing in our character.

Galatians 5:22-23 (AKJV) *"*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*"* Patience (forbearance, long-suffering) is listed as a fruit of the Spirit, meaning it is a natural outcome of a life led by the Holy Spirit. It is essential for living in accordance with God**'**s will and reflecting His character.

Proverbs 14:29 (AKJV) "He that is slow to wrath (Patient) is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalts folly." This proverb contrasts patience with quick-temperedness, indicating that patience demonstrates wisdom and understanding, while a lack of patience often reveals foolishness and rashness.

Psalm 37:7 (AKJV) "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass. " This psalm encourages waiting on God with patience, rather than being anxious

or disturbed by the apparent success of others, especially those who act wickedly. It's a call to trust in God's timing and justice.

Lamentations 3:25-26 (AKJV) "The LORD is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. 26It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD." This passage assures us that God is good to those who trust and seek Him. It's beneficial to wait patiently for His intervention and salvation, showing that trust and patience are integral to our faith.

Hebrews 10:36 -39 (AKJV) "For you have need of patience, that, after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise. 37For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39But we are not of them who draw back to perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

Christians are to endure and stay committed to God's will, with the assurance that their perseverance will lead to receiving God's promises. Patience is necessary to fulfill God's plans and receive His rewards.

2 Peter 3:9 (AKJV) "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering (Patient towards us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. " This verse explains that God's seeming delay in fulfilling promises is actually an expression of His patience. He desires for everyone to come to repentance, showing that His patience is motivated by love and desire for all to be saved.

(92) Be Led By God's Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit, the very presence of God dwelling within us, is our guide, our comforter, and our source of strength. To be led by the Spirit is to walk in step with God's divine purpose and direction for our lives. It is to surrender our will to His, trusting in His wisdom and guidance every step of the way.

In the book of Romans, we are reminded, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. " (Romans 8:14). As children of God, we have the incredible privilege of being guided by His Spirit. Just as a loving parent gently leads and directs their child, so too does the Holy Spirit lead and guide us along the path of righteousness.

Being led by the Spirit requires a posture of surrender and humility. It means relinquishing our own plans and desires and allowing God to chart the course of our lives. It means being attentive to the promptings of the Spirit, whether through the still, small voice within us, the counsel of fellow believers, or the insights gleaned from Scripture.

As a Christian matures in the Lord, you are able to distinguish and discern more and more God's voice and the leading of the Holy Spirit vs your own human understanding and sometimes even your own self presumptions that God was speaking to you, but in reality He may have not been.

Proverbs 3:5 (AKJV) Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not to your own understanding. 6In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths.

When we allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit, we experience a deep sense of peace, assurance, and direction knowing that we are walking in alignment with God's will. When we obey God and follow His Holy Spirit we are able to successfully accomplish what God has specifically and uniquely called each of us to do and what He desires on a daily basis. Being led by God's Spirit does take a measure and walk of faith, but without faith it's impossible to please God. So there will be times that it will become evident that we were only following our own inclinations but we should not be discouraged, we should pray and purpose in our hearts to do what He desires and He'll be faithful to direct our paths. We may not always understand the path ahead, but we trust that the Spirit will never lead us astray.

The path is narrow that leads to life, and broad is the road that leads to destruction, (Matthew 7:13-14) we need to be led by God's Holy Spirit to make the right choices that leads to life.

(93) Decision Making:

All major decisions that we make should be based upon the word of God and not on our emotions and feelings. As Christians we would be wise to seek Godly counsel from other mature Christians and Pastors before making certain critical decisions; This is a matter of choice and very helpful, however, no Christian should ever be required to follow the counsel of a pastor or any person of authority, who is instructing them to do anything against the will of God, nor that is contrary to the Word of God.

Every Christian has One leader and Lord and that is Jesus Christ. Therefore first of all, we should pray to God the Father through Jesus Christ before making a decision and then follow the direction of the Holy Spirit.

When we have the Holy Spirit, He is our Helper, and will personally guide us into all Truth, However, we need to be careful if we have unrepented sin in our lives, because this will cloud our correct decision making.

Some people in general usually base their decisions on whether or not there is some personal benefit in it. Christians should never be self centered in their decisions, however when we esteem others more highly than ourselves, we ourselves will always be blessed, as well.

God will always help us to make the right decisions in life.

- **With All Essential Decisions That We Make, We Should each First God's Will In Prayer:**

Proverbs 3:5 AKJV; Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not to your own understanding. 6In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths..

Proverbs 16:3 AKJV **:** Commit your works to the LORD, and your thoughts shall be established.

- **We Should Ask For God’s Wisdom In Decision Making, without doubting:**

James 1:5-7 AKJV If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. 6But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

- **Certain Decisions Were Made By The Apostles And Elders Of The Church:**

Acts16:4,5 (AKJV) And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep,(they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders) that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. 5And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

- **We Should Seek Good Counsel From Seasoned Christians Before Making Certain Critical Decisions:**

Proverbs 11:14 (AKJV) Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

In our daily lives, we are faced with countless decisions, both big and small. Whether it’s a spiritual or moral dilemma, where to go, what to do, what to say and when, career change, a relationship choice, or a simple daily task, the weight of our decisions can sometimes feel overwhelming. However, as believers, we are called to seek God's guidance in all things.

Trust in the Lord Proverbs 3:5-6 encourages us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight." This scripture reminds us that while our understanding may be limited, God's wisdom is infinite. Trusting Him means letting go of the need to control every outcome and being open to His direction.

Ask for Wisdom James 1:5 tells us, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." God desires to guide us and provide the wisdom we need. When faced with a decision, take time to pray and ask Him for clarity. He is ready and willing to help us navigate our choices.

Listening for Guidance Psalm 32:8 states, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you." God promises to guide us, but we must be willing to listen. Spend quiet moments in prayer and meditation, creating space for Him to speak to your heart. Often, His guidance comes as a gentle whisper or a feeling of peace about a particular path.

Follow the Right Path Isaiah 30:21 assures us, "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’" As we seek His voice and align our hearts with His will, we can move forward with confidence. Remember that the journey of decision-making is as important as the outcome. Each step of faith draws us closer to Him.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for being a constant source of wisdom and guidance in my life. Help me to trust You completely as I navigate my decisions. Give me the courage to

seek Your will above my own and the patience to wait for Your answers. I ask for clarity in my choices and the ability to hear Your voice clearly. May I walk confidently in the paths You lay before me. In Jesus ’name, Amen.

Challenge for Today: Take a moment to reflect on a decision you’re currently facing. Write it down and spend time in prayer, asking God for His wisdom and guidance. Listen for His voice and be open to the direction He provides.

(94) Christian Fellowship - The Church:

Scripture: Hebrews 10:24-25 (AKJV) - "And let us consider one another to provoke to love and to good works: 25Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching..”

The Christian Church are the people, not a building. temple nor a specific denomination. The true Christian Church is anyone who genuinely believes in and follows Jesus Christ, according to his Word, any where in the world. These are the body of Christ, the Church, and Jesus knows who is His.

Within the Church, there exists a beautiful bond and good purpose in Christian gathering, intertwined in Jesus Christ's love, and being developed into maturity within us, as we fellowship and serve together. It's a community where hearts find unity, burdens are shared, and faith thrives. In a world fractured by strife and solitude, the Church stands as a sanctuary of hope, offering solace and a sense of belonging to all who seek it. The Scriptures urge us to cherish Christian fellowship within the Church, encouraging active engagement in community life and mutual encouragement in our spiritual journeys. As members of Christ's body, we are called to ignite love and inspire good works in one another, to uplift each other in moments of trial, and to share each other's burdens.

Coming together in Christian fellowship isn't just a social gathering; it's a spiritual discipline essential for our growth and solidarity in Christ. In the embrace of fellow believers, we find strength, accountability, and inspiration to press onward in our walk with the Lord. Furthermore, the Church serves as a tangible expression of God's love to the world. Through acts of compassion, service, and unity, we mirror Christ's character and extend His invitation of grace to those in need.

In a world where pressures may tempt us to withdraw or isolate, let's remember the importance of Christian fellowship within the Church. Let's prioritize gathering with our brothers and sisters, worshipping together, delving into God's Word as one, and lifting each other in prayer.

May our gatherings be characterized by love, acceptance, and genuine care, fostering unity within the body of Christ and bearing witness to the transformative power of His love.

Reflection:

Take a moment to reflect on the ways in which you are currently engaged in Christian fellowship within your local church community. Consider how you can serve and deepen

your relationships with fellow believers and actively contribute to the growth and health of the body of Christ. Ask God to reveal areas where you may need to grow in your commitment to Christian fellowship and to empower you to live out His purposes within the church.

- **Understanding the Importance of Christian Fellowship:** The Bible teaches us that believers are not meant to journey through life alone but are called to live in community with one another as members of the body of Christ.
- **Gathering Regularly:** Actively participate in the gatherings of the local church, whether it be for worship services, small groups, or other fellowship activities.
- **Building Relationships:** Take the time to get to know fellow believers on a deeper level, fostering genuine friendships and accountability within the church community.
- **Supporting One Another:** Be willing to lend a listening ear, offer a helping hand, and pray for one another in times of need, demonstrating Christ's love through practical acts of kindness.
- **Encouraging and Edifying:** Use your words to uplift and encourage your brothers and sisters in Christ, speaking truth and life into their situations.
- **Forgiving and Reconciling:** Practice forgiveness and reconciliation in relationships, following the example of Christ who reconciled us to God through His sacrifice on the cross.
- **Sharing Spiritual Gifts:** Identify and utilize your spiritual gifts for the edification of the body of Christ, contributing to the growth and health of the church.
- **Studying God's Word Together:** Engage in Bible study and discipleship within the church community, growing together in knowledge and understanding of God's Word.
- **Praying Together:** Pray with and for your fellow believers, lifting up their needs and concerns before the Lord in corporate prayer.
- **Serving Together:** Seek opportunities to serve alongside other members of the church, using your time, talents, and resources to advance God's kingdom together.
- **Celebrating Milestones:** Rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn, walking alongside your brothers and sisters in both times of joy and sorrow.
- **Remaining Committed:** Stay committed to your local church family, faithfully stewarding your relationships and investing in the growth and well-being of the community.

(95) Understanding We Are Temple of God:

Embracing Our Identity in Christ *Living in the Power of God's Presence Within Us*

Introduction

One of the most powerful and humbling truths in our Christian faith is the reality that we are the temple of God. This profound truth speaks not only how Christians should act and have certain regard for our lives but also to fully understand and have deep respect and regard for the presence of God's Holy Spirit dwelling within us. To understand that we are the temple of God is to grasp the incredible privilege and responsibility that comes with being God's dwelling place on earth. Just as God's presence filled the Tabernacle and the Temple in the Old Testament, so now, through Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God resides within each believer.

In this commentary, we will explore the biblical foundation for understanding what it means that we are the temple of God, how this truth shapes our identity and behavior, and the implications for living a life that reflects the holiness and purpose of God. We will look at key Scriptures that illuminate this truth and offer practical insights for living in light of this reality.

1. The Biblical Foundation for Being the Temple of God

The idea that believers are the temple of God is rooted in both the Old and New Testaments. It points to the fact that God desires to dwell among His people and that through Jesus Christ, this dwelling has become a personal and intimate experience for every believer.

1.1 God's Presence in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, God's presence was uniquely associated with the Tabernacle and later the Temple in Jerusalem. The Tabernacle was a portable structure where God's glory dwelt in the midst of the Israelites (Exodus 25:8). The Temple in Jerusalem became the permanent dwelling place of God's presence (1 Kings 8:10-11). These were physical places where God chose to manifest His glory, and they were central to Israel's worship and identity.

However, even in the Old Testament, God hinted at a future time when His presence would no longer be confined to a building. In Ezekiel 36:26-27, God promises to give His people a new heart and spirit, indicating a future transformation where His presence would dwell not in a physical temple but in His people themselves.

1.2 The New Testament Revelation

The transition from the physical temple to the believer as the temple of God is clearly articulated in the New Testament. Through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the veil of the temple was torn (Matthew 27:51), symbolizing that access to God was now open to all believers through Christ.

- **1 Corinthians 3:16-17** (AKJV): **"**Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."

Here, the apostle Paul emphasizes that believers themselves are the temple of God. The "you" in this passage is plural, indicating that the church, collectively, is the dwelling place of God's Spirit. This truth underscores the sanctity of the Christian community and the individual believer's responsibility to live in a way that honors God's presence.

- **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** (AKJV) – "What? know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? 20For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

In this passage, Paul teaches that not only the church collectively but each individual believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit. This means that God's Spirit dwells within us, setting us apart for His purposes, and to glory God. It also means that our bodies are to be treated with the utmost respect, as they house the very presence of God. We have been bought with a price , the loving sacrifice that Jesus made at the cross to save us. Jesus abides in us and we in Him.

1.3 Jesus abides in us by faith, and as we keep His commandments:

Ephesians 3:17-21 -(AKJV) That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. 20Now to him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21To him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

1 John 3:24 (AKJV) -And he that keeps his commandments dwells in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he stays in us, by the Spirit which he has given us.

1.4 The Role of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit's indwelling presence is central to the Christian understanding of being the temple of God. It is the Holy Spirit who makes our hearts His home and empowers us to live lives that reflect God's holiness. Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit to dwell within His followers (John 14:16-17), and this promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

The Spirit's presence within believers is a continual reminder that God is near, guiding, convicting, and empowering us to live in accordance with His will. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not a passive presence but an active force that transforms believers from the inside out.

2. The Implications of Being the Temple of God

To understand that we are the temple of God is to recognize the profound implications this has on how we live, how we relate to God, and how we interact with others.

2.1 A Call to Holiness

Since our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, there is a call to holiness and purity. Just as the Old Testament temples had to be sanctified and set apart for God's use, so our lives must be sanctified as holy vessels for God's glory.

1 Peter 1:15-16 (AKJV)– "But as he which has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation; 16Because it is written, Be you holy; for I am holy..'"

The presence of God within us calls us to reflect His holiness in our daily lives. Our conduct, thoughts, and actions are to align with God's character, as the Holy Spirit empowers us to live in a way that honors His presence in us.

2.2 A Call to Stewardship

Recognizing our bodies as the temple of God also implies that we are called to steward our lives wisely. This includes caring for our physical bodies, maintaining spiritual health, and using our lives for God's purposes. Our bodies are not our own; they have been purchased by the blood of Christ, and we are called to glorify God in how we live and what we do.

Romans 12:1-2 (AKJV)– "I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.."

Presenting our bodies as living sacrifices involves both physical and spiritual stewardship. This includes how we care for our health, how we engage in relationships, and how we use our time, talents, and resources to serve God's kingdom.

2.3 A Call to Unity and Community

Just as the Temple in the Old Testament was a place of communal worship, so the church, as the temple of God, is the church, the Christians that reflects God's glory. The temple was never meant to be a solitary, individual place but a space for God's people to gather and worship. In the same way, the church is called to be a community of believers who together form the temple of God.

Ephesians 2:19-22 (AKJV)– "Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20And are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21In whom all the building fitly framed together grows to an holy temple in the Lord: 22In whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.."

This passage highlights the communal aspect of the temple. The church, as a whole, is the dwelling place of God's Spirit, and each believer is a vital part of this temple. Unity, love, and mutual support are essential as we seek to reflect God's presence in the world.

3. The Benefits of Understanding We Are the Temple of God

Embracing the truth that we are the temple of God brings numerous benefits that transform our lives.

3.1 Intimacy with God

The temple was a place where God's presence was tangibly experienced. In the New Testament, this intimacy with God is available to every believer through the Holy Spirit. God is no longer distant but dwells within us, providing a deep and personal connection with Him.

John 14:23 (AKJV)– "Jesus answered and said to him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our stayed with him.'"

The presence of God within us creates a place for continuous communion and fellowship with our Creator, Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

3.2 Empowerment for Life and Mission

As the temple of God, we are not only recipients of God's presence but also empowered to fulfill His purposes on earth. The indwelling Spirit equips us to live with purpose, to carry the message of the gospel, and to be agents of change in the world.

Acts 1:8 – (AKJV) "But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come on you: and you shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth."

3.3 Assurance of God's Presence

Finally, understanding that we are the temple of God gives us confidence in God's constant presence. No matter where we go or what we face, God is with us. His Spirit is in us, and this assurance brings peace, strength, and courage.

Hebrews 13:5 – "For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'"

Conclusion: Living as the Temple of God

Being the temple of God is both a privilege and a responsibility. It calls us to live in holiness, to steward our lives well, and to engage in the community of believers. The presence of God within us empowers us for life and mission, and we are called to reflect His holiness, His righteousness by faith and His love in every aspect of our lives.

Living as the temple of God means that every day is an opportunity to honor God in our bodies, minds, and spirits. May we live in the fullness of this truth, embracing our identity as God's dwelling place, and allowing His Spirit to transform us into His image for the glory of His name.

We Are the Temple of God - Continued…

Scripture References:

- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (AKJV): **“**Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.”
- 1 Peter 2:5-10 (AKJV): **“**You also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6Why also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believes on him shall not be confounded. 7To you therefore which believe he is precious: but to them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: to which also they were appointed. 9But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; 10Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”
- Ephesians 2:19-22 (AKJV): **“**Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20And are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21In whom all the building fitly framed together grows to an holy temple in the Lord: 22In whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

Reflection

As sincere believers and followers of Jesus Christ, He abides spiritually within us, along with the indwelling of God**’**s Holy Spirit. Therefore, we are the temple of God. We carry God**’**s incredible divine truth within us: Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. This biblical and spiritual truth transcends physical spaces, inviting us into a profound relationship with our Creator and God the Father.

In 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Paul emphasizes that we are God**’**s temple, and His Holy Spirit resides in us. This indwelling signifies intimacy with God—He walks with us, guiding and empowering us. As we reflect on this truth, let us consider how we honor this sacred space. Are our thoughts, words, and actions aligned with the holiness of God?

- **Living Stones in a Spiritual House**

1 Peter 2:5 reminds us that we are like living stones, being built into a spiritual house. Each of us plays a vital role in God**’**s family, contributing to a structure that glorifies Him. This image invites us to see ourselves not just as individuals, but as part of the body of

Christ. We are called to support one another, encouraging growth and unity as we collectively embody the temple of God.

- **A Dwelling for God's Presence**

Ephesians 2:19-22 illustrates that believers are united as a holy temple, where God dwells by His Spirit. This is not just a personal experience; it's a communal calling. As we gather in fellowship, our collective worship becomes a fragrant offering to God. Let us cultivate an atmosphere where His presence is welcomed and revered.

- **Abiding in Jesus**

Scripture Reference:

- John 15:4-10 (AKJV): **"**Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. 5I am the vine, you are the branches: He that stays in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. 6If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you. 8Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be my disciples. 9As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: continue you in my love. 10If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

Reflection

The relationship between us and Jesus is foundational to understanding our identity as the temple of God. In John 15:4-5, Jesus uses the metaphor of a vine and branches to illustrate the intimacy of our connection with Him. To abide in Jesus means to remain steadfastly connected, drawing life and sustenance from Him. Willfully following and obeying him and doing the will of God. This abiding presence is what makes us His temple.

- **Our Source of Life**

When we abide in Jesus, we draw strength from Him, much like branches draw nourishment from the vine. This connection allows us to flourish spiritually. As we cultivate our relationship with Christ through prayer, worship, and the Word, we create an environment where His presence can thrive within us. Reflect on the ways you can deepen your connection with Him today.

- **Christ Living in Us**

The beautiful reality of our faith is that not only do we abide in Jesus, but He also abides in us. This mutual indwelling empowers us to reflect His character and love in the world. Galatians 2:20 captures this truth well: **"**I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." As we yield to His presence within us, we become vessels of His grace and truth.

- **Bearing Fruit for His Kingdom**

The outcome of our abiding relationship is fruitfulness. Just as branches bear fruit when connected to the vine, our lives will produce good works that glorify God. This fruit is not just for our benefit but serves as a testimony to others. It reflects the character of Christ and invites others to experience His love.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the incredible gift of Your Spirit dwelling within us. Help us to honor our bodies and our community as sacred spaces. Teach us to live in a way that reflects Your holiness and love. May we support one another as living stones, building a spiritual house that glorifies You. We ask for Your guidance in every thought, word, and deed. In Jesus ’name, Amen.

Closing Thoughts

As you go about your day, remember that you are a temple of God. Carry the Spirit of God, his love and his truth within you, allowing it to shape your identity and influence your interactions. Let His presence radiate through you, transforming not only your life but also the lives of those around you. Embrace the beauty of being a living testament to His love and grace.

(96) Worship and Praise To God:

Hebrew Words (Old Testament)

For Worship

1. שָׁחָה(shāchāh) – To bow down, to prostrate in reverence or submission
   - Primary Hebrew word for worship.
   - Denotes deep respect and **reverent surrender** before God.

Example:

- “Come, let us worship (*shāchāh*) and bow down...” – *Psalm 95:6*

2. עָבַד(ʿābad) – To serve, to work, to labor in worship
   - Often used for **serving God** as an act of worship.

Example:

- “You shall worship (*ʿābad*) the Lord your God...” – *Exodus 23:25*

For Praise

1. הָלַל(halal) – To shine, boast, praise enthusiastically
   - Root of “Hallelujah” (Praise Yahweh).
   - Celebratory praise, often loud and expressive.

Example:

- “Let everything that has breath praise (*halal*) the Lord.” – *Psalm 150:6*

2. יָדָה (yādāh) – To give thanks, confess, extend hands

- Expresses gratitude and acknowledgment of God's greatness.

Example:

- "I will praise (*yādāh*) You, O Lord, among the peoples..." – *Psalm 108:3*

3. תְּהִלָּה (tehillāh) – A song or act of praise

- Used often for **musical praise** and **psalms**.

Example:

- "Yet You are holy, enthroned on the praises (*tehillōt*) of Israel." – *Psalm 22:3*

Greek Words (New Testament)

For Worship

1. προσκυνέω (proskyneō) – To fall down, to worship, to show reverence

- Most common NT word for worship, indicating **submission and devotion**.

Example:

- "Worship (*proskyneō*) the Lord your God and serve Him only." – *Matthew 4:10*

2. λατρεύω (latreuō) – To serve, minister as worship

- Worship through service, especially temple or priestly work.

Example:

- "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice... your spiritual worship (*latreia*)." – *Romans 12:1*

For Praise

1. αἰνέω (aineō) – To praise, extol, celebrate

- General term for expressing admiration or thanksgiving to God.

Example:

- "They were continually in the temple blessing (*aineō*) God." – *Luke 24:53*

2. εὐλογέω (eulogeō) – To bless, speak well of

- Used both for God blessing people and people praising God.

Example:

- "Blessed (*eulogētos*) be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..." – *Ephesians 1:3*

Expressions of Worship and Praise in the Bible

- **Singing** (Psalm 147:1; Ephesians 5:19)
- Kneeling or bowing down (Psalm 95:6)

- Lifting hands (Psalm 63:4)
- **Dancing** (Psalm 149:3)
- Sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13:15)
- **Silent awe** (Habakkuk 2:20)

Jesus on Worship and Praise

“The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth...” – *John 4:23–24*

- **Worship must be sincere**, Spirit-led, and grounded in truth.
- Jesus Himself praised the Father (Luke 10:21) and received worship (Matthew 14:33).

Reflection

- **Praise** is the joyful voice of gratitude;
- **Worship** is the bowed heart of reverence.

True worship includes praise, and genuine praise flows from a heart that worships. Both are **essential responses to the glory of God** and are at the center of a faithful, Spirit-filled life.

“Let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe.” – *Hebrews 12:28*

Worship is the act of paying divine honor and adoration to God. The Greek word for worship is 'proskuneo' which means 'to kiss the hand or towards'. Worship expresses our total love for God with all reverence. Every Christian should worship God in various ways. We can worship God through songs of praise, and especially by presenting our bodies as a holy living sacrifice by keeping ourselves away from being selfish and doing evil, this demonstrates our reverence of God. Spiritual worship can and should be given to God anytime, both within the Church and when we are alone.

Some KEY SCRIPTURES

We can teach and admonish one another as we worship the Lord:

Colossians 3:12-17 (AKJV) Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; 13Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you. 14And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfection. 15And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also you are called in one body; and be you thankful. 16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; **teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.**

Romans 12:1 (AKJV) I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (which is your spiritual service of worship.')

John 4:23-26 (AKJV) But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him. 24God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. 25The woman says to him, I know that Messias comes, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. 26Jesus says to her, I that speak to you am he.

We spiritually enter the presence of God when we sing praises to His Name and it is the will of God that we worship Him and give Him all the glory.

Psalm 84:4 (AKJV) Blessed are they that dwell in your house: they will be still praising you. Selah.

Ephesians 5:18-21. (AKJV) And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; 19Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; 20Giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; 21Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Psalm 29:1-2 (AKJV) Give to the LORD, O you mighty, give to the LORD glory and strength. 2Give to the LORD the glory due to his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. =

Psalm 40:3 (AKJV) And he has put a new song in my mouth, even praise to our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

Matthew 4:10-11(AKJV) Then says Jesus to him, Get you hence, Satan: for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve. 11Then the devil leaves him, and, behold, angels came and ministered to him..

Psalm 100:1-5 (AKJV) Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all you lands. 2Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. 3Know you that the LORD he is God: it is he that has made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. 4Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful to him, and bless his name. 5For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endures to all generations.

Worship and praise are two main facets of a Christian's faith, glorifying God with our thanksgiving and appreciation ,emphasizing the reverence, adoration, and acknowledgment of God's greatness. The Bible provides numerous references highlighting the significance of worship as an integral part of a believer's relationship with God.

In the Old Testament, Psalm 100:2-4 encourages believers to "Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. 3Know you that the LORD he is God: it is he that has made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. 4Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be

thankful to him, and bless his name" This Psalm emphasizes joyful worship, recognizing God's sovereignty, and expressing gratitude for His creation.

The New Testament continues to stress the importance of worship. Jesus, in conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:23-26, declares, "But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him. 24God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. 25The woman says to him, I know that Messias comes, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. 26Jesus says to her, I that speak to you am he.." Here, Jesus emphasizes the spiritual nature of worship, focusing on authenticity and sincerity.

The Apostle Paul, in Romans 12:1, urges believers to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, as an act of spiritual worship. This underscores the idea that worship extends beyond mere rituals or ceremonies; it involves the surrender of one's entire life to God.

Praise is closely intertwined with worship, often expressed through song and music. Psalm 150:1-6 provides a beautiful portrayal of praising God with various instruments and voices: "Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!”

Additionally, the Book of Revelation details scenes of heavenly worship, describing angels and redeemed saints praising God around His throne. Revelation 5:11-12 also describes a multitude of voices saying, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

In summary, worship and praise should be integral components of every Christian’s life, reflecting a heart devoted to God. The scriptures call us to engage in genuine, spirit-led worship, recognizing God's greatness, expressing gratitude, and praising Him with joyful hearts and voices. Whether through individual acts of surrender or collective expressions of adoration, worship remains a foundational aspect of the relationship with our God the Almighty.

Diverse Expressions of Worship:

Worship is not limited to a specific set of actions; it involves a wide range of actions to express our love for Jesus and to glorify God. Romans 12:1 encourages us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, presenting every aspect of their lives as an act of worship. This approach of sacrificial love implies that our thoughts, actions, and attitudes can be offerings to God when aligned with His will. The psalmist David, in Psalm 19:14, prays, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." This verse underscores the significance of the heart's posture and words in our worship.

Singing and Music in Worship:

The prevalent form of worship in both the Old and New Testaments involves singing and making music to God. Colossians 3:16 encourages believers to "Let the word

of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God." Music has the power to convey emotions, express gratitude, and unite believers in a communal act of worship. The Psalms, in particular, are filled with poetic expressions of praise through song.

Praise in Times of Trial:

True worship is not contingent on favorable circumstances but is demonstrated even in the midst of challenges. The apostle Paul and Silas exemplified this in Acts 16:25 when, imprisoned and in chains, they were praying and singing hymns to God. Their worship in adversity led to a life changing intervention by God through them, revealing the Spirit of God inhibiting the praises of His people, even in difficult situations.

Private and Corporate Worship:

While personal worship is vital, the Bible also emphasizes the importance of gathering together for corporate worship. Hebrews 10:24-25 encourages us to "consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another." Corporate worship fosters a sense of community, accountability, and shared adoration of God.

Worship as a Response to God's Revelation:

Central to Christian worship is a response to God's revelation of Himself. As believers encounter God through His Word, prayer, and the Holy Spirit, their natural response is awe, gratitude, and submission. The Transfiguration of Jesus in Matthew 17:1-8 exemplifies a profound encounter with the divine, leading the disciples to fall on their faces in worship.

The phrase "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise" is derived from Psalm 100:4, which is a call to worship and an invitation to approach God's presence with a heart full of gratitude and praise. Understanding this verse involves exploring the broader context of Psalm 100 and considering its implications for believers' approach to God.

Psalm 100: A Psalm of Thanksgiving and Praise:

Psalm 100 is a joyful and exuberant psalm that calls all the earth to worship the Lord with gladness, acknowledging His sovereignty and goodness. It begins with the famous declaration, "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!" The psalmist encourages the one another to serve the Lord with gladness and come into His presence with singing. In verse 4, the specific instruction to "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise" provides insights into the attitude and demeanor with which believers should approach God.

Symbolic Meaning of "Gates" and "Courts":

The use of terms like "gates" and "courts" in the context of worship has symbolic significance. In the Old Testament, the gates of the city were places of gathering, judgment, and authority. Likewise, the courts of the Lord's dwelling, such as the tabernacle or temple, were considered sacred spaces representing His presence.

Therefore, entering God's gates and courts symbolizes approaching His dwelling place, seeking communion with Him.

Thanksgiving and Praise as Approaches to God:

The sequence of thanksgiving and praise in Psalm 100:4 is noteworthy. Thanksgiving involves expressing gratitude for God's specific acts of kindness, provision, and faithfulness. It is a reflection on the goodness of God in our lives. Praise, on the other hand, is a broader acknowledgment of God's attributes and character. Together, thanksgiving and praise create a well-rounded approach to God, recognizing both His specific blessings and His overarching majesty.

Attitude of the Heart:

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise" emphasizes not only the outward expression of worship but also the inward disposition of the heart. The act of entering God's presence is not a mere formality but an intimate encounter where the believer brings a heart filled with gratitude and adoration. This implies that worship is not a mechanical or ritualistic activity but a deeply relational and personal engagement with the Creator.

New Testament Application:

While Psalm 100 is rooted in the Old Testament context, its principles find resonance in the New Testament. The declaration of entering God's presence with thanksgiving and praise aligns with the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. In the New Testament, believers are encouraged to approach God with confidence and gratitude, understanding that they have access to the Father through the work of Jesus Christ.

Romans 12:1-2: A Call to Transformation

The crux of this spiritual principle is encapsulated in Romans 12:1-2, where Paul passionately appeals to disciples of Jesus Christ. He implores them to present their bodies as living sacrifices, not conforming to the patterns of the world but undergoing a transformative renewal of their minds. This metamorphosis, rooted in the spiritual realm, signifies a departure from the self-centeredness of the world to a God-centric existence.

The Old Testament Foreshadowing: Sacrificial Offerings

To appreciate the depth of presenting ourselves as living sacrifices, we glance back at the Old Testament, where sacrificial offerings were a tangible expression of devotion. However, the new covenant, established through Christ's sacrifice, transforms this practice from external rituals to an internal, spiritual reality.

Hebrews 13:15-16: The Fruit of Lips and Deeds

In the New Testament, the book of Hebrews sheds light on the continuity of spiritual worship. Hebrews 13:15-16 emphasizes that our lips should continually offer praises to God, and our deeds should align with acts of kindness and sharing. This emphasis of presenting our bodies as living sacrifices – is defining a worship that encompasses both the spoken and lived aspects of our lives.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20: The Temple of the Holy Spirit

Another facet of this spiritual worship is unveiled in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Here, believers are reminded that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, purchased at a great price. This realization serves as a compelling motivation for presenting ourselves entirely to God, acknowledging His rightful ownership.

Philippians 2:17: Paul's Self-Pouring Offering

The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, illustrates the sacrificial aspect of spiritual worship in his own life. In Philippians 2:17, he likens his life to a drink offering poured out in service to God. This vivid example that captures the essence of presenting our bodies – a pouring out of ourselves as an offering to the One who is worthy.

In conclusion, worship and praise are dynamic aspects of our faith in God and Jesus Christ, encompassing a spectrum of expressions that go beyond ritualistic practices. Genuine worship flows from a heart transformed by the love and grace of God, influencing every facet of a believer's life. Whether through individual contemplation, musical expressions, persevering in trials, or Christian fellowships and Churches, worship remains a vibrant and essential part of the Christian's life in loving God with all of mind, heart and strength..

(97) Adoration for God:

Adoration in the Bible

Definition

Adoration is the act of **deep love, reverence, and worship** directed toward God. It goes beyond gratitude or praise—it is **a posture of the soul** that recognizes the **worth, holiness, and majesty** of God and responds with **awe and affection**.

Adoration is often expressed through worship, bowing, praise, silence, singing, or prayer—all acts that exalt God for who He is, not just what He does.

Biblical Language Roots

Hebrew (Old Testament)

1. שָׁחָה(shāchāh) – To bow down, to worship, to prostrate
   - A primary word for worship in Hebrew.
   - Literally means to bend low—an outward act expressing adoration, submission, and reverence.

Examples:

- "Come, let us worship and bow down (*shāchāh*); let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." – *Psalm 95:6*
- Abraham "bowed down" to worship in Genesis 18:2.

2. הָלַל(halal) – To praise, to boast in, to glorify

- The root of *hallelujah* (“praise the Lord”).
- Expresses joyful, celebratory **adoration and glorying in God**.

Example:

- “Let everything that has breath praise (*halal*) the Lord.” – *Psalm 150:6*

Greek (New Testament)

1. προσκυνέω (proskyneō) – To worship, to prostrate oneself
   - Literally means “to kiss toward” or “fall down before.”
   - Describes **adoration by bowing or prostrating**, especially before God or Christ.

Examples:

- “Worship the Lord your God (*proskyneō*) and serve Him only.” – *Matthew 4:10*
- “The twenty-four elders fall down and worship…” – *Revelation 4:10*

2. δοξάζω (doxazō) – To glorify, honor, magnify
   - To **give glory and exaltation** to God in response to His nature or acts.

Example:

- “Glorify (*doxazō*) God in your body.” – *1 Corinthians 6:20*

Adoration in Worship

Adoration is central to true worship. It focuses not just on God’s blessings but on **God’s being**:

- **His holiness** – Isaiah 6:3: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts…”
- **His majesty and glory** – Psalm 8:1, Psalm 145:3
- His love and faithfulness – Psalm 103:1–5

In many Psalms, adoration is expressed through songs, silence, bowing, and declarations of God’s worthiness.

Examples of Adoration in Scripture

1. **David**“ – I will extol You, my God and King, and bless Your name forever...” – *Psalm 145:1–3*
2. **Mary (Mother of Jesus)**“ – My soul magnifies the Lord…” – *Luke 1:46–47*
3. **Heavenly Worship**“ – Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power…” – *Revelation 4:11*
4. **Jesus in Prayer**“ – Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name...” – *Matthew 6:9*

How to Practice Adoration Today

- Private worship and prayer focused on God's attributes
- **Scripture meditation** (especially Psalms and Revelation)
- **Singing hymns or worship songs** that exalt God's holiness, love, power, and glory
- Silence or reverent stillness before God (Psalm 46:10)
- **Bowing or lifting hands** in acknowledgment of God's majesty (1 Timothy 2:8; Psalm 134:2)

We worship you O God, and you are worthy of all of our Adoration, Now and Forever

Psalm 29:2: "Give to the LORD the glory due to his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness."

Psalm 95:6: "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker."

Revelation 4:11:"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for you have created all things, and for your pleasure they are and were created."

Adoration of God is the highest form of worship, an expression of reverence, awe, and love for the Almighty Creator. It is a response to the majesty, holiness, and goodness of God, acknowledging His sovereignty and worthiness of all praise. In Psalm 95:6, we are invited, "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker."

When we adore God, we recognize His attributes and character. We marvel at His infinite wisdom, His unfailing love, and His boundless grace. We stand in awe of His power displayed in creation, His faithfulness demonstrated throughout history, and His mercy extended to us, despite our unworthiness.

Adoration of God is not limited to words or certainty not rituals but encompasses every aspect of our being, with sincerity. It is expressed through our prayers, our songs of praise, and our acts of service. It permeates our thoughts, our attitudes, and our relationships, shaping us into people who reflect the glory of God in all we do.

Adoration of God is a humbling experience, as we recognize our insufficient nature in comparison to His greatness. It leads us to surrender our will to His, to trust in His providence, and to submit to His guidance. It fills us with gratitude and joy, knowing that we are loved by the One who holds all things in His hands.

As we adore God, we are transformed. Our hearts are softened, our minds are renewed, and our spirits are lifted. We find peace in His presence, strength in His promises, and hope in His eternal kingdom.

May our lives be characterized by adoration of God, as we exalt His name with all our hearts, souls, and minds. May every breath we take be an offering of praise to Jesus who is worthy of all honor and glory forevermore.

(98) Thankfulness And Gratitude To God:

Expressing Gratitude Toward God: A Life of Thankful Worship *Living in Recognition of His Goodness and Grace*

Thankfulness and Gratitude in the Bible

Definition

Thankfulness and **gratitude** are the heart's **genuine acknowledgment of God's goodness, grace, and provision**, often expressed in words, worship, prayer, and obedience. They are not limited to favorable circumstances but flow from a posture of trust in God's sovereignty and character.

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." – *1 Thessalonians 5:18*

Hebrew Words (Old Testament)

1. יָדָה(yādāh) – To give thanks, to praise, to confess
   - Root meaning: to cast or throw—symbolizing the **lifting or extending of hands** in acknowledgment and praise.
   - Often used in Psalms to express **thanksgiving directed to God**.

Examples:

- "I will give thanks (*yādāh*) to the Lord with my whole heart." – *Psalm 9:1*
- "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good..." – *Psalm 107:1*

2. תּוֹדָה(tōdāh) – Thanksgiving, gratitude, praise offering
   - Derived from *yādāh*, it refers to **a thank offering** or **declaration of thanks**, often accompanied by public worship or sacrifice.

Examples:

- "Enter His gates with thanksgiving (*tōdāh*), and His courts with praise." – *Psalm 100:4*
- "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving (*tōdāh*)." – *Psalm 50:14*

Greek Words (New Testament)

1. εὐχαριστέω (eucharisteō) – To give thanks, be grateful
   - Root of the word *Eucharist*, meaning **thanksgiving**.
   - Expresses a **deep spiritual gratitude**, especially in prayer and worship.

Examples:

- "In everything give thanks (*eucharisteite*)..." – *1 Thessalonians 5:18*
- Jesus "gave thanks" (*eucharisteō*) before feeding the 5,000 – *John 6:11*

2. χάρις (charis) – Grace, favor, kindness

- The root word of *gratitude*, as grace (*charis*) is the basis for all thankfulness.
- When one receives *charis*, the proper response is *eucharisteō* (thanksgiving).

Examples:

- "Thanks (*charis*) be to God for His indescribable gift!" – *2 Corinthians 9:15*

Key Characteristics of Thankfulness in Scripture

1. It is God-Directed
    - True biblical gratitude recognizes God as the **giver of all good things** (James 1:17).
2. It Is Continual, Not Circumstantial
    - "In everything give thanks..." – *1 Thessalonians 5:18*
    - Even in trials (James 1:2), gratitude reflects faith.
3. It Is Expressed in Prayer and Worship
    - "With thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." – *Philippians 4:6*
4. It Honors and Glorifies God
    - Ingratitude is the root of unbelief and rebellion (Romans 1:21).
    - Thankfulness acknowledges God's rightful place as Lord and Provider.

Biblical Examples of Thankfulness

- **Jesus** – Gave thanks before meals (Matthew 15:36), before raising Lazarus (John 11:41)
- **David** – Constantly praised and thanked God in the Psalms
- **Paul** – Overflowed with thanksgiving in his letters, even from prison (Colossians 1:3, Philippians 1:3)
- **The healed leper** – Only one of ten returned to give thanks (Luke 17:11–19)

What Gratitude Produces in the Christian Life

1. **Contentment**" – Godliness with contentment is great gain." – *1 Timothy 6:6*
2. **Peace**" – Let the peace of Christ rule... and be thankful." – *Colossians 3:15*
3. **Joy and Praise**" – Rejoice always... give thanks in all things." – *1 Thessalonians 5:16–18*

4. **Generosity** – Grateful hearts give freely (2 Corinthians 9:11–12)

Reflection

Thankfulness is not just a polite or seasonal gesture—it is the **daily rhythm of the redeemed heart**. Gratitude is the **evidence of grace**, the **fuel of joy**, and the **foundation of worship**. It honors God and transforms the soul.

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits...” – *Psalm 103:2*

Introduction

As a people who have been saved and loved by Jesus Christ, thankfulness and gratitude or gratefulness are fundamental expressions of every Christian’s life and faith. It is not merely an emotion or a fleeting feeling but a deliberate and continuous response to the goodness, grace, and love of God. Throughout Scripture, we are called to express thankfulness in all circumstances, recognizing that every good gift comes from God (James 1:17). Gratitude is not simply an acknowledgment of what God has done; it is a recognition of who He is and a response to His character.

At the heart of our thankfulness is the cross of Jesus Christ. **“**While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). This truth humbles us. We look back at our lives and see how far God has brought us, not because of our own goodness, but because of His. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, our sins have been forgiven, and we**’**ve been reconciled to God. That alone is reason enough to live every day in gratitude. We were dead in our sin, and now we are alive in Christ. How could we not give thanks?

But our gratitude doesn**’**t end at the moment of salvation — it deepens as we walk with God daily. He doesn**’**t just save us and leave us alone; He stays with us through His Spirit. The Holy Spirit comforts us, convicts us, teaches us, and reminds us of what is true. Even in our darkest moments, we are not abandoned. We**’**ve learned to say with confidence, **“**God is faithful,” even when we can**’**t understand everything. Our thankfulness grows when we realize that His presence never leaves us, and His plans for us are always good — even when they**’**re not always easy.

We are exceedingly thankful for his steadfast love, kindness and goodness, in providing our spiritual and physical needs, every day according to His perfect wisdom and purpose. He helps us to overcome temptation and sin and gives us his His Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. We no longer walk in darkness and confusion but rather in the light of Jesus Christ. He gives us a hope, a future and eternal life.

In this commentary, we will explore what it means to express gratitude toward God, why it is important, and how it shapes our lives as followers of Christ. We will look at the biblical foundations for thankfulness and its transformative power in the life of a believer. Through various Scripture passages, we will examine the role of gratitude in worship, prayer, relationships, and in the face of both joy and adversity.

1. The Biblical Foundation for Gratitude Toward God

Gratitude toward God is found throughout the Bible, the Word of God, from the Old Testament to the New Testament. It is rooted in the acknowledgment of God's sovereignty, His goodness, and His faithful provision for His people.

1.1 Gratitude in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, expressions of gratitude were a vital part of Israel's worship. The Psalms, in particular, are filled with declarations of thankfulness to God for His acts of creation, His deliverance, and His covenant faithfulness. The Israelites were regularly reminded to remember and give thanks for the ways in which God had provided for them, both in times of blessing and in times of hardship.

Psalm 100:4,5 (AKJV) – "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful to him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endures to all generations. ."

This verse speaks to the communal nature of gratitude. The act of entering the Lord's gates and courts with thanksgiving was not just an individual act but a communal celebration of God's goodness. Gratitude was integral to the worship experience, setting the tone for the heart of worship to follow.

Psalm 107:1 –(AKJV) "O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endures for ever.."

This verse highlights two key reasons for gratitude: God's goodness and His enduring mercy. The psalmist calls the people to give thanks because God is good by nature, and His mercy is unending, making gratitude a natural and fitting response.

1.2 Gratitude in the New Testament

In the New Testament, gratitude is equally emphasized, especially in the context of the believer's new identity in Christ. The apostle Paul frequently encourages the early church to be thankful, both for God's work in salvation and for His ongoing provision.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 –(AKJV) "Rejoice ever more. 17Pray without ceasing. 18In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.."

Paul's instruction to give thanks in everything is a radical challenge, not dependent on circumstances but on the nature of God's will. Gratitude is a response that transcends situations because it is rooted in God's character and His providential care.

Colossians 3:15-17 –(AKJV) "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also you are called in one body; and be you thankful. 16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

Here, Paul emphasizes that gratitude should permeate every aspect of the believer's life—both in actions and in worship. Gratitude is a posture of the heart that shapes relationships, worship, and our daily conduct. It is also a natural outflow of the peace and presence of Christ in our lives.

1.3 Theological Foundations of Gratitude

At the heart of biblical gratitude lies the gospel itself—the good news that, through Jesus Christ, sinners have been reconciled to a holy God. The gratitude that Christians are called to express is not simply for temporal blessings but for the eternal, unmerited grace offered through Christ. This grace is the foundation of every act of thankfulness.

Ephesians 2:8-10 –(AKJV) "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.."

The doctrine of grace—God's undeserved favor—compels gratitude. Believers are saved not because of anything they have done but purely by God's grace. This divine grace is the reason for our ultimate thankfulness and the foundation for our new life in Christ.

2. The Nature of Gratitude Toward God

Expressing gratitude toward God is not only about offering thanks in times of joy but also about cultivating a continual attitude of thankfulness in every circumstance.

2.1 Gratitude as Worship

Gratitude is central to worship. Worship is not merely singing songs or attending church services; it is the act of offering ourselves to God in thanksgiving for His greatness and goodness. When we give thanks, we acknowledge God as the giver of all good things, and our gratitude becomes a form of worship.

Hebrews 13:15 –(AKJV) "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. "

This verse illustrates that thanksgiving is a form of sacrifice, an offering that acknowledges God's sovereignty and grace. It is through this expression of gratitude that we honor God and declare His worth.

2.2 Gratitude in Prayer

Prayer is another key avenue for expressing gratitude. While petitioning God for help is a natural part of prayer, the Scriptures consistently call believers to offer prayers of thanksgiving alongside their requests.

Philippians 4:6-7 – (AKJV) “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

In times of anxiety, gratitude in prayer becomes a powerful antidote. It redirects our focus from our fears and problems to the faithfulness and goodness of God, leading to peace that guards our hearts.

2.3 Gratitude in Adversity

One of the most challenging aspects of gratitude is learning to give thanks in difficult circumstances. While it is easier to express gratitude in times of abundance and joy, the Bible teaches that we are also to give thanks in times of suffering, knowing that God works all things for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28).

James 1:2-4 –(AKJV) "My brothers, count it all joy when you fall into divers (various)temptations; 3Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. 4But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

Gratitude in adversity is an act of faith that trusts God**’**s purposes even in the midst of trials. This kind of gratitude acknowledges that God is sovereign over our circumstances and that He is using them to refine us and conform us to the image of Christ.

2.4 Gratitude in Relationships

Gratitude is not only an individual expression but also a communal one. Paul encourages believers to express gratitude toward God as part of their relationships with one another. A thankful heart fosters unity, joy, and mutual encouragement in the body of Christ.

Ephesians 5:19-20 – "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; 20Giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;"

Gratitude is an act that encourages others. As believers give thanks to God, they also encourage one another, fostering an atmosphere of unity, peace, and love within the church.

3. The Benefits of Gratitude Toward God

Expressing gratitude toward God is not only an act of obedience but also has transformative effects on the believer**’**s heart, mind, and life.

3.1 Spiritual Growth and Contentment

Gratitude shifts our focus from what we lack to what we have in Christ. It cultivates contentment, reminding us of God's abundant provision, both materially and spiritually. A thankful heart is a contented heart, knowing that God's grace is sufficient for every need.

1 Timothy 6:6-8 –(AKJV) But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

3.2 Joy and Peace

Gratitude leads to joy and peace. When we focus on God**'**s goodness and faithfulness, our hearts are filled with joy, and our minds are guarded by peace. Gratitude transforms our perspective, allowing us to experience the fullness of God's peace.

Psalm 118:24 –(AKJV) "This is the day which the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. ."

3.3 A Testimony to the World

A life of gratitude serves as a powerful testimony to the world. In a world that is often marked by complaining, discontentment, and ingratitude, the believer**'**s thankful heart stands out as a witness to the goodness and grace of God.

Matthew 5:16 – "(AKJV) You are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light to all that are in the house. 16Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Conclusion: Living a Grateful Life

Gratitude toward God is a lifestyle, not a one-time act. It is a posture of the heart that shapes our worship, our relationships, and our daily actions. Gratitude is rooted in the gospel and flows from the recognition of God**'**s unmerited grace and goodness. As we cultivate a life of thankfulness, we draw closer to God, experience His peace, and become a powerful testimony of His love and provision to the world. May our hearts overflow with gratitude, and may our lives reflect the goodness of the God we serve.

(99) Expressing Our Gratitude To God:

1 Thessalonians 5:18 AKJV," In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you".

Ways to Express Our Gratitude To God:

1. Loving God

Jesus taught that the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37). Loving God is a powerful way to show gratitude because it means valuing Him above everything else—not just for what He gives, but for who He is.

Ways to express Thankfulness and love to God:

- Spending time in prayer and studying His Word.
- Making Him the priority in your decisions, goals, and relationships.
- Loving others as a reflection of His love in you.

Loving God is the foundation of a grateful life. It turns thankfulness from words into devotion.

2. By Blessing God:

What Does It Mean to Bless God?

To **bless God** doesn't mean we're giving Him something He lacks (He is complete in Himself). Rather, it means we:

- Praise Him for who He is
- Acknowledge His greatness and goodness
- Express heartfelt gratitude and reverence

It's a posture of **adoration, worship, and humility** — saying, "God, You are worthy of all honor and glory."

Biblical Examples

- **Psalm 103:1** – "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!"
- **Psalm 34:1** – "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth."
- **Luke 1:68** – "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people."

Ways to Bless God

Here are some practical and heartfelt ways to bless God:

a. Through Praise and Worship

- Speaking or singing about His attributes (e.g., faithfulness, mercy, justice).
- Praising Him not just for what He does, but for who He is.

b. Through a Grateful Heart

- Acknowledging every blessing as a gift from Him.
- Giving thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

c. By Living in Obedience

- Choosing righteousness, even when it's hard.
- Offering your life as a "living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1) is a way to say, *"I bless You with my choices."*

d. By Speaking of His Goodness to Others

- Sharing testimonies and giving Him glory publicly.
- Encouraging others in their faith by declaring what God has done.

A Simple Prayer to Bless God

"Blessed are You, Lord, God of all creation. You are holy, merciful, and full of compassion. I praise You not just for what You've done for me, but because You are worthy, righteous, and good. May my life bring You honor today. Amen."

In short, **to bless God and to show thankfulness to Him is to worship Him with your heart, your words, and your life.** It's the natural overflow of a soul that knows it has been loved, saved, and sustained.

3. Honoring God

To honor God means to treat Him with reverence, respect, and awe. It's about recognizing His authority, holiness, and goodness in every part of life.

Ways to honor God:

- Speaking about Him with reverence, not casually or irreverently.
- Putting Him first in your time, your choices, and your resources.
- Living in a way that reflects His character—humble, pure, and faithful.

Proverbs 3:9 says, *"Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops."* Honoring God shows that your life belongs to Him, and that you're grateful not just for His gifts, but for His Lordship.

4. Doing His Will

Obedience is one of the clearest and most practical expressions of gratitude. When we choose God's ways over our own, it shows that we trust Him and are thankful for His guidance and love.

Ways to do His will:

- Seeking His direction through prayer and Scripture.
- Living according to His commandments, even when it's difficult.
- Letting go of selfish ambitions to follow His purpose for your life.

Jesus said in John 14:15, *"If you love me, keep my commandments."* Doing God's will is an act of worship and gratitude—it says, "Your way is better, and I trust You."

5. Prayer

- **Verbal thankfulness**: Simply speaking to God in prayer, acknowledging specific blessings.
- **Silent reflection**: Quiet moments of gratitude in one's heart.

Example: "Thank You, God, for the strength to get through today."

6. Worship and Praise

- Singing or listening to worship music that honors God.
- Attending church or spiritual gatherings to give collective thanks.

Example: Singing hymns like "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" or "How Great Thou Art."

7. Acts of Service

- Serving others selflessly as a way to show love and gratitude to God.
- Volunteering, helping the needy, or supporting someone in crisis.

Example: Donating time or resources to an emergency crisis with thankfulness for your own provisions.

8. Obedience and Faithfulness

- Living according to God's teachings as a form of respect and gratitude.
- Trusting God even when it's difficult, as a sign of love and appreciation.

Example: Choosing patience over anger because it reflects God's character.

9. Giving

- Supporting those in need, or to ministries and missions as a way to express our thankfulness to God
- Offering firstfruits or financial blessings in gratitude.

Example: Giving a portion of your income to your church or a mission that aligns with your values; Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, providing shelter to the strangers and homeless etc.

10. Sharing Your Testimony

- Telling others about what God has done in your life.
- Using your story to encourage and build up others.

Example: "I went through a hard season, but God gave me peace when I didn't expect it."

11. By again, Blessing God

a. Blessing God in What We Think

“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord.” – Psalm 19:14

- **Thoughts of gratitude**: Thanking God inwardly throughout the day.
- **Pure and honoring thoughts**: Rejecting bitterness, lust, or pride; choosing thoughts that reflect God's character.
- **Meditating on truth**: Filling your mind with Scripture, promises, and God’s faithfulness.

Example: When faced with fear, you turn your thoughts to God's promises and choose trust over worry.

b. Blessing God in What We Say

“With the tongue we bless our Lord and Father…” – James 3:9

- **Speaking praise**: Verbally thanking and worshiping God.
- **Using our words to uplift**: Encouraging others, speaking truth, and avoiding gossip, lies, or anger.
- **Testifying of His goodness**: Sharing what God has done in your life, giving Him the glory.

Example: Instead of complaining, you thank God aloud for His faithfulness—even when things aren’t easy.

c. Blessing God in What We Do

“Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” – 1 Corinthians 10:31

- **Acts of obedience**: Following His commands, even when it's costly or inconvenient.
- **Serving others**: Showing kindness, compassion, and generosity as a reflection of His love.
- **Living with integrity**: Doing your work, relationships, and responsibilities in a way that reflects God's truth and righteousness.

Example: You forgive someone who wronged you, not because it’s easy, but because it blesses God to obey Him and extend grace.

Gratitude is a powerful expression of our faith and humility, acknowledging the goodness and faithfulness of God in our lives. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, we are exhorted, “ In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”. This reminds us that gratitude is not dependent on our circumstances but is a choice we make to recognize and appreciate the blessings we have received from God.

Expressing gratitude to God begins with a heart posture of humility and appreciation. It involves acknowledging God as the source of all good gifts and recognizing His sovereignty over every aspect of our lives. Whether in times of abundance or scarcity, in joy or sorrow, we are called to give thanks to God for His unfailing love and provision.

Gratitude is expressed through prayer, praise, and acts of service. It is lifting our voices in thanksgiving for the countless blessings we have received, both big and small. It is offering our time, talents, and resources in service to others as a tangible expression of our gratitude to God.

When we have a spirit of gratitude, our perspective shifts. Instead of focusing on what we lack, we become attuned to the abundance of God's blessings all around us. We see His hand at work in every circumstance, working all things together for our good and His glory.

Expressing gratitude to God is not just a one-time event but a continuous attitude of the heart. It is a lifestyle characterized by thankfulness and praise, even in the midst of trials and difficulties. As we exhibit an attitude of gratitude, we experience greater joy, peace, and contentment in our relationship with God.

May our lives be a testament to the transformative power of gratitude, as we continually offer thanks to God for His boundless grace and love toward us.

(100) Christian Behavior:

The call for all of us as Christians to have and to continue in good behavior resonates throughout the Scriptures as a reminder for us to conduct ourselves in a manner that reflects the transformative power of God's grace, and love. This call goes beyond mere external actions; it encourages us to embody a Christlike character in every aspect of our lives. As disciples of Jesus Christ we should reflect His love and righteousness, turning from sin and temptations. Exhibiting good behavior is a powerful witness to the world. How will they know that we are Christians? By the love that we have for one another.

So in what ways should our behavior be as outlined in the Bible?

Christian behavior encompasses how we live out our faith in everyday actions, reflecting the values and teachings of Jesus Christ. As followers of Christ, our behavior should be marked by love, holiness, purity, humility, integrity, godly virtues and a commitment to righteousness. In Romans 12:9-10, the apostle Paul instructs us, "Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor." This passage emphasizes the centrality of love in our interactions with others, encouraging us to prioritize genuine care, compassion, forgiveness and regarding the spiritual and physical needs and livelihood of others, as Jesus loved us. Most of all. our behavior towards God should be with thankfulness, willful obedience and loving Him with all of our being.

Our behavior as Christians should also be characterized by humility, following the example of Jesus who humbled Himself to serve others (Philippians 2:3-8). Humility involves acknowledging our dependence on God, valuing others above ourselves, and

using our gifts and resources to benefit the community. When we practice humility, we cultivate unity and harmony within the Body of Christ, fostering an environment where everyone feels valued and supported.

Integrity is another hallmark of Christian behavior. Psalm 15:1-2 poses the question, "O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart." As Christians, we are called to live with honesty and sincerity, aligning our words and actions with God's truth. Integrity strengthens our witness and credibility, demonstrating our commitment to following Christ wholeheartedly.

Furthermore, our behavior should reflect a commitment to righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:22-24 exhorts us, "Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." This transformation involves actively resisting sin and pursuing a life that honors God in thought, word, and deed. It requires intentional effort to cultivate virtues such as patience, kindness, forgiveness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

In all aspects of our behavior, whether at home, work, school, or in our communities, we are called to be ambassadors of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). Our words and actions should reflect His love and grace, drawing others to Him through our testimony and example. As we strive to live out our faith authentically, guided by the Holy Spirit and grounded in God's Word, we fulfill the commandment to love God and love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). In doing so, we contribute to building a community of believers characterized by compassion, unity, and a shared commitment to glorifying God in everything we do.

HOW should we behave ?

Romans 13:13 (AKJV): **"Let us walk honestly, as in the day;** not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."

1 Samuel 18:30 (AKJV): "Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, that David **behaved himself more wisely** than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by."

Ephesians 4:32 (AKJV) - "And be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you."

Philippians 2:3-4 (AKJV) - "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

Colossians 3:12-14 (AKJV) - "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you. And above all these things put on charity (Love), which is the bond of perfection."

1 Peter 3:8-9 (AKJV) - "Finally, be you all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brothers, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that you are thereunto called, that you should inherit a blessing."

Love as Jesus Christ Loved Us:

Ephesians 5:2-5 (AKJV) " And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling smell. 3But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becomes saints; 4Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5For this you know, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

How should we NOT behave ?

Psalm 106:6 (AKJV): "We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done (behaved) wickedly."

Romans 13:13 (AKJV): "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; **not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."**

Romans 12:9 (AKJV) - "Let love be without(deceit,lying)dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; hold to that which is good."

Philippians 2:3-4 (AKJV) - **"Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory;** but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

Some More Ways About How Should We Behave As Christians:

Behaving with Love:

The foundation of Christian conduct is love. In John 13:34-35, Jesus commands us, His disciples, to love one another as He has loved us. This love goes beyond mere sentiment; it involves practical actions that demonstrate selflessness, compassion, and genuine care for others. Behaving with love is a hallmark of a Christlike character. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to embody His love in our actions and relationships.

Living in Righteousness:

Psalm 119:172 declares, "My tongue shall speak of your word, for all your commandments are righteousness." As Christians, living in accordance with God's Word involves aligning our actions with the moral and ethical standards outlined by Jesus Christ. Righteous behavior reflects our commitment to holiness and obedience. This means not behaving self-righteously but rather taking on the righteousness of Jesus Christ by faith, living more Christlike in good conduct and morals, and loving others as He loved us.

Walking in Humility:

Micah 6:8 calls us, as believers, to "walk humbly with your God." Behaving with humility involves acknowledging our dependence on God, recognizing the value of others, and cultivating a servant-hearted attitude. Humility is exemplified in the life of Jesus, who "humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8). As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to follow His example and walk humbly in all areas of our lives.

Practicing Patience:

James 5:7-8 encourages us to be patient, like a farmer waiting for the precious fruit of the earth. Patience in behavior involves enduring trials with steadfastness, bearing with one another in love, and trusting in God's perfect timing. As Christians, we reflect trust in God's sovereignty when we demonstrate patience, knowing He is working all things for our good.

Exercising Self-Control:

Galatians 5:22-23 highlights self-control as a fruit of the Spirit. As followers of Jesus Christ, exercising self-control means demonstrating restraint over our impulses, desires, and reactions. This discipline helps us navigate challenges with wisdom, resist temptations, and live in a manner that honors God.

Being Honest and Truthful:

Ephesians 4:25 instructs us to put away falsehood and speak the truth. As believers and disciples of Jesus, behaving honestly means being people of integrity in speech and action. Truthfulness builds trust in our relationships and reflects the character of a God who is the ultimate source of truth.

Fleeing from Sin:

1 Thessalonians 5:22 advises us to "abstain from every form of evil." As Christians, we are called to behave in light of God's grace by actively avoiding and fleeing from sinful practices. This commitment to holiness reflects our recognition of God's transforming power, which breaks the chains of sin.

Cultivating a Spirit of Gratitude:

Colossians 3:17 encourages us to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. As disciples of Jesus Christ, behaving with gratitude involves acknowledging God's goodness, expressing thankfulness in all circumstances, and living with a heart of appreciation for God's grace.

Seeking Wisdom and Understanding:

Proverbs 3:13 emphasizes the value of wisdom. As Christians, we are encouraged to behave in light of God's grace by seeking wisdom and understanding, making decisions in alignment with God's Word, and relying on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Wisdom-driven behavior reflects our deep reverence for God and His guidance in our lives.

Exhibiting Kindness and Compassion:

Ephesians 4:32 encourages us to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave us. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to exhibit kindness and compassion in our interactions. Our grace-driven behavior extends forgiveness and reflects the mercy we have received from God.

Honoring Authority and Submitting Willingly:

Romans 13:1 emphasizes the submission to governing authorities as part of God's ordained order. As Christians, we are called to honor authority structures and submit willingly in various spheres of life. This submission is an expression of trust in God's sovereignty and a commitment to living a life of order and respect.

Practicing Generosity and Hospitality:

Hebrews 13:16 encourages us to do good and share what we have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Living gracefully means practicing generosity and hospitality, reflecting the open-handedness of a gracious God. By sharing our resources and welcoming others, we demonstrate Christlike love in action.

Demonstrating Faithfulness:

1 Corinthians 4:2 calls for faithfulness in stewardship. As believers, living gracefully involves being faithful stewards of the gifts, talents, and responsibilities entrusted to us by God. A life marked by faithfulness demonstrates our deep appreciation for God's trust and reflects our commitment to honoring Him in every aspect of our lives.

Resisting Pride and Cultivating Humility:

James 4:6 reminds us that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to resist pride and cultivate humility. A humble demeanor acknowledges our dependence on God, values others above ourselves, and opens the door for God's abundant grace.

Seeking Reconciliation and Forgiveness:

Matthew 5:23-24 emphasizes the importance of reconciling with others before presenting offerings to God. As disciples of Jesus Christ, living gracefully includes actively seeking reconciliation and extending forgiveness. A grace-driven approach to conflicts and offenses reflects the reconciliation we have received through Christ.

Embracing the Fruits of the Spirit:

Galatians 5:22-23 outlines the fruits of the Spirit, including love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. As Christians, we are called to manifest these fruits in our attitudes and actions. These qualities characterize a life surrendered to the Holy Spirit's transformative work.

Striving for Holiness:

1 Peter 1:15-16 calls us to be holy as God is holy. As followers of Jesus Christ, living gracefully means continually pursuing holiness, recognizing that God's grace empowers us to live a life set apart for His purposes. Striving for holiness is an expression of gratitude for the sanctifying work of God in our lives.

Developing a Spirit of Contentment:

1 Timothy 6:6 teaches that godliness with contentment is great gain. As believers, graceful living involves cultivating contentment in every season, recognizing that true satisfaction comes from a relationship with God rather than external circumstances. A content heart reflects trust in God's provision and sovereignty.

Exercising Discernment and Wisdom:

Proverbs 3:13-14 extols the value of wisdom and discernment. As Christians, graceful living includes seeking God's wisdom in decision-making, discerning the times, and understanding His will. Exercising discernment and wisdom demonstrates a reliance on God's guidance and a commitment to aligning our choices with His Word.

Being Quick to Listen and Slow to Speak:

James 1:19 advises us to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. As followers of Jesus Christ, graceful living involves cultivating effective communication, actively listening to others, and tempering our words with kindness and wisdom. This approach fosters understanding and promotes unity within the body of Christ.

Extending Compassion to the Needy:

Proverbs 14:31 underscores the importance of showing compassion to the poor. As Christians, graceful living involves extending a helping hand to those in need, reflecting God's heart for the marginalized. Compassion is a tangible expression of Christ's love and a response to the grace we have received.

Choosing Joy in Adversity:

James 1:2-3 encourages us to consider it pure joy when facing trials. As followers of Jesus Christ, graceful living involves choosing joy in the midst of adversity, trusting that God works all things for good. A joy-filled disposition reflects confidence in God's faithfulness and a reliance on His sustaining grace.

Embracing a Lifestyle of Thankfulness:

Colossians 3:15 urges us to be thankful. Graceful living includes embracing a lifestyle of gratitude, recognizing God's goodness in every circumstance. A thankful heart expresses appreciation for God's grace and acknowledges His faithfulness in both trials and blessings.

Exhibiting Purity of Heart:

Psalm 51:10 encourages us to create in us a clean heart. As Christians, graceful living involves pursuing purity of heart, maintaining integrity, and guarding against impure thoughts and motives. A pure heart reflects our commitment to honoring God in all aspects of life.

Being Steadfast in Prayer:

Colossians 4:2 calls us to be steadfast in prayer. As believers, graceful living involves maintaining a vibrant prayer life, seeking God's guidance, and interceding for others. Steadfast prayer demonstrates our reliance on God's wisdom and power.

Living with an Eternal Perspective:

2 Corinthians 4:18 reminds us to focus on what is unseen, as the seen is temporary. As followers of Jesus Christ, graceful living involves maintaining an eternal perspective, recognizing that our present actions have enduring significance. An eternal perspective guides our priorities and shapes our conduct.

Conclusion:

Behaving in light of God's Word and grace encompasses a spectrum of virtues and actions that emanate from a transformed heart. As we navigate the complexities of life, may our behavior be a living testimony to the grace that has redeemed and continues to shape us into the likeness of Christ. In every interaction, decision, and response, may our conduct reflect the love, righteousness, humility, and wisdom found in Jesus Christ who has called us to a life of godly behavior.

Romans 12:1,2 (AKJV):“ I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God..”

(101) Living Sacrifice:

Living Sacrifice in the Bible

Key Verse

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” — *Romans 12:1*

Greek Terms and Meanings

1. ζῶσαν θυσίαν (*zōsan thysian*) – *Living Sacrifice*

- ζῶσαν (*zōsan*)“ – Living” (from *zaō*), meaning alive, active, vibrant
- **θυσίαν (*thysian*)**“ – Sacrifice” (from *thusia*), a word often used in the context of **temple offerings or worship**

Unlike the dead animal sacrifices of the Old Covenant, Paul uses this phrase to describe a **radical, ongoing offering of the believer's life** to God. This sacrifice is **living**, **holy**, and **pleasing**—dying to our old carnal nature, it continues daily and is spiritual in nature.

Old Testament Background

- Under the **Mosaic Law**, a **sacrifice** involved offering an animal's life to atone for sin or express worship (Leviticus 1–7).
- These offerings had to be **without blemish**, wholly dedicated to God, and consumed on the altar.
- Paul now urges believers to offer **not an animal, but themselves**—**not their death, but their life**—as an act of worship.

“To obey is better than sacrifice…” – *1 Samuel 15:22*

Spiritual Meaning

A. Total Surrender

Offering your body means **your whole being**—mind, will, emotions, actions. You no longer belong to yourself, but to God.

“You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.” – *1 Corinthians 6:19–20*

B. Ongoing Devotion

A living sacrifice is **not a one-time event**. It is a daily, continual **choice to yield** your life, priorities, and desires to God.

“Take up your cross daily and follow Me.” – *Luke 9:23*

C. Holy and Acceptable

Holy means **set apart** for God's purpose. Acceptable means **pleasing** to God—through Christ, our lives can now be an acceptable offering.

“Spiritual Worship” (Logikēn Latreian)

- The phrase translated “spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1) in Greek is **λογικὴν λατρείαν (*logikēn latreian*)**, which can also mean:
    - Reasonable worship
    - Rational service

This indicates that offering ourselves is the **logical response** to God's mercy. Worship is not just emotional—it involves **mindful devotion** and **conscious surrender**.

Practical Applications: What It Means to Be a Living Sacrifice

1. **Sacrificing Selfish Desires** – Choosing God's will over your own (Galatians 5:24)
2. **Daily Obedience** – Honoring God in your actions, speech, relationships (Colossians 3:17)
3. **Serving Others** – Offering your time, gifts, and energy to the body of Christ (Romans 12:4–8)
4. **Worship Through Lifestyle** – Living in a way that reflects God's holiness (1 Peter 1:15)
5. **Sacrificing Comfort for the Gospel** – Willingness to suffer, if needed, for Christ's sake (Philippians 1:29)

Examples in Scripture

- **Jesus Christ** – The ultimate sacrifice (Hebrews 10:10–14). Our lives reflect His offering.
- **Paul**" – I die daily" – *1 Corinthians 15:31*
- **Early Christians** – Lived sacrificially for the gospel (Acts 2:44–47; Philippians 2:17)

Introduction: The Call to Present Our Bodies as a Living Sacrifice

In Romans 12:1, the apostle Paul issues a powerful and profound appeal to believers, urging them to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God. This passage marks a significant shift in Paul**'**s letter from doctrinal teachings to practical application. After expounding on the mercies of God and the work of salvation in the preceding chapters, Paul calls Christians to respond in a way that is consistent with their identity as redeemed people. The presentation of one's body as a living sacrifice is not merely a call for external behavior but an invitation to offer every part of our being—our actions, thoughts, and desires—as an offering to God. This commentary explores what it means to present our bodies as living sacrifices, the implications of this command for the Christian life, and how we can live in a way that honors God with our entire selves.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Sacrifice

Sacrifice is an integral part of the biblical narrative. In the Old Testament, sacrifices were central to the worship of God, serving as an outward sign of repentance, gratitude, and devotion. However, with the coming of Jesus Christ, the sacrificial system was fulfilled in Him, and Christians are now called to offer a different kind of sacrifice: not the blood of animals, but the offering of their lives to God.

1.1 Sacrifice in the Old Testament

Sacrifices in the Old Testament were a means of atonement for sin and a way to express devotion to God. The idea of sacrifice, however, was not merely about ritualistic offerings, but about surrendering to God in obedience and worship.

- **Abraham's Willingness to Sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22:1-18):** Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac is one of the most powerful illustrations of obedience and faith in the Old Testament. Although God ultimately provided a ram in place of Isaac, the act of offering his son demonstrated Abraham's willingness to surrender everything to God. This act prefigures the greater sacrifice of Jesus, who gave His life willingly for our salvation.

1.2 Jesus: The Ultimate Sacrifice

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is portrayed as the ultimate sacrifice for sin. His death on the cross was the fulfillment of the sacrificial system, and through His sacrifice, all other sacrifices are rendered unnecessary. Jesus 'sacrifice was the ultimate act of love, offering Himself completely for the forgiveness of humanity.

- **Hebrews 10:12-14 (AKJV):**" But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13From now on expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14For by one offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Jesus 'sacrifice makes it possible for believers to be reconciled with God. It is in response to this overwhelming act of grace that Paul urges believers to offer their own lives as living sacrifices.

1.3 The Living Sacrifice: A New Way to Worship

Paul's appeal to present our bodies as "living sacrifices" takes the Old Testament concept of sacrifice and transforms it into a call for a living, ongoing act of worship. Unlike the dead sacrifices of the Old Testament, which were offered once for atonement, the living sacrifice is continuous and encompasses every area of life. This sacrifice is not about physical death but about spiritual surrender. Taking up our own cross daily and dying to our selfish worldly desires, and further denying ourselves of our old sinful ways

- **Romans 12:1** speaks of offering our **"**bodies" as a sacrifice. This signifies the totality of our lives—our physical, mental, and spiritual selves. The body is not to be viewed as separate from the spirit but is an integral part of our worship. True worship involves the entire person, not just the heart or the mind.

2. The Nature of a Living Sacrifice

The call to present our bodies as living sacrifices has profound implications for how Christians live in the world. It is not a call to asceticism or to self-punishment but a call to radical obedience, holiness, and devotion to God in every area of life.

2.1 Holy and Acceptable to God

Paul goes on to say that this living sacrifice must be "holy" and "acceptable to God." Holiness refers to being set apart for God's purposes, living in a way that reflects His nature and character. It is not about moral perfection but about living in a way that is distinct from the world, demonstrating God's goodness and grace.

- **1 Peter 1:15-16 (AKJV):** "But as he which has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation; 16Because it is written, Be you holy; for I am holy."

Holiness is the result of being in relationship with God, and it is reflected in how we live our daily lives. The Christian life is one of ongoing transformation, where our desires, attitudes, and actions are continually shaped by God's will.

2.2 A Reasonable Service

Paul states that presenting our bodies as living sacrifices is "your reasonable service." This phrase suggests that offering ourselves to God in this way is a rational response to His mercy. It is the logical conclusion of understanding what God has done for us through Jesus Christ. The more we grasp the depths of God's grace, the more we realize that offering our lives back to Him is not a burden but a privilege.

- **Titus 2:11-12 (AKJV):** "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;"

This "reasonable service" is the expected response of every believer who recognizes the vastness of God's mercy. It is not a duty performed out of obligation but an offering made in love, gratitude, and devotion.

3. The Transformation through Sacrifice

The call to offer our bodies as living sacrifices also entails transformation. Paul emphasizes this transformation in the next verse:

- **Romans 12:2 (AKJV):**“ And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

The "renewing of the mind" is a key element of what it means to present our bodies as living sacrifices. As we offer ourselves to God, our minds and hearts are transformed, allowing us to align more closely with His will. This transformation enables us to live in a way that is not driven by the patterns of the world but by God's purposes.

3.1 Not Conformed to the World

To be conformed to the world means to adopt its values, behaviors, and priorities. The world**’**s standards are often driven by selfishness, pride, and materialism. As living sacrifices, Christians are called to reject these worldly patterns and instead live in

accordance with God's will. This requires a radical reorientation of our priorities, desires, and actions.

3.2 Transformation by the Holy Spirit

Transformation is not something we can achieve on our own. It is the work of the Holy Spirit within us. As we present ourselves to God, the Holy Spirit renews our minds, helping us to think and live in ways that honor God. This transformation is a lifelong process of becoming more like Christ.

- **2 Corinthians 3:18 (AKJV):** "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD."

4. The Sacrifice of Service

Presenting our bodies as living sacrifices is not only about personal holiness but also about serving others. As we surrender our lives to God, we are called to serve those around us in love and humility. The true essence of this living sacrifice is found in the way we serve God by serving others.

- **Matthew 25:40 (AKJV):** "And the King shall answer and say to them, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it to me."

Our service to others, especially those in need, is an expression of our devotion to God. It is through acts of love, compassion, and service that we present our bodies as living sacrifices to God.

Conclusion: A Life Fully Devoted to God

Romans 12:1 presents a compelling vision of the Christian life: a life fully surrendered to God, where every aspect of our being—our body, mind, and spirit—is offered as a living sacrifice. This sacrifice is holy, acceptable, and is the logical response to God's mercy. It involves transformation, not by our own strength, but by the renewing work of the Holy Spirit. As living sacrifices, we are called to live in a way that reflects God's holiness, rejects worldly patterns, and serves others in love. This is the reasonable service of every believer, and it is through this sacrifice that we truly honor God and fulfill His will for our lives.

May we be a people who daily present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, living in accordance with His will, and bringing glory to His name in all that we do.

LIVING SACRIFICE - **Present Our Bodies as a Living Sacrifice**

Continued…

Scripture: Romans 12:1-2 (AKJV): "I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is

your reasonable service. 2And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

In Romans 12, the apostle Paul calls followers of Jesus Christ to a life of wholehearted devotion to God. He urges us to present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This act of surrender is a response to the mercies of God, which we have received through Christ Jesus.

To offer our bodies as living sacrifices means to dedicate every aspect of our lives to God's service. It involves yielding our wills, desires, and ambitions to His will, seeking to honor and glorify Him in all that we do. It is a recognition that our lives belong to God and that we are called to live in obedience to His commands. We are to deny ourselves, and put to death our old carnal sin sinful ways.

The act of presenting our bodies as living sacrifices is rooted in the Old Testament sacrificial system, where animals were offered as sacrifices to atone for sin. However, in the New Testament, Jesus became the ultimate sacrifice for our sins, offering Himself on the cross as a perfect and complete sacrifice. As Christians, we are called to respond to this sacrificial love by offering our lives as living sacrifices to God.

Living a life of sacrifice involves more than just external actions; it requires a transformation of the heart and mind. Paul urges us not to conform to the pattern of this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. This transformation comes through the power of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to discern and obey God's will.

As we offer ourselves as living sacrifices, we are called to live our lives resisting the pressures and temptations of the world and evil. Instead, we are to pursue holiness and righteousness, seeking to align our lives with God's purposes and plans. In doing so, we will overcome the world’s temptations and experience the abundant life that God desires for us and discover His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

(102) Fasting:

Fasting in the Bible

Definition

Fasting is the voluntary abstaining from food (and sometimes drink) for a spiritual purpose—seeking God through prayer, repentance, or focused devotion. It is a way to humble the body, express dependence on God, and intensify prayer.

“But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret.” – *Matthew 6:17–18*

Hebrew Words (Old Testament)

1. צוּם(tsūm) – To fast, abstain from food
   - The primary Hebrew word for fasting.

- It carries the idea of humbling oneself before God through abstinence.

Examples:

- Moses fasted for 40 days and nights (Exodus 34:28)
- The Day of Atonement involved a fast (Leviticus 16:29–31)
- The nation fasted in times of repentance or crisis (Joel 2:12–15)

Greek Words (New Testament)

1. νηστεία (*nēsteia*) – *Fasting*

- The general Greek term for fasting, often linked with prayer and spiritual discipline.

Examples:

- Jesus fasted 40 days in the wilderness (Matthew 4:2)
- The early church fasted when commissioning leaders (Acts 13:2–3)

Spiritual Significance of Fasting

1. Humbling Before God
    - Fasting is an outward expression of inward humility and dependence on God.
2. Focus on Prayer and Seeking God
    - It accompanies prayer to intensify spiritual sensitivity (Ezra 8:21–23; Acts 14:23).
3. Repentance and Mourning
    - Often linked with turning from sin and mourning (Joel 2:12).
4. Spiritual Warfare
    - Fasting can be a weapon in spiritual battle, strengthening faith and focus (Mark 9:29).
5. Demonstration of Sincerity
    - Jesus warns against fasting for show, emphasizing sincerity (Matthew 6:16–18).

Biblical Examples of Fasting

- **Moses** (Exodus 34:28) – Fasted while receiving the Law.
- **David** (2 Samuel 12:16) – Fasted and prayed for his child's life.
- **Esther** (Esther 4:16) – Called for a fast before approaching the king.
- **Jesus** (Matthew 4:1–2) – Fasted 40 days before beginning His ministry.

- **Early Church** (Acts 13:2–3) – Fasted before sending out Paul and Barnabas.

Practical Guidelines for Fasting

- **Purpose**: Seek God's guidance, repentance, breakthrough, or deepened intimacy.
- **Type**: Complete fast (no food), partial fast (specific foods), or other forms (social media, TV).
- **Duration**: Varies — from a meal, a day, several days, or longer (biblical examples).
- **Heart Attitude**: Humble, sincere, focused on God, not on public recognition.
- **Accompanied by Prayer and Scripture**: Fasting is not just abstaining from food but filling the time with worship, prayer, and God's Word.

God's Choosen True Fast:

Scripture: Isaiah 58:6-7 (AKJV)

" Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? 7Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor that are cast out to your house? when you see the naked, that you cover him; and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh?" -

Explanation

In this passage, God speaks through Isaiah to clarify what kind of fasting He desires—not just ritual abstaining from food, but **a fasting marked by justice, mercy, and compassion**:

- **Verse 6** focuses on **breaking chains of wickedness, injustice and oppression**—setting captives free and removing burdens.
- **Verse 7** describes practical acts of love and generosity: feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, and caring for those close to you.

This is often understood as God's **true fast**—one that leads to transformed lives and communities through active love and righteousness, not just external religious rituals.

In Isaiah 58:6-7, God reveals the kind of fasting that He desires from His people—a fasting that goes beyond mere ritualistic observance to embody true righteousness and compassion. This passage challenges us to examine the motives behind our acts of devotion and calls us to a deeper commitment to justice and mercy.

God's chosen fast is not simply abstaining from food or engaging in religious rituals; it is a lifestyle of righteousness and compassion that reflects His heart for the vulnerable and marginalized. It is about actively providing for those in need, serving and ministering to them, demonstrating love in tangible ways.

God's chosen fast includes sharing our resources with the hungry, providing shelter for the homeless, and clothing the naked. It challenges us to be generous and compassionate toward those in need, recognizing that true devotion to God is demonstrated through acts of kindness and compassion toward others.

The fast that God has chosen also involves loosing the chains of injustice and setting the oppressed free. It calls us to actively combat systems of oppression and to advocate for the rights and dignity of all people, particularly those who are marginalized and vulnerable in society.

Furthermore, This passage reminds us that our devotion to God should not be limited to religious rituals or outward displays of piety. It should flow from a heart that is aligned with God's heart—a heart that beats with compassion for the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized.

Fasting from food etc. is a significant practice often associated with deep spiritual reflection and repentance. It is a biblical means to seek closeness to God, express humility, and prepare for divine guidance. The practice of fasting is mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments, demonstrating its importance across different periods of biblical history. For instance, in the Old Testament, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) was observed as a day of fasting and atonement, as outlined in Leviticus 16:29-31. Similarly, King David engaged in fasting as a sign of mourning and supplication (Psalm 35:13). In the New Testament, Jesus also addressed fasting in His teachings, suggesting it as an expression of inner sincerity rather than mere outward ritual. In Matthew 6:16-18, He instructs His followers on how to fast with humility and secrecy, contrasting it with the hypocritical practices of the Pharisees. Additionally, the early church practiced fasting as part of their communal and personal spiritual discipline, as seen in Acts 13:2-3, where fasting and prayer were integral to seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance. Thus, fasting in the biblical context serves both as a personal and communal commitment and way for spiritual growth and seeking God's will.

Jesus 'fasting is a very notable aspect of His life and ministry, that we should learn by. According to the Gospels, Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, which is described in the synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This period of fasting occurred right after His baptism and before He began His public ministry.

In Matthew 4:1-2, it is recorded that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, and during this time, He fasted and prayed. This period of fasting demonstrated His obedience and reliance on God, as well as His preparation for the challenges and mission ahead. The fast also served as a time of spiritual fortification against the temptations presented by Satan, and His responses to these temptations were rooted in Scripture.

The account in Luke 4:1-2 provides a similar narrative, emphasizing Jesus 'full reliance on the Father and His commitment to His mission despite the intense physical and spiritual trials. The mention of Jesus fasting in the wilderness highlights the significance of fasting as a practice of spiritual discipline, setting an example for His followers to seek God's strength and guidance through their own times of fasting and prayer.

As we reflect on God's chosen fast, as described in Isaiah 58 let us examine our hearts and lives to see if they align with His desires. Let us seek to embody true righteousness

and compassion in all that we do, extending love and mercy to those in need and actively working for justice and reconciliation in our communities and beyond.

May our lives be a reflection of God's heart for the vulnerable and marginalized, and may our devotion to Him be demonstrated through acts of justice, mercy, and love.

(103) Appearance - Spiritual, Modesty, Impartial

A Biblical Perspective on Appearance: Reflecting God's Design and Character

Introduction:

The Bible provides guidance on various aspects of life, including how Christians should approach their appearance. While external appearance is not the ultimate measure of a person's worth, the Scriptures offer principles that guide us in presenting ourselves in a manner that honors God and reflects His character. We should encourage one another to align our choices with God's intended design and values. We should propose not do anything that has the appearance of evil, but rather walk in the light even as Jesus Christ

All Christians have the liberty in the Spirit and should not be constrained to only wear extreme conservative clothing.

However, we should all be modest in our dress, as an outward statement of our heart and always use godly discretion for what we choose to wear or do, so we won't stumble each other.

Godly appearance, is being Christlike in our character traits, behaviors and virtues.

Some KEY SCRIPTURES

God Is transforming our spiritual and physical appearance:

2 Corinthians 3:18 (AKJV) But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD..

1 Timothy 2:9-10 (AKJV) In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with modesty and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10But (which becomes women professing godliness) with good works.

James 2:1-4 (AKJV) My brothers, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. 2For if there come to your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; 3And you have respect to him that wears the gay clothing, and say to him, Sit you here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand you there, or sit here under my footstool: 4Are you not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

The Heart's Condition Matters:

1 Samuel 16:7 reminds us that God looks at the heart, not the outward appearance. As followers of Jesus Christ, we understand that true beauty comes from a heart surrendered to God. While external appearance may reflect personal choices, our focus should be on cultivating a heart that seeks God's righteousness and love.

Modesty and Humility:

1 Timothy 2:9-10 encourages us, both men and women, to adorn ourselves with modesty and self-control. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are guided to approach our appearance with humility and modesty, prioritizing inner virtues over external adornment.

Clothed in Righteousness:

Isaiah 61:10 speaks of us being clothed in garments of salvation and robes of righteousness. This biblical imagery emphasizes the spiritual significance of clothing. As Christians, we are encouraged to embrace God's righteousness, allowing it to shape our character and influence our outward expression.

The Temple of the Holy Spirit:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 teaches us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we recognize the sacredness of the body and are called to consider how our choices in appearance honor God, remembering that our bodies are dedicated to His indwelling presence.

Avoiding Conformity to the World:

Romans 12:2 exhorts us not to be conformed to the patterns of this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. As Christians, we are guided to critically evaluate cultural standards and make choices in appearance that align with God's values rather than conforming to societal norms that may be contrary to His Word.

Adorning the Inner Self:

1 Peter 3:3-4 encourages women to focus on the inner self—the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. As Christians, we are reminded that true beauty radiates from within. We are called to prioritize developing a Christlike character, recognizing that it is this inner transformation that reflects God's glory.

Avoiding Excessive Adornment:

1 Timothy 2:9 advises us to avoid excessive external adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles, gold, pearls, or expensive clothing. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are encouraged to exercise moderation in our choices, avoiding an excessive focus on outward appearance and materialism.

Cultural Sensitivity and Respect:

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 speaks of becoming all things to all people for the sake of the gospel. As Christians, we are guided to demonstrate cultural sensitivity and respect in our interactions while upholding biblical values. We are called to reflect Christ in all aspects of our lives, including how we engage with others' cultural expectations regarding appearance.

Caring for the Body:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 also emphasizes that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and we are responsible for caring for them. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are encouraged to consider our health and well-being in our appearance, remembering that our bodies are gifts from God that require stewardship.

Avoiding Ostentation:

Matthew 6:1-4 warns us against practicing righteousness or acts of devotion for public acclaim. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to avoid ostentatious displays seeking attention or praise from others. Instead, we are encouraged to cultivate a humble and sincere demeanor in all we do.

Seeking Inner Transformation:

2 Corinthians 3:18 speaks of us being transformed into the image of Christ. As Christians, we are reminded that true transformation begins from within, and we are called to allow the Holy Spirit to work in us. Our outward appearance should align with the internal work God is doing in our hearts.

Adorning with Good Deeds:

1 Timothy 2:10 encourages us to adorn ourselves with good works. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we recognize that our actions—acts of kindness, love, and service—are more lasting and meaningful than any external adornment. We are called to live lives marked by Christlike deeds.

Guarding Against Vanity:

Proverbs 31:30 reminds us that charm is deceitful, and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. As Christians, we are reminded that the fleeting nature of physical beauty should not distract us from prioritizing a heart that seeks after God and His righteousness.

Reflecting Christ in Appearance:

Colossians 3:17 urges us to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to reflect Christ in all aspects of our lives, including our appearance. Whether in clothing, grooming, or personal style, we are encouraged to embody the love, humility, and righteousness of Christ.

Respecting Individual Convictions:

Romans 14:1-4 speaks of respecting the convictions of others in matters that are not explicitly addressed in Scripture. As Christians, we are called to extend grace and understanding to others, even if their perspectives on appearance differ from ours. This encourages unity and mutual respect within the body of Christ.

Avoiding Judgment Based on Outward Appearance:

James 2:1-4 warns us against showing favoritism based on external appearances. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are reminded not to make judgments about others based solely on what they wear or how they look. We are called to value individuals for who they are in Christ.

Practicing Humility in Adornment:

1 Peter 5:5-6 advises us to clothe ourselves with humility. As Christians, we are called to approach our appearance with a spirit of humility. Rather than seeking attention or validation through outward adornment, we are encouraged to embrace modesty and humility in all things.

Acknowledging the Transient Nature of Beauty:

Ecclesiastes 3:11 acknowledges that God has made everything beautiful in its time. As believers, we are reminded of the transient nature of physical beauty and are encouraged to invest in qualities that have eternal significance. We are called to prioritize spiritual development over fleeting beauty.

Avoiding Vain Conceit:

Philippians 2:3-4 urges us to do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. As Christians, we are encouraged to examine our motives in matters of appearance. We should avoid seeking personal glory or approval and instead adopt a posture of humility and selflessness.

Maintaining Purity in Motives:

1 Corinthians 4:5 reminds us that the Lord will reveal our hidden motives. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are guided to maintain purity in our motives regarding our appearance, ensuring that our choices align with a sincere desire to honor God rather than seeking human validation.

Living as Ambassadors of Christ:

2 Corinthians 5:20 describes us as ambassadors for Christ. As Christians, we are reminded that our appearance should reflect our identity as representatives of God's kingdom. We are entrusted with the responsibility to present ourselves in a manner that honors Christ and draws others to Him.

Fleeing from Conformity to Worldly Standards:

Romans 12:2 admonishes us not to conform to the pattern of this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to resist worldly standards that may compromise our commitment to Christ. Our appearance should reflect our new identity in Him.

Guarding Against Idolatry:

Exodus 20:4-5 warns us against making or worshiping idols. As followers of Jesus Christ, we must guard against making our appearance an idol. We should avoid placing undue importance on external beauty or fashion, remembering that true worship involves a heart devoted to God.

Conclusion:

In navigating the realm of appearance, as disciples of Jesus Christ we are called to anchor our choices in biblical principles that reflect God's design, values, and character. The overarching theme is one of humility, modesty, and a commitment to honoring God in all aspects of life. By cultivating a Christlike character and expressing gratitude for God's intentional creation, we can navigate our appearance in a way that glorifies God and contributes positively to the testimony of our faith.

(104) Stewardship:

Stewardship in the Bible

Definition

Stewardship is the responsible management of what belongs to God. It's the belief that everything we have—our time, talents, resources, bodies, and the earth—is entrusted to us by God and must be used for His glory, purposes, and kingdom.

"Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful." – *1 Corinthians 4:2*

Being a good steward means faithfully managing the resources, talents, skills, and spiritual gifts that God has entrusted to us. Everything we have ultimately belongs to Him, and He calls us to use these blessings for His glory and the good of others. In *1 Peter 4:10*, the Apostle Peter writes, *"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."* A good steward recognizes their role not as an owner, but as a caretaker, using what they've been given with wisdom, diligence, and a heart devoted to God's purposes. This includes not only finances, but time, abilities, and opportunities to serve in the Kingdom.

In contrast, a bad steward is careless, selfish, or neglectful with what God has given. Jesus illustrated this in the Parable of the Talents (*Matthew 25:14–30*), where the servant who buried his talent out of fear and failed to use it wisely was called wicked and lazy. He didn't misuse the gift outright, but he wasted it by doing nothing with it. This shows that passivity and fear can be just as destructive as misuse. God desires that we actively

invest our gifts—whether in ministry, work, or service—so that they bear fruit. In the end, faithful stewardship is not about how much we've been given, but how well we use it in love, obedience, and trust in God.

Biblical Language and Meaning

Greek (New Testament)

1. οἰκονόμος (oikonomos) – Steward, manager, overseer
   - From *oikos* (house) + *nomos* (law, management)
   - A steward was a **household manager**, entrusted with responsibility over another's possessions.

Examples:

- "Who then is the faithful and wise **steward** (*oikonomos*)…?" – *Luke 12:42*
- "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good **stewards**…" – *1 Peter 4:10*

2. οἰκονομία (oikonomia) – Stewardship, management, administration
   - Refers to the **act or system of stewardship**—a trust or responsibility given by God.

Example:

- "According to the **stewardship** (*oikonomia*) from God that was given to me for you…" – *Colossians 1:25*

Core Principles of Biblical Stewardship

1. God Owns Everything
   - "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof…" – *Psalm 24:1*
   - We are managers, not owners.
2. We Are Entrusted with God's Resources
   - Time, money, talents, health, creation, truth—all are **entrusted to us temporarily**.
   - Like a steward in a household, we are accountable for how we use what belongs to God.
3. Faithfulness Is Required
   - "It is required of stewards that they be found faithful." – *1 Corinthians 4:2*
   - God is more concerned with **faithful management** than with quantity of return.
4. Stewardship Includes All of Life
   - **Time** (Ephesians 5:16 – redeem the time)
   - **Money and possessions** (Matthew 6:19–21; Luke 16:10–13)
   - Spiritual gifts (1 Peter 4:10)

- **The Gospel** (1 Thessalonians 2:4; 2 Corinthians 5:18–20)
- **Creation** (Genesis 1:28; Psalm 8:6–8)

Biblical Examples of Stewardship

- **Joseph** – Managed Potiphar's household and the storehouses of Egypt (Genesis 39–41)
- **Daniel** – Administered the kingdom with integrity and wisdom (Daniel 6:1–4)
- **Parable of the Talents** – Jesus teaches responsibility and accountability in Matthew 25:14–30
- **Paul** – Describes his ministry as a stewardship from God (Colossians 1:25)

Accountability in Stewardship

Jesus 'parables (especially in **Luke 12 and Matthew 25**) emphasize that **stewards will be held accountable** for how they handled what was entrusted to them.

"To whom much was given, of him much will be required…" – *Luke 12:48*

Stewardship Is Worship

Using what God gives us **faithfully and generously** is part of **spiritual worship** (Romans 12:1). How we manage our lives reflects our view of God's authority and goodness.

"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men…" – *Colossians 3:23–24*

In the Bible, all followers of Jesus Christ are instructed to be good stewards. As Christians, we should desire to be personally disciplined in faithfully using our talents and resources for the glory of God and to further His Kingdom. We can become good stewards by putting to action, and utilizing our talents and resources to minister to the needs of others, and moreover by continually sharing the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ with those whom the Lord brings us to.

Another way we should be good stewards is by setting aside time each day to pray to God and setting time to study and meditate on God's Word. When we become good stewards, of our time, talents, and resources, then our lives will be well balanced and blessed; Our Love will become effectual and we will bear much fruit, thereby many other lives around us will be blessed as well.

For any of us to demonstrate stewardship in the way God intended, we must keep the proper balance of spending our time, talents and resources so that we never neglect one area of our life over another. As Christians we should learn from God's Holy Spirit when to devote time and assistance to family, friends, strangers, those in need and even to our enemies at times as God directs.

God helps us in many ways to become good stewards, by instructing us in His word, just What should be our priorities, and further by directing and enabling us to do

various righteous deeds. God's Holy Spirit will show us the right timing and further, exactly what are the right proportions to give.

It is God who gives to each person certain measure of specific talents, spiritual gifts and resources.

Being a steward means you have been entrusted with God's resources and spiritual gifts therefore the money , the land, all that you own and your very being was given to you by God for His purpose, and we are responsible to wisely use all that have for serving God. This includes taking care of your family as a priority.

Each Christian will be held accountable to God, to show How he has used his talents and resources in doing the will of God. By being a good steward of our time, talents and resources, we can fulfill God's commandment to Love one another.

ASK YOURSELF And GOD the following Questions, then respond, set goals, and take action....

- How can I, today better use my time, talents and resources to glorify God?
- What are my talents ?
- What are my resources ?
- Who can I serve ?

STEWARDSHIP - Continued…

Matthew 25:14 (AKJV) "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered to them his goods. 15And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. 16Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. 17And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. 18But he that had received one went and dig in the earth, and hid his lord**'**s money. 19After a long time the lord of those servants comes, and reckons with them. 20And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, you delivered to me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. 21His lord said to him, Well done, you good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter you into the joy of your lord. 22He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, you delivered to me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. 23His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter you into the joy of your lord. 24Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew you that you are an hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not strewed: 25And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the earth: see, there you have that is yours. 26His lord answered and said to him, You wicked and slothful servant, you knew that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed: 27You should therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then

at my coming I should have received my own with usury. 28Take therefore the talent from him, and give it to him which has ten talents. 29For to every one that has shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that has not shall be taken away even that which he has. 30And cast you the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. “

Luke 16:1-13 (AKJV) And he said also to his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused to him that he had wasted his goods. 2And he called him, and said to him, How is it that I hear this of you? give an account of your stewardship; for you may be no longer steward. 3Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord takes away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. 4I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. 5So he called every one of his lord**’**s debtors to him, and said to the first, How much owe you to my lord? 6And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said to him, Take your bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. 7Then said he to another, And how much owe you? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said to him, Take your bill, and write fourscore. 8And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. 9And I say to you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. 10He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. 11If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? 12And if you have not been faithful in that which is another man**’**s, who shall give you that which is your own? 13No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

STEWARDSHIP - Continued…

As Christians, we are called to embrace wise stewardship of all that God entrusts to us, recognizing this as a profound and divine responsibility highlighted throughout Scripture. The foundational principle of stewardship starts with the understanding that God is the ultimate owner of everything. Psalm 24:1 reminds us, **“**The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.” This verse underscores that every possession, talent, and moment we have is a gift from God, and our role is to manage these gifts wisely.

Jesus **’**parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 illustrates that we, as believers, are expected to invest and utilize these divine resources in ways that align with God**’**s purposes. It**’**s not just about what we have, but how we use it to further His kingdom.

In terms of time, Ephesians 5:15-16 advises us to be deliberate and purposeful with our time, reflecting God**’**s glory in all we do and contributing to the advancement of His kingdom. The principle of Sabbath rest, mentioned in Exodus 20:9-10, reinforces the need to set aside time to rest and acknowledge God's provision, ensuring we are balanced and focused on what truly matters.

When it comes to finances, the Bible encourages us to be generous and responsible. 2 Corinthians 9:7 emphasizes that our giving should be done cheerfully, understanding that our financial resources ultimately belong to God. Proverbs 3:9-10 calls us to honor the Lord with our wealth, making sure our financial stewardship aligns with His divine purposes.

The stewardship of our talents is also crucial. The parable of the talents teaches us that we are to develop and use our abilities and gifts for the advancement of God's kingdom. 1 Peter 4:10 urges us to use our gifts in service to others, embodying good stewardship of God's grace.

Jesus teaches about eternal stewardship in Matthew 6:19-21, encouraging us to invest in treasures that endure beyond this life, rather than being caught up in temporary gains. Faithfulness in small matters, as highlighted in Luke 16:10, reflects true stewardship, showing that even our smallest choices can have eternal significance.

Ultimately, as Christians, our stewardship is a reflection of a heart transformed by the recognition of God's sovereignty. It's not merely about managing resources; it's about living in a way that honors God's ultimate ownership and reflects His glory through every aspect of our lives.

As Christians, our commitment to stewardship encompasses every facet of our lives. It's about aligning our daily actions with God's will, acknowledging His lordship over all that we have, and demonstrating our gratitude through responsible and purposeful living.

Stewardship of Finances: Our financial resources are another crucial area of stewardship. Scripture teaches us that everything we have ultimately belongs to God. In 1 Timothy 6:17-19, we are reminded that we should not place our hope in wealth, but instead, use our finances to do good, be rich in good deeds, and be generous and willing to share. Stewardship of finances involves budgeting wisely, avoiding debt, giving generously to support the church and charitable causes, and managing money in a way that honors God and supports His work.

Stewardship of Talents: We are each given unique talents and abilities that God intends for us to use for His glory. In 1 Peter 4:10, we are instructed to use whatever gift we have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace. This means actively using our skills and talents in ways that benefit others and advance God's kingdom, whether through our jobs, hobbies, or volunteer work. Recognizing and developing these talents to their fullest potential honors God and enriches our communities.

Stewardship of Spiritual Gifts: Spiritual gifts are special abilities given by the Holy Spirit to each believer for the purpose of building up the church and serving others. In Romans 12:6-8, Paul encourages believers to use their gifts in accordance with the grace given to them. Stewardship of spiritual gifts involves discovering what gifts we have been given, using them effectively in ministry, and continually growing in our understanding of how to serve others through these gifts.

Stewardship of Time: Time is a finite resource, and how we use it reflects our priorities. Ephesians 5:15-16 advises us to be careful how we live, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil. Stewardship of time involves setting priorities that

align with God’s will, balancing work, rest, and recreation, and making deliberate choices to invest time in spiritual growth, relationships, and service to others.

Stewardship of Possessions: Our material possessions are entrusted to us by God and should be used in a way that honors Him. In Luke 12:15, Jesus warns against greed and emphasizes that life does not consist in the abundance of possessions. Stewardship of possessions means managing what we own with gratitude, avoiding excess and waste, and using our resources to help those in need and further God’s kingdom. It also involves being willing to share and give away possessions when needed, reflecting a heart that values people over things.

Integrating All Aspects of Stewardship: In integrating these aspects of stewardship, we recognize that each area is interconnected. For instance, good stewardship of finances can free up time to use our talents and spiritual gifts more effectively. Likewise, managing our possessions wisely can help us maintain a focus on eternal values rather than material wealth. By seeking to steward each aspect of our lives well, we honor God, reflect His character, and contribute to His purposes in the world.

Stewardship of Relationships:

We are also called to steward our relationships with others. In John 13:34-35, Jesus commands us to love one another as He has loved us, which is a fundamental aspect of our Christian witness. Our interactions with others should reflect God’s love and grace, nurturing and building up those around us. This stewardship of relationships involves actively seeking to reconcile conflicts, offering support and encouragement, and using our influence to lead others towards Christ.

Stewardship of the Gospel:

Perhaps the most significant aspect of our stewardship is how we handle the message of the Gospel. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commissions us to “go and make disciples of all nations.” Stewarding the Gospel involves sharing it with others, supporting missionary work, and living in a way that reflects the transformative power of Christ. We are entrusted with the responsibility of spreading the Good News and living as examples of God’s grace and truth.

Stewardship in Adversity:

Even in times of difficulty, our stewardship is tested. James 1:2-4 encourages us to consider trials as opportunities for growth, developing perseverance and character. How we respond to challenges and hardships can be a testament to our faith and trust in God’s providence. Maintaining a steadfast attitude and continuing to serve faithfully during these times reflects a deep commitment to stewardship.

Eternal Perspective:

Lastly, our stewardship is framed by an eternal perspective. Colossians 3:1-2 calls us to set our hearts on things above, not on earthly things. This perspective helps us prioritize our actions and decisions according to what truly matters in light of eternity. By focusing on eternal values and purposes, we align our stewardship with God’s eternal plan and purpose.

In all these areas, as Christians, our stewardship is an expression of our love for God and our desire to honor Him with every aspect of our lives. It's a continuous journey of learning, growing, and serving, driven by a heart that recognizes God's ultimate ownership and seeks to reflect His glory in all that we do.

- **Genesis 2:15**: Introduces the concept of stewardship in the Garden of Eden, where humanity is given the responsibility to care for and cultivate the created world.
- **Matthew 25:14-30 (Parable of the Talents)**: Illustrates the importance of faithful stewardship over resources and the accountability for how they are used.
- **1 Corinthians 4:2**: Stresses the requirement of faithfulness in stewardship, emphasizing the trustworthiness expected of stewards.
- **Luke 16:10-12**: Expresses the principle that faithful stewardship in small things leads to greater responsibilities, highlighting the concept of accountability.
- **Colossians 3:23-24**: Encourages believers to work heartily in all they do, recognizing that they are serving the Lord, emphasizing a stewardship mindset in daily tasks.
- **Psalm 24:1**: Declares that the earth and everything in it belong to the Lord, establishing the foundational truth of God's ownership and humanity's role as stewards.
- **1 Timothy 6:17-19**: Advises the wealthy to be rich in good deeds and willing to share, emphasizing the stewardship of wealth for the benefit of others.
- **Luke 12:42-48**: Describes the responsibility of stewards to faithfully manage the resources entrusted to them, with consequences for negligence or faithfulness.
- **Proverbs 27:23**: Compares the diligent care of one's possessions to the well-being of flocks, drawing parallels to responsible stewardship.
- **Ephesians 2:10**: Describes believers as God's workmanship, created for good works, indicating a stewardship role in fulfilling God's purposes.
- **Malachi 3:10**: Encourages bringing tithes into the storehouse, emphasizing the principle of giving back to God as an act of stewardship.
- **2 Corinthians 9:6-7**: Discusses the cheerful giver and the principle of sowing and reaping, highlighting the stewardship of resources and generosity.
- **Proverbs 3:9**: Advises honoring the Lord with one's wealth, acknowledging God's ownership and the stewardship responsibility of managing financial resources.
- **Titus 1:7**: Sets forth qualifications for church leaders, including being a steward of God, underlining the importance of stewardship in spiritual leadership.
- **James 1:17**: Acknowledges that every good and perfect gift is from above, reinforcing the idea that all blessings come from God, and stewardship involves using them wisely.

- **2 Corinthians 8:9**: Points to the example of Christ, who, though rich, became poor for our sake, emphasizing sacrificial stewardship for the well-being of others.
- **Proverbs 13:22**: Highlights the idea of leaving an inheritance for future generations, emphasizing long-term thinking and generational stewardship.
- **Luke 12:33**: Advises selling possessions and giving to the needy, promoting a lifestyle of intentional simplicity and generosity as part of Christian stewardship.
- **Proverbs 14:31**: Stresses that whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for God, emphasizing the ethical dimension of stewardship and social responsibility.
- **2 Corinthians 9:10-11**: Speaks about the generosity of God leading to thanksgiving and the multiplication of seed for sowing, illustrating the concept of God's provision for faithful stewardship.
- **Deuteronomy 8:17-18**: Warns against forgetting that it is God who gives the ability to produce wealth, emphasizing a humble acknowledgment of God's role in stewardship.
- **Proverbs 19:17**: Encourages lending to the Lord by helping the poor, illustrating the idea that acts of kindness toward others are acts of stewardship.
- **1 Peter 4:10**: Calls believers to use their gifts to serve others, highlighting the concept of stewardship not only over material resources but also over individual talents and abilities.
- **Proverbs 22:9**: Speaks about the generous person being blessed, linking generosity with the principle of reaping what is sown in stewardship.
- **Matthew 6:19-21**: Advises storing up treasures in heaven rather than on earth, emphasizing an eternal perspective in stewardship.
- **1 Chronicles 29:14**: Acknowledges that everything comes from God, reinforcing the idea of stewardship as recognizing and managing resources that ultimately belong to God.
- **Galatians 6:2**: Encourages bearing one another's burdens, expressing the communal aspect of stewardship in supporting and caring for fellow believers.
- **Acts 20:35**: Quotes Jesus' saying that it is more blessed to give than to receive, promoting the virtue of generosity and the joy found in selfless stewardship.
- **Romans 14:12**: Reminds believers that each person will give an account of themselves to God, emphasizing personal responsibility in stewardship.

These verses collectively provide a comprehensive perspective on the biblical doctrine of stewardship, encompassing the responsible management of various resources, including time, talents, finances, and relationships, with the overarching recognition that all things ultimately belong to God. Stewardship is portrayed not only as a duty but also as a means of expressing gratitude, love, and care for others in alignment with God's will and purposes.

(105) Making The Most Of Time:

Seizing Opportunities for God's Kingdom

Scripture:

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." - Ephesians 5:16 (AKJV)

Time is a precious gift from God, and as Christians, we are called to make the most of it for His glory. We need to know how we can redeem the time and seize opportunities to advance God's kingdom in our lives and in the world around us.

God’s Word exhort us to "redeem the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16). This command is a call to action, reminding us that each passing moment holds the potential for eternal significance. It's an invitation to live with intentionality, to be purposeful in our pursuits, and to prioritize the things of God above all else.

To make the most of time for God's kingdom, we must first develop a mindset of stewardship. Recognizing that time is a gift entrusted to us by God, we are called to manage it wisely, investing it in activities that honor Him and further His purposes. This requires a conscious effort to align our priorities with God's will, seeking His guidance in all that we do.

Central to seizing opportunities for God's kingdom is the practice of discernment and wisdom. Not every opportunity that presents itself is from God, and not every open door leads to His purposes. We also especially need to beware of any way or individual masquerading itself as from God but is deceitfully being used by satan to led us astray down the wrong path and to waste our time. Therefore, we must learn to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit amidst the noise of the world, choosing those opportunities that align with God's character and His Word.

Moreover, making the most of time entails a willingness to step out in faith. God often calls us to venture beyond the boundaries of our comfort zones, to take risks for the sake of His kingdom. This requires trust – trust in God's provision, His guidance, and His faithfulness to fulfill His promises.

Furthermore, excellence should characterize all our endeavors. Whether in our work, relationships, or personal pursuits, we are called to do everything with excellence, as unto the Lord (Colossians 3:23). By offering our best to God, we honor Him and reflect His glory to the world around us.

Above all, making the most of time for God's kingdom is grounded in love. Love is the heartbeat of God's kingdom, the driving force behind all our actions. When we love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and love our neighbors as ourselves, every moment becomes an opportunity to demonstrate God's love and grace.

In conclusion, seizing opportunities for God's kingdom requires intentionality, discernment, faith, excellence, and above all, love. As we journey through life, may we be mindful of the preciousness of time and the opportunities it presents. And may we use each moment wisely, for the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom.

- **Prioritizing God's Kingdom:** Making the most of time begins with prioritizing God's kingdom above all else. This means seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33) and aligning our goals, plans, and activities with His will. When we prioritize God's kingdom, everything else falls into its rightful place.
- **Investing in Spiritual Growth:** Redeeming the time involves investing in our spiritual growth and relationship with God. This includes spending time in prayer, studying God's Word, and cultivating intimacy with Him through worship and fellowship. By nurturing our relationship with God, we become better equipped to fulfill His purposes and make an impact for His kingdom.
- **Seizing Opportunities for Service:** God presents us with opportunities every day to serve others and share His love with those around us. Whether it's through acts of kindness, sharing the gospel, or using our gifts and talents to bless others, we should seize every opportunity to be a light in a dark world (Matthew 5:16).
- **Living with Intentionality:** Making the most of time requires living with intentionality and purpose. This means being mindful of how we use our time and resources, avoiding distractions and time-wasting activities that detract from our walk with God. By living intentionally, we can maximize our impact for His kingdom and leave a lasting legacy of faithfulness.
- **Embracing God's Timing:** Ultimately, making the most of time involves trusting in God's timing and sovereignty. We may not always understand His plans or the pace at which He works, but we can trust that His timing is perfect. As we surrender our plans and desires to Him, He will lead us and guide us in His perfect will (Proverbs 3:5-6).
- **Purpose to faithfully fulfill God’s calling for your life** as a wise steward, friend and servant of God.

(Matthew 25:19-21)AKJV “After a long time the lord of those servants comes, and reckons with them. 20And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, you delivered to me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. 21His lord said to him, Well done, you good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter you into the joy of your lord.

(106) Counting All Things Loss For The Sake Of Gaining Christ:

Scripture:Philippians 3:7 (AKJV): "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

In Philippians 3:7, the apostle Paul expresses a radical shift in perspective regarding his worldly achievements and possessions. He considers everything he once valued as loss compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus as his Lord.

Paul's statement challenges us to examine our own priorities and attachments in light of our relationship with Christ. It's a call to reevaluate what we consider valuable and worthy of pursuit in this life.

The world often measures success and worth by external standards such as wealth, status, and accomplishments. Yet, Paul's example teaches us that true fulfillment and purpose are found in knowing and following Christ.

To count all things loss for the sake of Christ means recognizing that nothing in this world compares to the richness of a relationship with Him. It means letting go of the things that hinder our devotion to Him and surrendering our desires and ambitions to His will.

We should count the loss of all of our old sinful carnal ways, lust, sexual immorality, greed, materialism etc that we might gain the eternal virtues and blessings of Jesus Christ.

For some, this may involve sacrificing personal ambitions or worldly comforts. For others, it may mean letting go of past achievements or reputations that once defined their identity. Whatever the cost, the joy and satisfaction found in knowing Christ far outweigh any worldly gain.

Counting all things loss for the sake of Christ, especially means letting go any evil or sinful way in our lives, and reminding ourselves when we are tempted. Absolutely nothing compares to gaining the love of God.

Throughout his life, Paul exemplified this principle of counting all things loss for the sake of Christ. He willingly endured persecution, hardship, and even imprisonment for the sake of the gospel. He considered it a privilege to suffer for Christ, knowing that his ultimate reward was found in Him.

As followers of Christ, we are called to emulate Paul's example of radical devotion and surrender. We are called to live with an eternal perspective, prioritizing the things of God over the fleeting pleasures of this world.

So, let us consider all things loss for the sake of Christ, willing to relinquish whatever stands in the way of wholehearted devotion to Him. May our lives be a testimony to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ, our Lord and Savior.

(107) Setting Our Minds on Heavenly Things:

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." - **Colossians 3:2** (AKJV)

Setting our minds on heavenly things involves directing our thoughts, desires, and affections towards the eternal realities of God's kingdom. It's about prioritizing spiritual values, eternal truths, and the presence of God over the temporal pursuits and pleasures of this world.

In a world that constantly surrounds us with distractions, temptations, and worries, setting our minds on heavenly things requires intentional effort and discipline. It means consciously choosing to focus on God's kingdom and His righteousness in every area of our lives.

Setting our minds on heavenly things would be as such —God’s love, Jesus, all good spiritual virtues, the promise of eternal life, and the peace that surpasses all understanding. When we focus on these higher things, we align ourselves with divine purpose and deepen our relationship with God. It shifts our perspective, helping us to live

with greater compassion, patience, and humility, reflecting Christ's example. Heavenly things also include the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—which should be developed in our daily lives. As we set our minds on such virtues, we are empowered to navigate life's challenges with grace, trusting in God**'**s plan for us. Moreover, this mindset reminds us to focus on serving others, as true fulfillment comes not from earthly possessions, but from living a life of love and service to God and our neighbors.One of the key aspects of setting our minds on heavenly things is obtaining and maintaining a heavenly perspective. This involves viewing the world through the lens of God's Word and His eternal purposes. It's about recognizing that our true citizenship is in heaven and that our ultimate allegiance is to Christ.

When we set our minds on heavenly things, our priorities and values are aligned with God's kingdom. We seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, trusting that He will provide for our needs and fulfill His purposes in our lives.

Furthermore, setting our minds on heavenly things helps to guard against the influence of worldly thinking and values. It enables us to resist the pull of materialism, selfish ambition, and sinful desires, and to live lives that are pleasing to God.

As we set our minds on heavenly things, we experience a transformation in our attitudes, desires, and behaviors. We become more like Christ, reflecting His character and His love to the world around us. Our hearts are filled with joy, peace, and contentment that come from knowing and serving Him.

(108) Contentment:

Scripture: Philippians 4:11-13 “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

Contentment in the Bible

Definition

Contentment is a **deep inner satisfaction and peace** that comes from trusting God and being at rest with what He provides—regardless of circumstances. It is not passivity or complacency but a **spiritual stability** rooted in God's sufficiency.

“Godliness with contentment is great gain.” – *1 Timothy 6:6*

Biblical Words and Meanings

Greek (New Testament)

1. αὐτάρκεια (autarkeia) – Contentment, self-sufficiency, sufficiency in God
   - From *autos* (self) and *arkeo* (to suffice).

- Not independence from others, but **dependence on God** that leads to inner sufficiency.

Example:

“I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content (*autarkēs*).” – *Philippians 4:11*

2. ἀρκέω (arkeo) – To be enough, to suffice, to be satisfied

- Often used in the sense that God’s grace or provision is sufficient.

Example:

“My grace is sufficient (*arkei*) for you...” – *2 Corinthians 12:9*

Hebrew (Old Testament Concepts)

While there is no direct Hebrew word for "contentment" used frequently in the OT, the **concept** is expressed in terms of:

- **Trusting God’s provision** – *Yahweh Yireh* (“The LORD will provide”) – *Genesis 22:14*
- **Being satisfied with what God gives**“ – The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” – *Psalm 23:1*
- Not envying or grasping for more – *Exodus 20:17* (Do not covet)

Key Scriptures on Contentment

1. Philippians 4:11–13

“I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content... I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

Paul teaches that **contentment is learned**, not automatic, and it's found in **Christ’s strength**, not circumstances.

2. 1 Timothy 6:6–8

“Godliness with contentment is great gain... if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.”

This passage contrasts **spiritual wealth** with materialism and reminds believers to rest in **basic provision**.

3. Hebrews 13:5

“Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”

Here, contentment is rooted in **God’s presence**, not possessions.

How to Cultivate Contentment

1. **Daily Gratitude** – Thank God for what you have, not just what you hope for.

2. **Prayerful Trust** – Rely on God's faithfulness in every season (Matthew 6:25–34).
3. **Simplicity** – Reject materialism; focus on what truly matters (Luke 12:15).
4. **Serving Others** – Shifting focus from self to service helps reset the heart (Acts 20:35).
5. **Meditation on God's Promises** – Remember His presence and sufficiency (Hebrews 13:5).
6. **Believing and Understanding** that Jesus Christ and His love is all that we need.

Reflection

Biblical contentment is not about **having less desire**, but about **desiring more of God**—finding full satisfaction in His will, ways, and presence.

"The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in Him." – *Lamentations 3:24*

In a world that constantly emphasizes messages of dissatisfaction and longing for more, the concept of contentment can seem elusive. However, the apostle Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, provides us with a powerful example of what true contentment looks like. He declares that he has learned to be content in every circumstance, whether he has plenty or is in need.

Contentment is not dependent on external circumstances but is a state of the heart that transcends the ups and downs of life. It is a deep-seated peace and satisfaction that comes from knowing and trusting in God's provision and sovereignty. Paul's contentment was rooted in his unwavering faith in Christ, who provided him with the strength to endure all things.

Learning to be content requires a shift in perspective—a recognition that true fulfillment is found in Christ alone, not in the accumulation of wealth, success, or possessions. It involves releasing our grip on earthly treasures and fixing our eyes on the eternal riches found in our relationship with God.

As followers of Christ, let us strive to cultivate contentment in our lives, regardless of our circumstances. Let us learn, like Paul, the secret of contentment, trusting that God's grace is always sufficient for us. May we find joy and peace in knowing that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

(109) Contentment in God's Provision:

Scripture: "But godliness with contentment is great gain." - 1 Timothy 6:6

Contentment is a state of heart and mind that transcends external circumstances. It's an inner sense of peace and satisfaction that comes from knowing and trusting in God's provision, regardless of our present circumstances.

In 1 Timothy 6:6, the apostle Paul underscores the value of godliness with contentment, describing it as great gain. This divine contentment is not dependent on material wealth, success, or recognition but is rooted in our relationship with God and His faithfulness to meet our needs.

Contentment is not synonymous with complacency or passivity. It doesn't mean that we stop striving for growth, improvement, or excellence in our lives. Rather, it's a recognition that true fulfillment and joy are found not in the pursuit of worldly pleasures or possessions but in living in alignment with God's purposes and priorities.

Contentment doesn't imply that we can't own things or have some wealth, but rather that these possessions or wealth don't drive us to constantly crave more and more. True contentment is found in Jesus, being at peace with whatever circumstances we are currently in.

The key to developing contentment lies in our perspective and attitude towards life. Instead of constantly craving for more or comparing ourselves to others, we can choose to focus on the blessings and provisions that God has already bestowed upon us. We can adopt an attitude of gratitude, acknowledging God's goodness and faithfulness in every season of life.

Moreover, contentment is fostered through trust in God's sovereignty and provision. When we trust that God is in control of our lives and that He works all things together for our good, we can rest in His promises and find peace in the midst of uncertainty. We can trust that He will provide for our needs according to His riches in glory (Philippians 4:19).

Ultimately, contentment is a spiritual discipline that requires cultivation and practice. It involves surrendering our desires and expectations to God, trusting in His timing and plan for our lives, and finding satisfaction in His presence and promises.

As we cultivate contentment in our hearts, we experience the freedom and joy that come from living in harmony with God's will. We discover that true contentment is not found in the accumulation of possessions or achievements but in knowing and walking with our Heavenly Father, who satisfies the deepest longings of our souls.

Contentment in God's Provision - Continued…

Text: Philippians 4:11-13 (AKJV): *"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. 12I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."*

Introduction: The True Source of Contentment

In Philippians 4:11-13, Paul shares a profound lesson on contentment, emphasizing that it is not dependent on external circumstances but on the strength and provision of Christ. Contentment is often misunderstood as mere satisfaction with material possessions or circumstances. However, in the biblical sense, contentment is a state of peace and trust in God's provision, regardless of life's ups and downs.

This commentary will explore the biblical understanding of contentment, how it relates to God's provision, and how we can develop this virtue. True contentment comes from knowing that God is sovereign and that He provides for our every need, both physically and spiritually. By understanding the nature of contentment, we can learn to live with peace, joy, and trust, no matter our external conditions.

1. The Nature of Biblical Contentment

Contentment, in the biblical sense, is not simply about feeling okay with the way things are. It is an inner peace that comes from trusting in God’s will and provision, regardless of outward circumstances. Biblical contentment is the opposite of greed, covetousness, or envy. It is a state of heart that finds fulfillment not in what we have or don’t have, but in the knowledge that God is enough.

1.1 Contentment is Learned

Paul states that he has "learned" to be content. This teaches us that contentment is not a natural trait but a learned response. It takes time, experience, and spiritual growth to develop this inner peace and trust in God’s provision.

Scripture Reference: Philippians 4:11 (AKJV): *"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."*

Contentment comes through understanding and accepting God’s will for our lives. It is developed as we see His faithfulness over time and trust in His ability to meet our needs. God gives us understand it far more better to have contentment in Jesus and his provisions rather than the fleeting vain empty materials, pleasures or riches of the world.

1.2 Contentment is Not Dependent on Circumstances

Paul makes it clear that contentment does not depend on whether he is in a time of abundance or need. He had learned to be content in both extremes. This is because true contentment is rooted in God’s presence and provision, not in the fleeting circumstances of life.

Scripture Reference: 1 Timothy 6:6-8 (AKJV): *"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."*

In a culture that often promotes the pursuit of material wealth and success, the Bible teaches that contentment is found in godliness and a focus on eternal things. God provides what we need, and that is enough.

2. The Foundation of Contentment: Trusting in God's Provision

Contentment is ultimately rooted in trusting that God will provide for all our needs. It is not a resignation to a life of deprivation, but a confidence that God knows our needs and will meet them in His perfect timing.

2.1 God’s Provision is Sufficient

God's provision is always sufficient for His people. We are not promised extravagant wealth or a life of luxury, but we are assured that God will provide what we need, when we need it.

Scripture Reference: Matthew 6:31-33 (AKJV): *"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. 33But seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. 34Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof."*

God**'**s provision is an expression of His love and care for His children. We are called to seek His kingdom first, and as we do, He promises to take care of our needs. When we understand that God is the provider, we can rest in the assurance that He will give us what we need to live for His glory.

2.2 God Provides According to His Will and Timing

While God**'**s provision is sufficient, it often comes in ways that challenge our understanding or desires. We may not always receive what we expect or when we expect it, but God**'**s provision is always in alignment with His perfect will and timing.

Scripture Reference: James 1:17 (AKJV): *" Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no fickleness (variableness) , neither shadow of turning."*

God is the source of all good things, and His provision is always perfect, even when it doesn**'**t align with our immediate desires. Trusting in His wisdom and timing is key to developing contentment.

3. The Power of Contentment in Our Lives

When we learn to be content in God's provision, it changes our perspective and frees us from the anxieties and pressures that come from constantly striving for more. Contentment brings peace, joy, and a deeper relationship with God.

3.1 Contentment Brings Peace and Freedom

When we are content, we are free from the constant pursuit of more—more money, more possessions, more success. This freedom allows us to experience a peace that the world cannot give. We no longer feel the need to compare ourselves to others or to live in constant dissatisfaction with our circumstances.

Scripture Reference: Hebrews 13:5 (AKJV): *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for he has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you."*

Contentment is tied to trusting in God's constant presence. When we believe that God will never leave us or forsake us, we can find peace in whatever situation we find ourselves.

3.2 Contentment Enables Generosity

A content heart is a generous heart. When we are content with what we have, we are less focused on accumulating wealth or possessions for ourselves and more willing to share with others. We realize that our security does not lie in our wealth but in God's provision.

Scripture Reference: 2 Corinthians 9:7 (AKJV): *"Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver."*

When we are content with God's provision, we can give generously, trusting that God will continue to provide for our needs. Contentment fosters a spirit of generosity and kindness toward others.

3.3 Contentment Strengthens Our Faith

As we learn to be content in God**'**s provision, our faith is strengthened. We begin to trust God more fully, knowing that He will take care of us in every situation. This trust allows us to live with greater confidence, joy, and peace, regardless of our circumstances.

Scripture Reference: Philippians 4:13 (AKJV): *"I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."*

Paul**'**s confidence in contentment comes from knowing that Christ gives him the strength to endure whatever situation he faces. Contentment is not a passive resignation, but an active trust in God**'**s ability to provide.

4. Cultivating Contentment in Our Lives

Cultivating contentment is a process that requires intentional focus and reliance on God. As we learn to trust Him more fully, we grow in contentment.

4.1 Focus on God’s Kingdom

The key to contentment is seeking God**'**s kingdom first. When our hearts are aligned with God**'**s purposes, we find contentment in knowing that He is in control and that our lives have eternal significance.

Scripture Reference: Matthew 6:33 (AKJV): *"But seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you."*

By prioritizing God**'**s will over our own desires, we can experience true contentment.

4.2 Practice Gratitude

Gratitude is a powerful antidote to discontentment. When we focus on what God has already provided, rather than what we lack, we are reminded of His goodness and faithfulness.

Scripture Reference: 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (AKJV): *"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*

Developing a heart of gratitude shifts our focus from what we don't have to all that God has blessed us with, helping us to live in a constant state of contentment.

Conclusion: Resting in God's Perfect Provision

Contentment is not about having everything we want but about trusting that God provides everything we need. It is an inward peace that comes from knowing that God is in control, that He is faithful, and that He will never fail to provide for us. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to find contentment in God's provision, learning to live in peace, joy, and gratitude, no matter our circumstances.

May we learn, like Paul, to be content in whatever state we are in, knowing that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Let our hearts rest in the assurance that God is our provider and that His provision is always sufficient.

(110) Finding Contentment in Jesus Christ:

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content." - **Philippians 4:1**1 (AKJV)

This verse encapsulates a profound truth about finding contentment in Jesus Christ regardless of our circumstances. Let's explore what it means to find contentment in Christ and the transformative impact it can have on our lives.

Contentment is often misunderstood in our culture. It's not merely about being satisfied with what we have or achieving a state of happiness. True contentment goes much deeper than that; it's a state of spiritual fulfillment that comes from knowing, trusting and having faith in Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul, who wrote the letter to the Philippians, provides a powerful example of contentment in the midst of adversity. Throughout his ministry, Paul faced numerous trials and hardships, including persecution, imprisonment, and physical suffering. Yet, he was able to declare that he had learned to be content in every situation.

Paul's secret to contentment lay in his relationship with Jesus Christ. He understood that true satisfaction and fulfillment could only be found in Christ, not in external circumstances or material possessions. Regardless of whether he was experiencing abundance or lack, Paul found his identity, purpose, and worth in Christ alone.

Finding contentment in Jesus Christ requires a shift in perspective. Instead of seeking fulfillment in the fleeting pleasures of this world, we fix our eyes on the eternal realities of

God's kingdom. We recognize that our true treasure is found in the riches of His grace and the hope of eternal life.

Contentment in Christ is not dependent on our circumstances; it transcends them. It's a peace that surpasses understanding, rooted in the unchanging character of God and His unconditional love for us. It's a deep-seated trust that God is sovereign and that He is working all things together for our good.

Furthermore, finding contentment in Jesus Christ frees us from the bondage of comparison, envy, and greed. Instead of constantly chasing after the next big thing or longing for what others have, we are able to embrace the life that God has given us with gratitude and thanksgiving.

As we learn to find contentment in Jesus Christ, we experience a profound sense of joy and fulfillment that cannot be shaken by the ups and downs of life. We discover that true contentment is not found in what we have or don't have but in who we are in Christ and the eternal inheritance that we have in Him.

Philippines 3:8 (AKJV) Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win (gain) Christ,

(111) Spiritual Good Fruit:

Spiritual Good Fruit in the Bible

Definition

Spiritual good fruit refers to the visible evidence of a transformed life through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the **outward expression of inward righteousness**, including both **character** and **actions** that are aligned with God's will.

“You will recognize them by their fruits.” – *Matthew 7:16*

Biblical Words and Original Language

Greek (New Testament)

1. καρπός (*karpos*) – *Fruit*

- Literal: physical fruit from trees or crops
- Figurative: the **results or outcomes** of a person’s character, words, and deeds
- Often used to describe spiritual growth and moral character produced by the Holy Spirit

Examples:

- “But the fruit (*karpos*) of the Spirit is love, joy, peace…” – *Galatians 5:22–23*
- “Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.” – *Matthew 3:8*

The Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22–23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

These are **not separate fruits**, but rather **a unified cluster**—evidence of the Spirit’s presence and work in the believer.

Key Characteristics of Good Spiritual Fruit

(Galatians 5:22–23)

1. Love (*Agapē*)

A selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional love that seeks the highest good of others. It reflects the love of God and is the foundation for all other fruit.

"Love one another as I have loved you." – *John 13:34*

2. Joy (*Chara*)

A deep, abiding inner gladness that comes from knowing and trusting God—independent of circumstances. This joy is rooted in the hope of Christ.

“Rejoice in the Lord always...” – *Philippians 4:4*

3. Peace (*Eirēnē*)

A sense of inner rest, harmony, and wholeness that flows from reconciliation with God. It includes peace with others and the ability to remain calm under pressure.

“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You...” – *Isaiah 26:3*

4. Patience (*Makrothumia*)

The ability to endure hardship, delay, or wrongdoing without losing heart or becoming angry. It is long-suffering and slow to retaliate.

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise... but is patient toward you...” – *2 Peter 3:9*

5. Kindness (*Chrēstotēs*)

A gentle, generous, and compassionate attitude toward others. It is an active goodness that seeks to meet needs and reflect God's grace.

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted...” – *Ephesians 4:32*

6. Goodness (*Agathōsunē*)

Moral integrity and virtue expressed in action. It means doing what is right, fair, and beneficial, even when it's difficult or costly.

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” – *Romans 12:21*

7. Faithfulness (*Pistis*)

Loyalty, reliability, and trustworthiness in all relationships—first to God, then to others. It involves staying true to one's commitments and calling.

“Well done, good and faithful servant...” – *Matthew 25:21*

8. Gentleness (*Prautēs*)

Strength under control, marked by humility, grace, and meekness. It is not weakness but a Christlike softness in dealing with people.

“Let your gentleness be evident to all.” – *Philippians 4:5*

9. Self-Control (*Enkrateia*)

Mastery over one’s thoughts, emotions, and desires. It is the Spirit-empowered ability to resist temptation and live in godly discipline.

“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” – *2 Timothy 1:7*

Contrast: Good vs. Bad Fruit

Jesus on Good Fruit

“Every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.” – *Matthew 7:17*

Good Fruit:

- Flows from a **Spirit-led**, **born-again** life
- Results in **obedience**, **love**, and **kingdom impact**
- Brings **glory to God** (John 15:8)

Bad Fruit:

- Comes from a life disconnected from Christ
- Includes hypocrisy, selfishness, impurity (Galatians 5:19–21)
- Leads to judgment (Matthew 7:19)

How Spiritual Fruit is Produced

1. **By Abiding in Christ**“ Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit…” – *John 15:5*

2. **By the Work of the Holy Spirit**“ Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” – *Galatians 5:16*
3. **Through Obedience and Surrender** Fruit grows through consistent faith, repentance, and submission to God’s Word.

Other Types of Spiritual Fruit in Scripture

- **Praise** (Hebrews 13:15) “ –fruit of lips that confess His name”
- Giving and generosity (Philippians 4:17)
- **Making disciples** (Romans 1:13; John 15:16)
- **Holy living** (Romans 6:22 “ –the fruit you get leads to sanctification”)

Summary

The **Fruit of the Spirit** is the natural outcome of a life submitted to the Holy Spirit. These nine qualities reflect the character of Christ and are cultivated as believers abide in Him and walk by the Spirit daily.

God wants our lives to be productive and fruitful; Many people in the world are spiritually famished and God wants to establish His spiritual fruit within every Christian's life so that they will truly have something to give to others to fill their hearts with God's eternal goodness. God is glorified when we bear much spiritual fruit in our hearts.

Spiritual fruit is the good spiritual attributes and abilities that God plants and brings to maturity in our lives. For instance, Love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control etc...

We need to be in God's word, and follow Jesus, in order to bear fruit and God will produce much growth.

As followers of Christ, we are called to bear good fruit and demonstrate the transformative power of our faith through our actions and works. Just as a good tree naturally produces good fruit, so too should our lives reflect the character and love of Christ in all that we do.

The fruit of our lives is not merely measured by outward acts of service but by the inward transformation that occurs as a result of our relationship with Christ. Galatians 5:22-23 describes the fruit of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are the qualities that should characterize our lives as we abide in Christ and allow His Spirit to work in us.

Bearing good fruit and works requires intentionality and obedience to God's Word. Jesus said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last" (John 15:16). As branches connected to the vine, our responsibility is to remain in Him and allow His life to flow through us, producing fruit that brings glory to His name.

Our good works are not done to earn salvation but as a response to God's grace and love poured out upon us. Ephesians 2:10 reminds us that we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which He prepared in advance for us to do. Our

lives are to be a living testimony of God's transforming power, drawing others to Him through our love and service.

May we, therefore, be diligent in bearing good fruit and works, allowing the Spirit of God to produce His fruit in us and through us. Let us be faithful stewards of the gifts and talents entrusted to us, using them to advance God's kingdom and bring glory to His name.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Galatians 5:22 25 (AKJV) — But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24And they that are Christ**'**s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

James 3:17-18 (AKJV) But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

John 15:1-10 (AKJV) I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer. 2Every branch in me that bears not fruit he takes away: and every branch that bears fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken to you. 4Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. 5I am the vine, you are the branches: He that stays in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. 6If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you. 8Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be my disciples. 9As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: continue you in my love. 10If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father**'**s commandments, and abide in his love.

Colossians 1:10-12 (AKJV) That you might walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, to all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; 12Giving thanks to the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

The Fruit of the Spirit - Love:

Galatians 5:22-23 outlines the fruit of the Spirit, beginning with love: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Love is identified as the first and foremost fruit of the Spirit. It transcends mere affection and encompasses selfless, sacrificial love that reflects God's love for humanity.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Joy:

Following love, joy is listed as a fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. This joy is not dependent on circumstances but is rooted in the believer's relationship with God.

Joy, as a fruit of the Spirit, goes beyond fleeting happiness. It is a deep-seated gladness that arises from the knowledge of God's presence and salvation.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Peace:

Galatians 5:22-23 includes peace as a fruit of the Spirit, signifying a tranquility that surpasses understanding: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

The peace mentioned here is not merely the absence of conflict but a holistic well-being that comes from being reconciled with God and trusting in His sovereignty.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Patience:

Patience is highlighted as a fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, representing enduring perseverance in the face of challenges: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

This patience involves maintaining steadfastness and composure even in difficult circumstances, reflecting God's enduring patience with humanity.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Kindness:

Galatians 5:22-23 includes kindness as a fruit of the Spirit, embodying a benevolent and compassionate disposition: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Kindness, as a fruit of the Spirit, involves a genuine concern for the well-being of others, demonstrating God's kindness extended to humanity.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Goodness:

Galatians 5:22-23 lists goodness as a fruit of the Spirit, portraying moral excellence and virtue: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Goodness, in this context, represents an inherent moral quality that seeks to do what is right, reflecting the goodness of God.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Faithfulness:

Galatians 5:22-23 includes faithfulness as a fruit of the Spirit, depicting unwavering loyalty and reliability: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

This faithfulness extends beyond mere belief; it involves steadfastness and reliability, mirroring God's faithful nature.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Gentleness:

Gentleness is identified as a fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, characterizing a considerate and humble demeanor: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience,

kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Gentleness involves a tender and compassionate approach to others, reflecting the gentleness of God in His dealings with humanity.

The Fruit of the Spirit - Self-Control:

Galatians 5:22-23 concludes with self-control as a fruit of the Spirit, denoting disciplined and controlled behavior: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Self-control involves the mastery of one's desires and impulses, aligning with the discipline that comes from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Bearing Fruit in Every Good Work:

Colossians 1:10 encourages believers to bear fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God: "so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

This verse emphasizes that the fruit of the Spirit should manifest in practical expressions of goodness and service, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of God.

Abounding in Fruitful Work:

In 2 Corinthians 9:8, the concept of abounding in every good work is connected to God's ability to make all grace abound to believers: "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work."

Abounding in every good work is seen as a result of God's grace, highlighting the connection between the indwelling Spirit and a life that bears fruit in service to others.

These scriptural references give insight into the diverse aspects of spiritual fruit, exploring the characteristics of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control as manifestations of the Holy Spirit's work in the lives of believers. Additionally, the call to bear fruit in every good work underscores the transformative impact of the Spirit's fruit in practical expressions of service and righteousness.

(112) Holiness:

1 Peter 1:14-16 AKJV 14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15 But as he which has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be you holy; for I am holy.

Holiness in the Bible

Definition

Holiness is the essential nature of God that sets Him apart from all creation. In people, it refers to being **set apart by God, for God, and to live in purity, obedience, and reverence**. Holiness is both a position (what God declares us) and a pursuit (how we live in response).

"You shall be holy, for I am holy." – *Leviticus 11:44*; *1 Peter 1:16*

Original Language

Hebrew (Old Testament)

שִׁדְקָ(qādôsh) – Holy, set apart, sacred

- Root: *q-d-sh* meaning "to separate" or "to consecrate"
- Describes God's transcendence, purity, and separateness from sin
- Also applied to people, places, and objects consecrated to God

Example:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts..." – *Isaiah 6:3*

Greek (New Testament)

ἅγιος (hagios) – Holy, consecrated, set apart

- Refers to someone or something **devoted to God and morally pure**
- Used of the Holy Spirit (*Pneuma Hagion*), saints (*hagioi*), and the church

Example:

"To all the saints (*hagiois*)... called to be holy." – *Romans 1:7*

The Holiness of God

Holiness is not just one attribute of God—it is **central to His identity**.

- He is morally perfect (Habakkuk 1:13)
- He is utterly distinct from His creation (Exodus 15:11)
- His presence makes things holy (Exodus 3:5)

God's holiness is the reason sin must be judged and why we are called to purity.

Holiness in the Life of the Believer

1. Positional Holiness – What God has done

- Through Christ, believers are **declared holy (sanctified)** at salvation.

"By one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified." – *Hebrews 10:14*

2. Practical Holiness – What we pursue daily

- We are called to **live out** the holiness we've received through obedience, purity, and love.

"Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." – *Hebrews 12:14*

Examples in Scripture

- **Moses** – Called to holy ground (Exodus 3:5)
- **Israel** – Called to be a holy nation (Leviticus 20:26)
- **Isaiah** – Confronted with God's holiness and his own sin (Isaiah 6:1–7)
- **Jesus** – The embodiment of holiness and perfect obedience (Hebrews 7:26)
- **The Church** – A holy people, set apart for God's purposes (1 Peter 2:9)

Key Characteristics of Holiness

1. Separation from Sin

Holiness begins with a break from what is unclean or ungodly. To be holy means to be set apart from sin and the corrupt values of the world. This separation is not physical isolation but a moral and spiritual distinction in how we think, act, and live.

"Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing..." – *2 Corinthians 6:17*

2. Devotion to God

Holiness is not just what we turn from—but what we turn **to**. It is wholehearted dedication to God in worship, obedience, and purpose. A holy life seeks to glorify God in every area, submitting fully to His will.

"Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." – *Romans 12:1*

3. Obedience to God's Word

A holy person takes God's Word seriously. Holiness is demonstrated by a life of obedience—aligning thoughts, choices, and actions with Scripture. Holiness doesn't grow from feelings but from faithful obedience to God's revealed truth.

"Be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" – *1 Peter 1:15–16*

4. Moral Purity

Holiness involves clean living—not just outward behavior, but inward integrity. It's seen in honesty, sexual purity, humility, and upright speech. This purity reflects the character of a holy God and protects our witness.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." – *Matthew 5:8*

5. Reverence for God

Holiness walks hand-in-hand with the fear of the Lord. Reverence is a deep respect for God's majesty, authority, and presence. It leads to humility, worship, and a cautious, prayerful life that seeks to please God above all.

"Let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire." – *Hebrews 12:28–29*

6. Transformation of Character

Holiness is not just about avoiding sin, but being transformed into the image of Christ. It is a process of growing in love, patience, humility, and all the fruit of the Spirit, becoming more like Jesus in heart and life.

"Put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." – *Ephesians 4:24*

7. Love for Righteousness

A holy person doesn't just avoid evil—they **love** what is right. Holiness involves desiring what pleases God and valuing His standards. It means rejoicing in justice, mercy, truth, and everything that reflects God's nature.

"Let those who love the Lord hate evil." – *Psalm 97:10*

8. Spiritual Discipline and Self-Control

Holiness is cultivated through spiritual practices—prayer, Scripture, confession, fasting, and worship. It also requires resisting temptation and disciplining the flesh to walk in the Spirit daily.

"Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." – *1 Timothy 4:7*

How to Grow in Holiness

1. **Abide in Christ** – He is your sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:30)
2. **Obey God's Word** – Scripture cleanses and corrects (John 17:17)
3. **Be Led by the Spirit** – He empowers holiness (Galatians 5:16–25)
4. **Confess Sin Regularly** – Keep a soft, repentant heart (1 John 1:9)
5. **Fear God** – Live with reverence, not casualness (2 Corinthians 7:1)

God desires that every Christian to be Holy. Holiness means to be separated from worldliness and from every sinful way. Likewise holiness means also to be without blame, to have a pure mind, and heart or to have spiritual integrity.

God is Holy, so we should also be Holy, if we desire to please God and hope to have a good relationship before Him. It is important for us to desire God to work His

holiness into our lives so that our joy will be full, and so our lives would be protected from evil.

Holiness is not achieved through our acts of righteousness, even though our faith must be followed rightly by good deeds.

Neither can holiness be just an outward appearance of false humility, or self abasement, rather our lives must reflect the genuine holiness and pureness of God which is only made possible through the grace of Jesus Christ.

Holiness refers to the state of being pure, and morally excellent. It embodies the character trait of being set apart for a divine purpose and is often associated with perfection and righteousness. In a Biblical context, holiness reflects the nature of God, who is without sin and embodies ultimate goodness. For Christians, pursuing holiness involves purposing to align one's thoughts, actions, and character with God's will, seeking a deeper relationship with Him, and living in a way that honors His standards of purity and love.

Holiness comes to the depths of our minds and hearts as we sincerely repent, and turn away from every evil way, while we submit ourselves to be sanctified by the grace and words of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is further important for us to be holy and separated from the world, so that we will have the time and ability to do the work of God unhindered; This does not mean that we should isolate ourselves somewhere. We are still to go among non-Christians and sinners, however we are not to continue to have close friendship with them any longer nor do the same carnal ways of the world. we should still witness to them and bring the good news of God's Love.

Holiness is only possible through God’s Holy Spirit working within us, being cleansed by the grace of Jesus Christ and by his Word of truth. Holiness further comes by taking on the nature of Jesus Christ as we continually humble ourselves and ask for His forgiveness.

When we live a holy life, we can rest in the goodness of God apart from the bondage of the world of sin. Let all of us purpose to make holiness our desire, and to be holy because God is holy.

Holiness, a central doctrine in the Bible, is the call to be set apart for God's purpose and to reflect His character in every aspect of our lives. As followers of Christ, we are called to pursue holiness, not as a mere outward appearance but as a transformation of the heart and mind.

God, who is holy, calls us to emulate His holiness in our thoughts, words, and actions. It is a continuous journey of sanctification, where we surrender our lives to His will and allow His Spirit to conform us to the image of Christ. Holiness is not about perfection but about a growing intimacy with God and a willingness to be shaped by His grace.

We are made holy through Jesus Christ.

Living a holy life requires intentional effort and discipline. It involves cultivating a deep reverence for God, a commitment to obedience to His Word, and a desire to honor Him

in all that we do. It means forsaking sinful practices and patterns of behavior that are contrary to His will and embracing righteousness and purity instead. Pursuing holiness also involves cultivating a life of prayer, worship, and devotion to God. It requires us to prioritize our relationship with Him above all else, seeking His guidance and strength to walk in His ways. As we abide in Him, we are empowered to bear fruit that reflects His holiness and to shine as lights in a dark and broken world.

Ultimately, holiness is not a burden but a privilege. It is the path to experiencing the fullness of God's presence and the joy of living in alignment with His purpose for our lives. As we yield ourselves to His transformative work, He empowers us to live as holy vessels, sanctified and set apart for His glory.

HOLINESS - Continued…

The Holiness of God and How Our Lives Become Holy Through Jesus Christ"

The holiness of God is a characteristic that defines His flawless and superior nature. Throughout the Bible God's holiness is portrayed as the embodiment of purity, righteousness and perfection setting Him apart from all other created beings. His holiness serves as a benchmark against which all moral and ethical values are measured highlighting the purity and transcendence of His essence. The importance of God's holiness reinforces the need for us as disciples of Jesus Christ to seek for a life that reflects His excellence and righteousness. It also emphasizes our reliance on Jesus Christ's intervention to enable us to attain the state of holiness desired and required by God.

The Scriptures repeatedly emphasize the holiness of God to remind us about the significance of revering and honoring His nature. Isaiah 6;3 captures this sentiment through the proclamation made by seraphim who declared the Lord's holiness revealing its awe inspiring and majestic nature. This passage underscores our responsibility as Christians to approach God with respect and humility while recognizing His faultless and superior nature as the standard, for purity and righteousness.

The very nature of God's holiness, fully revealed to us in the life of Jesus Christ, serves as a guiding principle that inspires and guides us to lead lives dedicated, to reflecting His excellence and upholding His standards in all aspects of their existence.

The ability for any of us to achieve holiness in our lives is made possible through the work of Jesus Christ. He serves as the ultimate sacrifice allowing individuals to be reconciled with God the Father and experience the power of His grace. 1 Peter 1;15 16 emphasizes the call for us to live lives just as God, who has called them is holy. This passage highlights how Christ's redemptive work brings about a change in our lives emphasizing the need for us to live a life consecrated and set apart for God's purposes. The attainment of holiness through Jesus Christ demonstrates how His grace empowers individuals to live lives characterized by excellence and righteousness as we purpose to follow Christ's example in our endeavors.

By so doing we take on the righteousness and holiness of Jesus Christ, while our own righteousness is filthy because our sinful, imperfect nature.

The fact if we truly abide in Jesus Christ, is that God the Father views us as spiritually holy, because Jesus Christ is perfectly holy, although we are not perfectly holy as far as our current condition of still being transformed into Christ's image.

The atoning blood of Jesus makes us spiritually holy before God the Father, by faith. However our behavior and actions are being changed daily by the work of God's Holy Spirit, as we die to ourselves, and take on the nature of Jesus Christ.

Moreover God's Holy Spirit also does a crucial role, in enabling us to achieve holiness in our lives. Through the empowerment provided by the Holy Spirit individuals are able to live lives that please God and reflect His standards.

The book of Galatians, verses 5;22- 23 highlights the importance of the fruits of the Spirit. These fruits include love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. This passage emphasizes how the Holy Spirit can bring about changes in believers lives by developing these qualities. It enables them to live in a way that reflects Gods excellence and righteousness. To achieve holiness through the Holy Spirits work believers must be open to His guidance and empowerment. We should strive to embody these virtues and values in our relationships with others, and in our everyday behavior, as we conduct our lives in society or wherever we go in the world.

The world shall know we are Christians by our love, that is holy, apart from continuing in any evil way.

Moreover attaining holiness as Christians requires an effort to develop disciplines and moral virtues that align with God's standards. The book of 2 Peter reinforces this in verses 1;5-7 by urging us to develop our faith along with goodness, knowledge, self control, perseverance, godliness maintaining affection and expressing love, towards others. This passage emphasizes how cultivating character traits can bring transformation in our lives and enable our to reflect God's nature through our actions.

(113) Be Holy, As God Is Holy:

"But as he which has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation; 16Because it is written, Be you holy; for I am holy. - **1 Peter 1:15-16** (AKJV)

In 1 Peter 1:15-16, we are urged to strive for holiness, echoing the divine commandment to be holy because God is holy. This summons is not a mere suggestion but a profound call to emulate the very character of our Creator. Holiness, far from being an unattainable ideal, is a transformative journey and process that we embark upon, inspired by our love for God and our desire to reflect His nature in our lives. It's a commitment to purity, integrity, and righteousness in all aspects of our being – in our thoughts, words, and deeds. As we immerse ourselves in the sanctifying presence of God, we are purified, refined, and molded into vessels worthy of His glory. Our pursuit of holiness isn't solitary; it's a mutual effort between us and the Holy Spirit, who empowers and guides us along this narrow path to become more Christlike and holy. The finished work of Jesus Christ and God's Holy Spirit daily transforming our lives is what makes us holy. In this pursuit, we find our true identity and purpose, liberated from the bondage of

sin and called to a life of consecration and devotion. Let us, therefore, with reverence and awe, heed the apostle's exhortation, consecrating ourselves wholly to God, for He who called us is faithful, and His grace sustains us in our journey towards holiness.

Living a Holy Life through Jesus Christ

While we are only made holy by the work of God's Holy Spirit and what Jesus Christ alone accomplished at the cross, we still need to willingly respond to God, by putting off our old nature through repentance and walk in the newness of our spiritual life in Christ. Before we accepted Christ this was impossible, however now that we are a new creation set free from the power and bondage of our sin, we can freely live and reflect the holiness of Christ through our words and actions. The process of God sanctifying and transforming our lives takes place continually as the words and actions of our physical man comes into maturity and corresponds more and more to our spiritual nature in Jesus through His grace, so that we can actually live a life of holiness and purity as God intended.

To live a life that reflects God**'**s holiness, we, as disciples of Jesus Christ, must actively engage in disciplines that nurture our growth and moral development. These practices help us align our lives with God**'**s desires, bringing Him honor in every aspect.

This becomes evident when a sincere believer and follower of Jesus Christ, spends intimate time with Jesus Christ and continues in His word and obeying and following God's instructions, the truth of Jesus Christ will set that person free of practicing sin and exhibit a recognizable holy, pure Christlike nature full of good fruits. This is in contrast of a so called believer of Jesus, but doesn't follow and do the what God's word instructs and commands. They are either immature, lukewarm or a hypocritical carnal Christian that does not reflect the holiness and purity of Christlike behavior.

God**'**s holiness is our standard of purity and righteousness, defining His flawless and transcendent nature. Through the work of Jesus Christ and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, we can attain holiness in our lives. This empowers us to manifest God**'**s excellence and righteousness through our actions.

Pursuing holiness requires us to cultivate disciplines and embrace moral virtues that reflect God**'**s divine nature. By striving to live lives that please and honor Him in all areas, we can walk this path toward holiness together.

In summary establishing and developing a relationship with God through abiding in Jesus Christ, spending quality time with Him in prayer, learning, and obeying the instructions and commandments of God found in God's Word and worship becomes essential, for living a life that exemplifies His holiness.

Psalm 99;9 reminds us to honor and praise the Lord our God and worship at His mountain because He is holy. This passage emphasizes the importance of pursuing a life filled with worship and reverence, towards God. It enables us to establish a connection with His nature allowing us to reflect His moral excellence and righteousness in our everyday lives. The pursuit of holiness through a life of worship highlights the importance for Christians to approach God with awe and reverence recognizing His transcendent nature as the source of moral guidance and spiritual strength.

Additionally living a life that mirrors God's holiness involves practicing love and compassion towards others just as Jesus Christ exemplified throughout His life and ministry. In 1 John 4;7-8 we are encouraged to love one another because love originates from God. This passage emphasizes how love can profoundly impact our lives enabling us to embody virtues such as compassion, kindness and forgiveness that reflect God's nature. By practicing love and compassion as an expression of God's holiness we are reminded of the importance of extending grace and mercy towards others. We should desire and purpose to emulate Christ's love and selfless sacrifice in ministry, in our relationships and interactions with those, around us.

Moreover to live a life that reflects the holiness of God one must practice humility and servanthood just as Jesus Christ demonstrated through His life and teachings. The passage, in Philippians 2;3&4 emphasizes the importance for us to avoid ambition or conceit and instead value others above ourselves. This passage highlights how humility can bring about transformation in our lives enabling us to develop a spirit of servanthood and selflessness that imitates Christs example during His time on earth. By prioritizing the needs of others over our own, we seek to embody qualities such as selflessness and compassion that reflect God's nature in our lives.

To truly reflect God's holiness believers must actively engage in acts of compassion and advocacy to promote equality, fairness and dignity, for everyone. It's about embodying the heart of God's justice and mercy.

In summary living a life that reflects God's holiness involves building an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ through sincere repentance, putting off every sinful way as God's Holy Spirit enables us, through the cleansing of Jesus Christ, His Blood and His Word, prayer, learning and meditating on God's Word, and worship. It also means showing love and compassion, towards others practicing humility and servanthood and striving for justice and righteousness. Pursuing holiness requires embodying the virtues and values that reflect ' nature. Believers aim to live in a way that honors Him in every aspect of their lives.

HOLINESS - **Continued…**

KEY SCRIPTURES

Romans 12:1-2 AKJV 1 I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

2 Corinthians 7:1 AKJV 1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Ephesians 1:4 AKJV 4 According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Hebrews 12:14 AKJV 14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

Understanding Holiness;

Holiness is an aspect of God**'**s nature representing His purity, righteousness and transcendence. Leviticus 19;2 emphasizes the instruction to strive for holiness highlighting the connection, between the work of human sanctification through Jesus Christ and the divine essence. This passage underscores the importance of pursuing excellence and spiritual purity reflecting how God**'**s holiness shapes the character and behavior of His people. We are made Holy through Jesus Christ.

The Call to Separate from Sin and Receive The Holiness Of Jesus;

The call of holiness carries with it a call to distance oneself from sin and impurity. In 2 Corinthians 7:1 there is an emphasis on cleansing oneself from any form of defilement in body and spirit emphasizing the significance of pursuing sanctification and moral purity. This verse highlights how holiness transforms individuals by urging them to reject influences and embrace a life characterized by integrity and moral uprightness. The precious blood of Jesus sanctifies us, and makes us holy by faith.

The Pursuit of Holiness as an Act of Worship;

Seeking holiness goes beyond efforts; it becomes an act of worship and devotion to God. Romans 12;1 encourages believers to offer their bodies as living sacrifices that are holy and pleasing, to God—this is seen as their act of worship.

This passage underscores the importance of dedicating ones life to God highlighting how holiness can profoundly transform individuals and serve as a manifestation of wholehearted devotion and reverence, towards the divine.

Holiness through Sanctification;

The principle of holiness entails a process of transformation through sanctification by God's Holy Spirit. In 1 Thessalonians 4;3 4 it is emphasized that we should strive for sanctification according to God's will. This passage highlights the significance of abstaining from immorality and pursuing holiness and honor. It portrays holiness as a process of growth and moral refinement guided by God's divine purpose.

The Call to Holiness Reflecting God's Nature;

The call to pursue holiness is rooted in the nature of God emphasizing the link between divine sanctification and human moral conduct. In 1 Peter 1;16 it is reiterated that we should be holy because God Himself is holy. This passage underscores how holiness has power serving as an aspect for reflecting God**'**s image and character in the world.

Holiness, as Symbolizing Spiritual Wholeness and Integrity;

Holiness represents a sense of completeness and integrity encompassing every aspect of a Christian. In 1 Thessalonians 5;23 24 there is a prayer for God to sanctify believers completely safeguarding their spirit, soul and body blameless until the return of Jesus Christ. This passage highlights the nature of holiness that is established by the work of

God’s Holy Spirit in a person’s life, as a process that encompasses the spiritual, emotional and physical dimensions of a Christian’s existence.

Holiness as an Expression of Devotion and Reverence;

The pursuit of holiness reflects an individuals devotion and reverence towards God embodying a life dedicated to serving Him. In 2 Corinthians 7;1 there is an emphasis on the call to purify oneself from any impurity—both spiritual—in order to perfect holiness out of respect, for God.

This passage emphasizes the impact of holiness depicting it as an embodiment of devotion, respect and wonder, towards the divine. It highlights the role of sanctification in fostering a spiritual connection and intimacy with God.

Holiness; A Standard for Righteous Living and Ethical Conduct-

Holiness sets a standard, for living and ethical conduct acting as a moral compass that guides believers towards spiritual integrity and moral uprightness. In 1 Thessalonians 4;3 4 believers are encouraged to follow Gods will by abstaining from immorality while pursuing holiness and honor in their lives.This passage highlights the impact of holiness emphasizing its ability to bring about changes, in individuals and communities. It portrays holiness as a catalyst for developing virtues such as purity, self control and ethical behavior among believers. Through their conduct and lifestyle choices believers honor God. Experience transformation in their lives.

Key Scriptures -Biblical Examples Of Holiness:

- Leviticus 11:44 - Instructs the Israelites to consecrate themselves and be holy, for the Lord their God is holy.
- Leviticus 19:2 - Calls for the Israelites to be holy because the Lord their God is holy, emphasizing the standard of holiness for God's people.
- Isaiah 6:3 - Describes the seraphim calling to one another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory," emphasizing the holiness and glory of God.
- Psalm 99:9 - Exalts the Lord, their God, and worship at his holy mountain, for the Lord their God is holy.
- 1 Peter 1:15-16 - Instructs believers to be holy in all their conduct, just as the one who called them is holy, emphasizing the call to reflect God's holiness in their lives.
- Revelation 4:8 - Describes the four living creatures each having six wings, full of eyes all around and within, calling out day and night, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" emphasizing the continual proclamation of God's holiness.
- Exodus 15:11 - Exalts the Lord as majestic in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders, emphasizing the awe-inspiring nature of God's holiness.

- 1 Chronicles 16:29 - Calls for worshippers to ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name, bringing an offering and coming into his courts, worshiping the Lord in the splendor of his holiness, emphasizing the reverence and worship of God's holiness.
- Hebrews 12:14 - Urges believers to strive for peace with everyone and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord, highlighting the requirement of holiness for encountering God.
- 2 Corinthians 7:1 - Encourages believers to purify themselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God, emphasizing the pursuit of holiness as an act of reverence and devotion to God.
- Ephesians 1:4 - Discusses believers being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and blameless before him, emphasizing the divine purpose for believers to walk in holiness.
- Colossians 1:22 - Speaks of believers being reconciled in Christ's physical body through death to present them holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation, emphasizing the redemptive work of Christ in making believers holy.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7 - Instructs believers to be holy, highlighting the call to live a life that is set apart and dedicated to God's purposes.
- Exodus 3:5 - Describes the Lord instructing Moses to remove his sandals because the ground where he was standing was holy, emphasizing the sacredness of God's presence.
- Psalm 22:3 - Describes God as holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel, highlighting the exaltation of God's holiness.
- Psalm 99:3 - Exalts the Lord as holy, emphasizing the awe-inspiring nature of God's holiness.
- Isaiah 57:15 - Speaks of the high and exalted one, who lives forever, whose name is holy, emphasizing the exaltation of God's holiness and majesty.
- Ezekiel 39:7 - Discusses God making his holy name known in the midst of his people Israel, emphasizing the manifestation of God's holiness.
- Revelation 15:4 - Describes all nations coming and worshiping before the Lord, glorifying his name, for he alone is holy, emphasizing the uniqueness and transcendence of God's holiness.
- Leviticus 20:26 - Calls for the Israelites to be holy to God because he has set them apart from the nations to be his, emphasizing the consecration and separation for God's purposes.
- Psalm 29:2 - Calls for the heavenly beings to ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name, worshiping the Lord in the splendor of holiness, emphasizing the worship and adoration of God's holiness.
- Psalm 30:4 - Exhorts the saints to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to his holy name, emphasizing the praise and thanksgiving for God's holiness.

- Psalm 99:5 - Exalts the Lord as holy, emphasizing the worship and reverence of God's holiness.
- Psalm 111:9 - Describes the Lord as holy and awesome, emphasizing the reverence and awe-inspiring nature of God's holiness.
- Isaiah 40:25 - Asks to whom can the people liken God, emphasizing his holiness and incomparability.
- Isaiah 57:15 - Describes God as high and exalted, living forever, whose name is holy, emphasizing the transcendence and majesty of God's holiness.
- Revelation 4:8 - Depicts the four living creatures calling out, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come," emphasizing the Leviticus 20:7 - Calls for the Israelites to consecrate themselves and be holy, for the Lord their God is holy, emphasizing the call to live a life set apart for God's purposes.
- Psalm 89:18 - Exalts the Lord as their strength and their shield, with whom their king is holy, emphasizing the kingship and holiness of God.
- Isaiah 6:1-3 - Describes Isaiah's vision of the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, with seraphim calling to one another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory," emphasizing the transcendent and glorious nature of God's holiness.
- 1 Timothy 2:8 - Instructs men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing, emphasizing the attitude of reverence and purity in prayer.
- 1 Peter 1:16 - Quotes from Leviticus, calling for believers to be holy, because God is holy, emphasizing the call to reflect God's character in their lives.
- Revelation 22:11 - Discusses the angel's declaration that the one who does wrong should continue to do wrong, and the vile person should continue to be vile, but the one who is holy should continue to be holy, emphasizing the contrast between the righteous and the wicked in light of God's holiness.
- Leviticus 11:45 - Calls for the Israelites to be holy, for the Lord who brought them out of Egypt to be their God; they must be holy because he is holy, emphasizing the standard of holiness for God's people.
- Psalm 96:9 - Calls for worshipers to worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness, trembling before him, all the earth, emphasizing the reverence and awe in worshiping God's holiness.
- Isaiah 43:15 - Describes the Lord as Israel's Holy One, their Creator and King, emphasizing the sovereignty and divine authority of God's holiness.
- Isaiah 57:15 - Describes the high and exalted one who lives forever, whose name is holy, dwelling in the high and holy place, emphasizing the transcendence and exaltation of God's holiness.

- 1 Corinthians 3:17 - Warns that if anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person, for God's temple is sacred, and they themselves are that temple, emphasizing the sanctity and reverence of God's dwelling place within believers.
- 1 Thessalonians 3:13 - Prays for the Lord to strengthen believers' hearts, making them blameless and holy in the presence of God and Father at the coming of the Lord Jesus with all his saints, emphasizing the hope for sanctification and holiness at Christ's return.

These references collectively emphasize the reverence, worship, and sanctity associated with God's holiness, underscoring the call for believers to reflect His character and live a life dedicated to His purposes.

(114) Self Denial:

Luke 9:23-25 (AKJV):“ And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24For whoever will save his life shall lose it: but whoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?.”

Self-Denial in the Bible

Definition

Self-denial is the deliberate choice to say **"no" to oneself** in order to say **"yes" to Christ**. It is the act of renouncing selfish desires, temptations and sin, personal comfort, and worldly ambitions to follow God’s will. Self-denial lies at the heart of true discipleship.

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” — *Luke 9:23*

Biblical Language

Greek (New Testament)

ἀρνέομαι (arneomai) – to deny, disown, reject

- Used in the context of **denying oneself**, i.e., rejecting your own will or rights in favor of God's.
- Also used for denying Christ, showing the seriousness and exclusivity of allegiance (e.g., *Mark 8:34*, *2 Timothy 2:12*).

ἐγκράτεια (enkrateia) – self-control, restraint

- While not identical to self-denial, it is closely related, as it reflects mastery over one's desires in pursuit of holiness.

Key Characteristics of Biblical Self-Denial

1. Surrender of Personal Will

Self-denial begins with laying down your own plans, preferences, and control, trusting God's will above your own.

"Not my will, but Yours be done." — *Luke 22:42* (Jesus in Gethsemane)

2. Death to Self

It is the willingness to **crucify the flesh**—the sinful nature and its desires.

"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." — *Galatians 5:24*

3. Daily Sacrifice

Self-denial isn't a one-time act but a **daily decision** to live sacrificially.

"Take up your cross daily and follow Me." — *Luke 9:23*

4. Rejection of Worldly Priorities

Choosing Christ may mean turning from comfort, popularity, wealth, or personal ambition.

"Do not love the world or the things in the world..." — *1 John 2:15*

5. Service to Others Above Self

True self-denial results in **serving others**, putting their needs above your own.

"Do nothing from selfish ambition... but in humility count others more significant than yourselves." — *Philippians 2:3*

6. Endurance in Suffering for Christ

Willingness to endure hardship or persecution is a mark of self-denial.

"If we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us." — *2 Timothy 2:12*

Examples of Self-Denial in Scripture

- **Jesus** – The perfect model of self-denial, who "emptied himself" and went to the cross (*Philippians 2:5–8*).
- **Paul** – Gave up status, comfort, and safety for the sake of the Gospel (*Philippians 3:7–8*).
- **Moses** – Chose mistreatment with God's people rather than enjoy fleeting pleasures of sin (*Hebrews 11:24–25*).

- **Early Church** – Sold possessions and shared with those in need (*Acts 2:45*).

Why Self-Denial Matters

1. It is the path of true discipleship (Luke 14:26–27)
2. It reflects Jesus 'character (Philippians 2:5–8)
3. It leads to spiritual freedom and joy (Matthew 16:25)
4. It prepares believers for eternal reward (Romans 8:17)
5. It is essential for Jesus transforming our lives

Introduction: The Call to Self-Denial

Self-denial is a vital part of our walk with Christ. As Christians, we are called to lay down our own desires and ambitions in order to follow Jesus wholeheartedly. In *Luke 9:23*, Jesus says, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."* This means that each day, we must choose to put God's will above our own. Self-denial isn't about punishing ourselves or living without joy; rather, it's about surrendering our selfish ways so that Christ can lead us into something greater. When we deny ourselves, we are making room for God's presence, His purpose, and His love to grow in our lives.

As followers of Jesus, we recognize that we no longer live for ourselves but for Him who gave Himself for us. *Galatians 2:20* reminds us, *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."* This truth invites us to live with humility and dependence on God. Self-denial helps us stay grounded in our identity in Christ and frees us from being controlled by the world's values. While it's not always easy, it leads us to a deeper relationship with God and aligns our hearts with His. Together, as the body of Christ, we support one another in this journey—learning to trust God more, love others better, and live lives that reflect Jesus in everything we do.

In Luke 9:23, Jesus issues one of the most radical and challenging commands in the New Testament: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." These words speak directly to the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Christ. Self-denial is not just a matter of temporary sacrifice but a continual, daily choice to lay aside one's own desires and ambitions in order to follow Jesus. It is a call to renounce self-centered living and embrace a life of humility, obedience, and sacrifice.

This commentary will explore the biblical understanding of self-denial, why it is essential for the Christian life, and how believers can live out this challenging but transformative command. We will look at the nature of self-denial in Scripture, its role in the life of Jesus and the early disciples, and how self-denial leads to true freedom and life in Christ.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Self-Denial

Self-denial is a core principle of the Christian faith, rooted in the teachings of Jesus. It involves the rejection of self-interest, the surrender of personal rights, and the submission of one's will to God's purposes. This radical reorientation of life is essential for those who desire to follow Christ wholeheartedly.

1.1 Self-Denial in the Life of Jesus

Jesus is the ultimate example of self-denial. Throughout His ministry, He demonstrated a profound commitment to the will of His Father, even when it required personal sacrifice and suffering.

- **Matthew 26:39 (AKJV):** "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as you will."

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus exemplified self-denial by submitting His own will to the Father**'**s will. Even though He was deeply distressed by the suffering He was about to face, He chose to deny Himself and obey God**'**s plan of salvation. This submission to the Father**'**s will, despite personal anguish, is the ultimate model of self-denial.

- **Philippians 2:5-8 (AKJV):** "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7But made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross."

Jesus **'**incarnation and His willingness to die on the cross for the salvation of humanity exemplify the highest form of self-denial. He gave up His heavenly glory and the comforts of divinity to live among and die for sinful humans. His entire life was marked by self-denial in order to fulfill God's redemptive plan.

1.2 Self-Denial in the Early Disciples

The apostles and early Christians followed Jesus' example of self-denial in their own lives. They willingly embraced hardship, suffering, and even death for the sake of the gospel. Their lives reflected the radical nature of discipleship and the commitment to self-denial that Jesus had called them to.

- **Acts 5:40-42 (AKJV):**“ And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.41And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. 42And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

The apostles **'**rejoicing in their suffering demonstrates the fruit of self-denial. They considered it an honor to suffer for Christ, seeing their willingness to endure persecution as a way to participate in the life of Christ Himself.

2. The Nature of Self-Denial

Self-denial, as taught by Jesus, is not a mere denial of physical comforts or worldly pleasures; it is a denial of the sinful desires and ambitions that pull us away from God**'**s will. It is a deliberate decision to set aside personal preferences, to forsake the idols of the self, and to live with a focus on God**'**s kingdom.

2.1 Denying Self in Favor of God's Kingdom

Self-denial is first and foremost about placing God**'**s will above our own. Jesus calls His disciples to reject the selfish pursuit of status, wealth, power, and personal pleasure in order to seek first God**'**s kingdom and righteousness.

- **Matthew 6:33 (AKJV):**" But seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. 34Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof."

The call to deny oneself is a call to prioritize God's kingdom over personal ambition. It is about living for God**'**s purposes rather than our own desires, acknowledging that true life and fulfillment are found not in pursuing our own agendas but in surrendering to God's will.

2.2 The Cross and Self-Denial

When Jesus says, **"**Take up your cross daily," He is not referring to a figurative burden or challenge in life but to the literal and profound act of dying to self. The cross symbolizes death—the death of our old self, our sinful nature, and our desires that are opposed to God**'**s will.

- **Galatians 2:20 (AKJV):**" I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Taking up the cross means dying to self daily. It involves identifying with Christ**'**s death, rejecting the sinful ways of the flesh, and living in the power of His resurrection. This self-denial leads to true freedom, for in dying to self, we find life in Christ.

2.3 Daily Commitment to Self-Denial

Jesus **'**call to **"**take up [the] cross daily" indicates that self-denial is not a one-time event but an ongoing, daily decision. Each day presents new opportunities to choose God**'**s will over our own, to put others before ourselves, and to live out the radical selflessness that Jesus exemplified.

- **Luke 14:27 (AKJV):**" And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

To follow Jesus requires a constant willingness to lay down our own desires and embrace a life of obedience to Him, even when it leads us into difficulty, sacrifice, or suffering. It is a daily choice to follow Jesus above all else.

3. The Fruit of Self-Denial

While self-denial may seem like a difficult and costly command, it leads to true life and fulfillment. By denying ourselves, we make room for God to work in us and through us, and we experience the joy, peace, and purpose that come from living in alignment with God's will.

3.1 True Freedom in Self-Denial

Self-denial may seem paradoxical, but in reality, it leads to freedom. The more we deny ourselves, the more we are freed from the power of sin, selfishness, and the world's empty pursuits. In Christ, we find our true identity and purpose, and it is only by denying our own sinful nature that we can fully experience the life He has for us.

- **John 8:36 (AKJV):**" If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed"

The freedom Jesus offers is not the freedom to live selfishly but to denial our self centered evil earthly desires and walk in the freedom to live for Him and for others. This freedom brings joy and peace that the world cannot provide.

3.2 Transformation into Christ's Likeness

Self-denial also results in transformation. As we continually die to our sinful desires and live in obedience to God, we are progressively conformed to the image of Christ. This transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to live out the selfless, sacrificial life that Jesus modeled.

- **Romans 12:2 (AKJV):**" And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

The process of denying self is part of the sanctification process, in which God shapes us to be more like Christ in character, attitudes, and actions.

4. How to Live Out Self-Denial

Living out self-denial requires practical steps, reliance on the Holy Spirit, and a constant reorientation of our hearts and minds to God's will. Here are several ways that Christians can practice self-denial in their daily lives:

4.1 Through Prayer and Surrender

Self-denial begins with a heart that is surrendered to God in prayer. We must regularly come before God, asking Him to align our hearts with His will and to help us deny the flesh in favor of following Him.

- **Matthew 26:41 (AKJV):**" Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

4.2 Through Serving Others

Self-denial is also demonstrated through serving others, especially those who cannot repay us. Jesus modeled servant leadership, and we are called to follow His example by putting the needs of others before our own.

- **Mark 10:45 (AKJV):**“ For even the Son of man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

4.3 Through Sacrifice

Self-denial involves making sacrifices for the sake of God**’**s kingdom. This could mean giving up personal comforts, time, or resources in order to serve God**’**s purposes. True discipleship requires a willingness to sacrifice whatever it takes to follow Jesus.

- **Luke 14:33 (AKJV):**“ So likewise, whoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he has, he cannot be my disciple.”

Conclusion: The Path to True Life

Self-denial is not a call to misery or asceticism, but a path to true freedom, joy, and fulfillment in Christ. It is through denying ourselves and taking up our cross that we become more fully aligned with God's will and experience the abundant life that He offers. Jesus' call to self-denial is an invitation to live a life of sacrificial love, of service, and of obedience to the Father. By following His example and embracing the discipline of self-denial, we are transformed into His likeness and empowered to live out the gospel in a world that desperately needs it. May we respond to His call by denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily, and following Him with wholehearted devotion.

SELF-DENIAL : Following Christ's Example - Continued..

Scripture: "Then said Jesus to his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25For whoever will save his life shall lose it: and whoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? .” - Matthew 16:24 -26 (AKJV)

Self-denial, a fundamental principle of Christian discipleship, is the call to relinquish our own desires, ambitions, and comforts in order to wholeheartedly follow and to serve Christ and others in the world. It requires a willingness to surrender our will to His, to prioritize His kingdom above our own interests, and to embrace the sacrificial path of discipleship.

Jesus Himself exemplified self-denial in the most profound way. He willingly laid aside His divine privileges and took on human form, humbling Himself to the point of death on the cross for the redemption of humanity. He calls us to follow His example, to die to self daily, and to embrace a life of radical obedience and sacrificial love. Self-denial does

not mean denying our worth in the eyes of God or neglecting our needs, but rather renouncing selfishness and self-centeredness in order to serve God and others wholeheartedly. It involves crucifying our fleshly evil desires and submitting our lives to the lordship of Christ, allowing His Spirit to reign in our hearts and transform us from the inside out.

Choosing self-denial over self-indulgence is often opposite of the worldly norm and challenging. It may require us to make difficult choices, to endure hardship and rejection, and to embrace a lifestyle of simplicity and humility. Yet, it is in denying ourselves that we find true freedom, joy, and fulfillment in Christ.

Self-denial is not a burden but a pathway to abundant life. It opens the door to deeper intimacy with Jesus Christ, to be able to abide in Him, unhindered, and have a more profound sense of purpose and meaning. We begin to see more clearly God's calling and are then able to walk the narrow way that leads to life without all the distractions. As we lay down our lives for the sake of Christ, we discover that in losing ourselves, we truly find ourselves in Him.

(115) Take Up Your Cross Daily

Luke 9:23-25 (AKJV): And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24For whoever will save his life shall lose it: but whoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

Introduction: The Call to Discipleship

In Luke 9:23, Jesus issues a profound and challenging call to all who would follow Him: "Take up your cross daily." This is not merely a call to occasional sacrifice or a one-time commitment, but an ongoing, daily act of self-denial and surrender. The imagery of the cross is powerful—associated with suffering, shame, and ultimate sacrifice—and Jesus uses it to illustrate the cost of true discipleship. As followers of Jesus Christ we are called by God to die to our old sinful, evil ways and recognize that Jesus was crucified and paid the price for our sins so that we would be set free from the bondage and spiritual death of sin.

This commentary will explore what it means to **"**take up our cross daily," examining its significance in the context of following Jesus, the nature of the cross in the life of a believer, and the practical implications of this radical call to discipleship. By understanding what it means to bear the cross daily, we can better live out the gospel in our everyday lives, fully surrendered to the will of God.

1. The Meaning of Taking Up Our Cross

The phrase **"**take up your cross" is one of the most striking and sobering images in the teachings of Jesus. To His original audience, the cross was not a symbol of triumph or

salvation, but a means of execution—reserved for the most humiliating and torturous death. For Jesus to use this imagery would have been shocking, but He was teaching a profound spiritual truth.

1.1 The Cross as a Symbol of Self-Denial

Taking up our cross is an act of self-denial. In the context of this verse, Jesus is calling His disciples to reject self-centeredness and embrace a life of sacrificial love and obedience to God. The cross represents death—death to our selfish desires, our comforts, and our will. Jesus is not calling us to a physical death immediately, but to a spiritual death to the old life, to sin, and to the pursuit of worldly success and satisfaction.

- **Galatians 2:20,21 (AKJV):**“ II am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. 21I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”

Paul**’**s declaration in Galatians 2:20 speaks to the heart of what it means to take up our cross. Our old self, with its sinful desires and attachments, is crucified with Christ, and we are called to live a new life empowered by Christ**’**s resurrection. This is the essence of discipleship—living in the power of the cross, embracing its cost, and submitting to the authority of Christ in every area of our lives.

1.2 The Cross as a Call to Obedience

Taking up the cross is also a call to radical obedience. Jesus **’**own journey to the cross was a path of submission to the Father**’**s will, even to the point of suffering and death. As His followers, we are called to imitate His example by surrendering our will to God, even when it leads us through difficult or painful circumstances.

- **Matthew 26:39 (AKJV):**“ And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as you will. .”

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus demonstrated the ultimate act of obedience by submitting His will to the Father**’**s, despite the agony and suffering that awaited Him on the cross. We, too, are called to deny our own will and embrace God**’**s plan for our lives, even when it leads us to difficult or sacrificial paths.

2. The Daily Nature of the Cross

Jesus **’**command to **“**take up your cross daily” emphasizes that discipleship is not a one-time decision or a single act of sacrifice, but an ongoing, daily commitment to follow Him. The cross is not a one-time event, but a daily reality for every true disciple of Christ.

2.1 Daily Self-Denial

To take up our cross daily means that we must continually deny ourselves and our desires. Self-denial is not a one-time act but a daily, moment-by-moment choice. Every

day, we face opportunities to either live for ourselves or live for God. True discipleship involves making the choice each day to lay down our own ambitions, desires, and comforts in order to follow Christ more fully.

- **Romans 12:1 (AKJV):**“ I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God..”

Paul urges believers to offer their lives as living sacrifices, an act of daily worship and service to God. This is the heart of what it means to take up our cross—living each day with an attitude of surrender to God**’**s will.

2.2 The Daily Struggle Between Flesh and Spirit

The daily nature of the cross is also seen in the ongoing struggle between the flesh and the Spirit. Taking up our cross involves crucifying the flesh—putting to death the desires that lead us away from God—and living by the power of the Holy Spirit. This struggle is not a one-time battle but a daily process of sanctification.

- **Galatians 5:24-25 (AKJV):**“ And they that are Christ**’**s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.”

The cross represents the ongoing battle against sin and selfishness in our lives. Each day, we must choose to walk in the Spirit, deny the flesh, and live in obedience to God**’**s Word.

3. The Cost of Discipleship

Taking up our cross daily is not without cost. Jesus never minimized the demands of following Him. In fact, He made it clear that discipleship would involve suffering, sacrifice, and even rejection.

3.1 Suffering for Christ’s Sake

To take up our cross daily often means embracing suffering for the sake of Christ. This may take many forms: rejection from the world, persecution for our faith, or the willingness to endure hardship in obedience to God. Just as Jesus suffered for our salvation, we too are called to suffer for His sake.

- **Philippians 3:10 (AKJV):**“ That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; 11If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.”

Paul**’**s desire was to share in the sufferings of Christ, understanding that suffering is an essential part of the Christian journey. Taking up our cross daily means being willing to endure hardship for the glory of God, knowing that suffering produces endurance and maturity in our faith.

3.2 The Risk of Rejection

Jesus warns His disciples that following Him may result in rejection by the world. To take up our cross is to embrace the possibility of being marginalized, criticized, or persecuted for our faith. Yet, in this rejection, we are called to find our identity in Christ and not in the approval of the world.

- **John 15:18-20 (AKJV):**“ If the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. 19If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20Remember the word that I said to you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. ”

Jesus makes it clear that the world will oppose those who follow Him. Taking up our cross means being willing to be rejected for His sake, knowing that our ultimate acceptance is in Christ, not in the approval of men.

4. The Reward of Discipleship

Though taking up our cross daily involves suffering and sacrifice, it also brings great rewards. The ultimate reward for following Jesus is the fullness of life in Him and eternal glory with God.

4.1 The Promise of Eternal Life

Jesus promises that those who follow Him and take up their cross will inherit eternal life. The path of discipleship may be difficult, but the eternal rewards far outweigh the temporary sacrifices.

- **Matthew 16:24-25 (AKJV):**“ Then said Jesus to his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25For whoever will save his life shall lose it: and whoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. ”

In losing our lives for the sake of Christ—by taking up our cross daily—we find true life in Him. The reward of discipleship is not just in the future, but is experienced here and now as we walk in fellowship with God, growing in grace and holiness.

4.2 The Presence of Christ

As we take up our cross and follow Jesus, we experience His presence in a deeper way. The trials and sacrifices of discipleship draw us closer to Christ and help us to know Him more intimately. Through the daily process of taking up our cross, we are conformed more into His image.

- **Romans 8:17 (AKJV):**“ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”

The reward of discipleship is the glory that we will share with Christ, as we are conformed to His image and made heirs of His kingdom.

Conclusion: Living with the Cross Daily

Taking up our cross daily is the essence of what it means to follow Jesus. It is a call to deny ourselves of what is evil and excessive worldliness, embrace God**'**s will, and live with an eternal perspective. While it requires sacrifice, suffering, and obedience, it is also the path to true life, joy, and fellowship with Christ. As we take up our cross each day, we are not only following Jesus but also being transformed into His likeness, experiencing His presence, and awaiting the glory that will be revealed in us.

May we, with the help of the Holy Spirit, live lives marked by daily self-denial, obedient surrender, and a deep commitment to following Jesus wherever He leads. Taking up our cross is not just a duty, but a privilege, as we walk the path of discipleship and share in the sufferings and glory of Christ.

TAKING UP OUR CROSS DAILY - Continued…

Scriptures

Luke 9:23-27 (AKJV): **"**And he said to them all, **If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me**. 24For whoever will save his life shall lose it: but whoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? 26For whoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father**'**s, and of the holy angels. 27But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God."

Galatians 5:24-26 (AKJV): **"**And they that are Christ**'**s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.."

Romans 6:8-11 (AKJV) Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over him. 10For in that he died, he died to sin once: but in that he lives, he lives to God. 11Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In Luke 9:23, Jesus offers us a powerful directive for those of us who desire to follow Him: a commitment to self-denial and sacrifice. When He calls us to "deny ourselves," He encourages us to prioritize our spiritual growth over personal desires and worldly ambitions. This act of self-denial is not about neglecting our needs or aspirations; rather, it**'**s an invitation to reorient our lives toward God**'**s purpose. It challenges us to reflect on our priorities and consider how our choices align with our faith.

Taking up our cross is a profound metaphor that signifies our acceptance of the challenges and hardships that come with being His disciples. In the context of Jesus **'** time, the cross represented suffering, humiliation, and ultimate sacrifice, to suffer death.

For us today, this means it may or may not involve us to experience some of the same by laying down our lives for sharing the love and truth of Jesus Christ with those in our community or throughout the world. It also means.embracing the difficulties that arise as we strive to live out our faith in a world filled with darkness that contradicts it. It invites us to understand that while our Christian journey may involve struggles, it also leads us to deeper understanding, connection and life with Christ.

As Romans 6:8-11 explains, If we die with Christ, (die to our selfish evil desires and reckon ourselves dead to sin) then we also live with Him. What a glorious promise.

The instruction of doing this "daily" emphasizes the continuous nature of our discipleship. Each day presents new opportunities for us to make conscious choices that reflect our commitment to following Jesus. It serves as a reminder that our faith journey is not a one-time event but a daily practice of self-reflection, discipline, and renewal. This ongoing commitment helps us develop resilience and a deeper reliance on God, reinforcing that each moment is an opportunity to align our actions with His divine will.

Galatians 5:24 complements this message by reminding us that those of us who belong to Christ have "crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." This verse highlights the transformative power of our faith, indicating that true discipleship involves a deliberate choice to let go of worldly temptations and desires that pull us away from God. It underscores the importance of living lives that reflect Christ's values, showing that our true freedom comes from surrendering to Him and allowing His Spirit to guide our actions.

In summary, taking up our cross daily is a profound invitation to live lives of intentionality, sacrifice, and devotion. It is about accepting the challenges we face as part of our faith journey while continuously striving to reflect Christ's love in our everyday lives. Through self-denial, embracing hardship, reckoning ourselves dead to sin and committing to this path each day, we can produce a richer, more meaningful relationship with God and grow in our discipleship together serving Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

(116) Avoid The Cares and Riches That Choke Out The Word Of God:

Mark 4:19 AKJV -And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. "

In the poignant parable of the sower, as recounted in Mark 4:19, Jesus unveils a profound truth about the human condition – the peril of being consumed by cares and riches, which ultimately choke out the word of God. This verse serves as a solemn reminder of the ever-present dangers of materialism and worldly distractions that can suffocate our spiritual growth and diminish our connection with Jesus Christ. We start to forget His live giving words and we drift farer and farer away from our Lord. In a world inundated with the pursuit of wealth, status, and temporal pleasures, it's easy to lose sight of the eternal truths and principles espoused by the Word. The cares of this world, whether they be financial anxieties, societal pressures, or personal ambitions, have the insidious ability to eclipse our spiritual vision, leaving us spiritually barren and devoid of

the spiritual life and wisdom that only Jesus and the Word of God can provide, through God's Holy Spirit. Likewise, the allure of riches, with its promises of comfort and security, can ensnare our hearts, leading us away from the path of righteousness and obscuring our understanding of God's will for our lives. Thus, let us heed the cautionary warning presented within this scripture, and earnestly guard our hearts against the encroachment of worldly cares and materialistic desires. May we prioritize the development of a rich spiritual life, wherein the Word of God finds fertile ground to take root and flourish, unfettered by the thorns of worldly distractions.

(117) No One And Serve Two Masters:

Matthew 6:24,25 (AKJV):" No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. 25Therefore I say to you, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

As Christians, we are reminded that our hearts must be fully devoted to God, without divided loyalties. Jesus makes this clear in *Matthew 6:24* when He says, *"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."* This truth applies not only to wealth but to anything that competes for our allegiance—whether it's pride, comfort, power, or approval. When we try to serve both God and something else, our faith becomes unstable and our focus divided. God desires our whole heart, not just part of it.

We must examine our lives and ask ourselves: What truly governs our decisions, shapes our priorities, and captures our affections? As believers, we are called to choose God above all else, trusting that He is enough. Serving Him alone brings clarity, peace, and purpose. When we surrender completely, we discover that God is not a harsh master, but a loving Father who provides, protects, and fulfills us in ways the world never can. As we grow in faith, we learn to lay aside the idols that distract us and devote ourselves entirely to the One who gave everything for us.

Introduction: The Conflict of Allegiances

In Matthew 6:24, Jesus presents a stark and uncompromising truth: **"**No man can serve two masters." This powerful statement challenges us to examine the allegiances of our hearts and lives. Jesus recognizes that human nature is drawn to divided loyalties, and He warns that attempting to serve both God and worldly pursuits is not only impossible, but destructive. To serve two masters is to live in constant tension, torn between conflicting desires and priorities.

The verse is part of Jesus ’Sermon on the Mount, where He teaches His followers about the kingdom of God, true discipleship, and the dangers of materialism. This commentary will explore the implications of this teaching—why we cannot serve both God and wealth (mammon), what it means to live with undivided loyalty to God, and how we can practically apply this truth to our lives.

1. The Nature of Divided Allegiance

When Jesus speaks of “two masters,” He is referring to two competing authorities that demand allegiance and devotion. The idea of “masters” suggests power, control, and influence—things that hold sway over our decisions, values, and actions. A master is someone who commands and expects loyalty, and in this case, Jesus is drawing a line between God and wealth, personified here as "mammon."

1.1 The Problem of Serving Two Masters

Serving two masters creates an inherent conflict. Each master demands exclusive loyalty, but when the heart is divided, it leads to internal strife, confusion, and compromised integrity. The Bible repeatedly warns against divided loyalties, urging believers to be fully devoted to God, not allowing anything else to take His place.

- **James 1:8 (AKJV):**“ A double minded man is unstable in all his ways..”

James highlights the instability of a person who is torn between two competing desires. Trying to serve both God and worldly pursuits leads to spiritual instability and a lack of direction. It undermines the believer's ability to fully follow Christ, as their devotion is split between two conflicting priorities.

1.2 The Dangers of Materialism (Mammon)

In the context of Matthew 6:24, “mammon” refers to wealth or material possessions, which can easily become an object of worship or an idol in the life of a believer. Jesus is warning that the pursuit of wealth can consume a person's heart and loyalty, drawing them away from God. Mammon is not merely money itself, but the unhealthy attachment and devotion to it.

- **1 Timothy 6:10,11 (AKJV):**“ For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11But you, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness..”

The love of money and material possessions leads to spiritual danger. It becomes a rival to God’s rightful place in our hearts. The pursuit of wealth can drive us to compromise our values, neglect our spiritual growth, and even abandon our faith in the pursuit of earthly gain.

2. The Exclusivity of Discipleship

Jesus ’words in Matthew 6:24 are not just about the danger of materialism; they also reflect the exclusive nature of true discipleship. Following Jesus requires wholehearted devotion and a single-minded focus on God’s will. To serve God is to make Him the primary master in our lives, setting aside any other competing masters.

2.1 Undivided Loyalty to God

To serve God means to submit to His authority and prioritize His purposes above all else. This involves a deep commitment to His kingdom, His righteousness, and His commands. Jesus calls us to live with an undivided heart, not allowing any earthly pursuits, even good ones, to take precedence over our devotion to God.

- **Matthew 22:37-38 (AKJV):**“ Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38This is the first and great commandment. ”

Loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind means that He becomes the primary focus of our affections, thoughts, and actions. All other allegiances must fall under this supreme love. True discipleship requires an undivided heart, where God reigns as the sole Master.

2.2 The Cost of Discipleship

Jesus ’call to follow Him comes with a cost, and part of that cost is the willingness to deny competing loyalties. The rich young ruler in **Matthew 19:16-22** is a clear example of someone who struggled to serve God while holding tightly to his wealth. Jesus ’invitation to him to sell all he had and follow Him revealed the man’s divided heart. His wealth had become his master, preventing him from fully embracing the call to follow Christ.

- **Matthew 19:21 (AKJV):**“ Jesus said to him, If you will be perfect, go and sell that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.”

The cost of discipleship is total surrender. Jesus asks for our whole lives, including our possessions, our time, and our desires. We cannot follow Him fully if we are holding onto other things that rival His place in our hearts.

3. The Incompatibility of God and Mammon

Jesus makes it clear that God and mammon are incompatible. They represent two opposing forces: one is the way of righteousness, the other is the way of worldly success, self-interest, and greed. To attempt to serve both is to live in conflict, and ultimately, it will lead to spiritual ruin.

3.1 The Nature of Mammon

Mammon, in Jesus ’day, referred to wealth, but it also symbolized the entire system of materialism and worldly ambition that can dominate human life. Mammon can become an idol—a competing force that demands loyalty and devotion. It can take many forms: wealth, power, status, or anything that we elevate to a position of importance above God.

- **Luke 16:13,14 (AKJV):**“ No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.14And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.”

Here, Jesus reiterates the incompatibility of serving God and mammon. The pursuit of wealth can lead to pride, selfishness, and a focus on temporal, earthly concerns. Jesus warns that when we allow mammon to take the place of God, we are choosing the fleeting pleasures of this world over the eternal treasures of His kingdom.

3.2 The Call to Choose God

The call to choose between God and mammon is not just about wealth—it**’**s about priorities. Do we live for the kingdom of God, or do we live for the pleasures and comforts of this world? Jesus **’**challenge forces us to examine where our treasure lies, for our treasure reflects where our heart is.

- **Matthew 6:19-21 (AKJV):**“ Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust does corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

To serve God is to set our hearts on eternal, unshakable treasures, and to live in light of His kingdom. The pursuit of earthly wealth and success, when they become our primary focus, leads us to store up treasures that will ultimately fade away.

4. How to Live with Undivided Loyalty to God

Jesus **’**teaching in Matthew 6:24 requires us to examine our lives and ask ourselves who or what is truly our master. Are we living with divided loyalties, or are we wholly devoted to God? Here are some practical steps to ensure that we serve God and not mammon:

4.1 Regularly Assessing Our Priorities

We must continually assess where our time, energy, and resources are going. Are we investing in things that have eternal value, such as relationships, ministry, and service? Or are we primarily focused on accumulating wealth, status, and comfort?

- **Matthew 6:33 (AKJV):**“ But seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you..”

Jesus calls us to prioritize God's kingdom above all else. When we seek God**’**s will and trust in His provision, He promises to take care of our needs.

4.2 Generosity and Contentment

To combat the pull of mammon, we must cultivate a heart of generosity and contentment. When we give generously to others and find our satisfaction in God**’**s provision rather than in material possessions, we are declaring that God is our true Master.

- **1 Timothy 6:6-11 (AKJV):**“ But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11But you, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness..”

Contentment in God, rather than in material wealth, helps to break the hold that mammon has over our hearts.

4.3 Living with an Eternal Perspective

Finally, we must live with an eternal perspective, constantly reminded that this world is temporary, and the things of this world are passing away. We are to lay up treasures in heaven, living in light of God's eternal kingdom.

- **Colossians 3:1-2 (AKJV):**“ If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. 2Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God..”

Conclusion: Wholehearted Devotion to God

The call to serve God and not mammon is a call to undivided loyalty. We cannot live with divided allegiances, seeking both the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. Jesus calls us to surrender our hearts and lives fully to Him, prioritizing His will over the pursuit of earthly gain. As we live with an eternal perspective, seeking first God**’**s kingdom, we find that He provides for our needs and fills us with peace and joy.

May we respond to Jesus **’**call with wholehearted devotion, choosing to serve God alone and laying aside the pursuit of worldly treasures. As we do so, we will experience the freedom, purpose, and fulfillment that come from living in complete alignment with His will.

No One And Serve Two Masters - Continued…

Matthew 6:24 AKJV -No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

In Matthew 6:24, Jesus delivers a stark proclamation about the impossibility of serving two masters. The weight of this truth reverberates through the ages, reminding us of the inherent conflict that arises when our loyalties are divided. This verse serves as a poignant admonition against the perilous path of attempting to straddle the fence between God and worldly pursuits. It lays bare the futility of attempting to serve both the God’s plan and the temporal, for ultimately, such a divided allegiance leads to spiritual bankruptcy. In a world rife with competing demands for our attention and devotion, the

call to choose whom we will serve resonates with profound urgency. For if we attempt to serve both God and mammon, we risk diluting our commitment to the one true source of life and fulfillment. Let us, therefore, heed the solemn warning embedded within this scripture and wholeheartedly commit ourselves to the service of the God our Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. May we relinquish all competing allegiances and surrender our lives entirely to the sovereignty of God, knowing that in Him alone will we find true purpose, peace, and abundance.

Introduction: The Dilemma of Divided Allegiance: Serving God Or Mammon

In Matthew 6:24, Jesus presents a powerful truth about loyalty and devotion. He declares that no one can serve two masters, highlighting the impossibility of being fully devoted to two competing authorities or interests. This statement is not just about the practicalities of life, but about the condition of the heart. Jesus is calling His followers to choose between God and worldly pursuits, emphasizing that divided allegiance leads to spiritual conflict and instability. This commentary will explore the deeper implications of Jesus' words, examining the nature of servitude, the dangers of divided loyalty, and how believers can cultivate an undivided heart in their service to God.

1. The Nature of Servitude

To understand Jesus' statement, we must first recognize what it means to serve a master. In the context of the ancient world, a servant was fully committed to the will and demands of their master. This was not a passive relationship; it was a relationship of total submission and devotion. Jesus uses this metaphor to illustrate that true service requires complete loyalty and undivided attention.

1.1 The Slave-Master Relationship in the Ancient World

In biblical times, a servant was often bound to the will of their master. Their life, actions, and decisions were governed by their master's desires. Jesus uses this familiar example to convey the idea of total devotion—either to God or to something else. In this sense, the relationship of master and servant becomes a metaphor for the relationship between us and their ultimate loyalties either to God or coveting worldly wealth.

Scripture Reference: Romans 6:16 -18 (AKJV): "Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness? 17But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness."

Paul reinforces the idea that servitude is not optional—every person is serving something, whether it is sin or righteousness. The choice of whom we serve defines our spiritual condition.

1.2 The Nature of Divided Service

Jesus' warning about serving two masters points to the inherent conflict that arises when a person tries to divide their allegiance. When we try to serve two competing masters, our loyalty will be divided, leading to tension, conflict, and ultimately, dissatisfaction. The idea of serving two masters is not sustainable because one will always be prioritized over the other, and the one that is neglected will inevitably cause resentment.

Scripture Reference: James 4:4 (AKJV): "You adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

James describes the danger of divided loyalty as spiritual adultery, likening it to unfaithfulness in a marriage. Just as a marriage requires the exclusive devotion of both partners, our relationship with God demands our undivided loyalty.

2. The Two Masters: God and Worldly Pursuits

Jesus specifically highlights the two competing masters in this passage: God and the pursuit of wealth or worldly possessions. The choice to serve one over the other is not merely a matter of practical concern but is a matter of spiritual priority.

2.1 Serving God

God, as our ultimate Lord and Master, is the source of all good things and the rightful ruler of our lives. To serve God is to love him, submit to His will, seeking His kingdom and righteousness above all else. This service is motivated by love, reverence, and faith in His goodness. Jesus calls His followers to make God their ultimate priority, trusting that when they seek Him first, everything else will fall into place.

Scripture Reference: Matthew 6:33 (AKJV): "But seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. ."

Serving God means prioritizing His kingdom, His values, and His purposes. It is an invitation to align our hearts with His will, to trust in His provision, and to live according to His principles.

2.2 Serving Worldly Pursuits

The other master Jesus mentions is the pursuit of wealth, often symbolized by the phrase "mammon" in Scripture. Mammon represents not just money, but a system of values and desires centered on materialism, self-interest, and pride. The pursuit of worldly gain can easily become a master that demands our attention, time, and energy, often leading us to neglect our spiritual commitments.

Scripture Reference: 1 Timothy 6:9-10 (AKJV): "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. "

The pursuit of wealth, when it becomes the primary focus of one's life, leads to spiritual destruction. The love of money and material things can cause individuals to lose sight of eternal values and, ultimately, of God Himself.

3. The Consequences of Divided Loyalty

When we try to serve two masters, we are setting ourselves up for conflict and frustration. Divided loyalty leads to inner turmoil and spiritual instability, as we cannot wholeheartedly devote ourselves to both God and worldly pursuits.

3.1 A Heart Divided Against Itself

Jesus' words indicate that serving two masters will result in a divided heart. A person who attempts to live in two opposing worlds will struggle to maintain consistency and peace. This divided heart leads to dissatisfaction because no matter how hard one tries to please both masters, they will always fail to fully satisfy. A divided heart does not have godly peace and contentment.

Scripture Reference: Matthew 6:24 (AKJV): "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other."

The heart's divided allegiance inevitably causes a conflict between the love of God and the desire for worldly gain. This tension leads to spiritual frustration and a sense of unfulfillment, as the pursuit of worldly things cannot provide lasting peace or joy.

3.2 The Call to Total Devotion

Jesus calls His followers to a life of total devotion to God. He does not simply want a portion of our lives; He desires our whole hearts, minds, and spirits. When we serve God alone, we find true fulfillment and peace, as our lives align with His will.

Scripture Reference: Deuteronomy 6:5 (AKJV): "You shalt love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and with all of your mind, and with all of your strength."

The call to love God with all our being is a call to undivided loyalty. This is not a partial devotion but a full commitment to God's will and purpose.

4. How to Serve God Alone

To serve God alone requires intentionality and a daily choice to prioritize Him over other competing interests. It means aligning our actions, desires, and goals with His kingdom and righteousness.

4.1 Developing an Undivided Heart

Developing an undivided heart begins with recognizing the areas of our lives where we are tempted to serve worldly masters. This awareness allows us to make intentional choices to focus on God's will and to surrender areas of our lives where we have allowed other pursuits to take precedence.

Scripture Reference: Psalm 86:11 (AKJV): "Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name."

The psalmist prays for God to unite his heart, recognizing the challenge of having an undivided devotion. Prayer and dependence on God's strength are essential in maintaining this focus.

4.2 Focus on Eternal Priorities

To serve God alone, we must consistently focus on eternal priorities—things that have lasting value. This includes seeking God's kingdom, loving others, living in obedience to His Word, and investing in spiritual growth.

Scripture Reference: Colossians 3:2 (AKJV): "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Setting our affections on eternal things helps us prioritize God's will over temporary pleasures or pursuits.

Conclusion: A Life of Unwavering Devotion

Jesus 'words in Matthew 6:24 challenge us to examine where our true loyalty lies. We are called to serve God alone, recognizing that divided allegiance leads to conflict, frustration, and spiritual instability. By prioritizing God's kingdom and seeking His will above all else, we can experience a life of peace, fulfillment, and eternal reward. Let us commit to serving God with our whole hearts, trusting that when we do, we will find the true satisfaction that only He can provide. Moreover our lives will then bring all glory to God, out of our undivided love for him.

(118) Lay Not Up Treasure For Yourself:

Matthew 6:19-21 AKJV -Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust does corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

As followers of Christ, we are called to live with eternity in mind, not to chase after temporary riches or build our security on material things. Jesus teaches us this in *Matthew 6:19-21*: *“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”* These words challenge us to examine what we value most. Are we investing our time, energy, and resources into things that will fade away, or into what will last forever—our relationship with God, our love for others, and the work of His Kingdom?

We live in a world that constantly tells us to accumulate more—to store up wealth, chase comfort, and measure success by what we have. But as Christians, we know that true fulfillment doesn’t come from possessions, but from a heart aligned with God. When we give generously, serve selflessly, and live with open hands, we are storing up heavenly treasure. It’s not wrong to have things, but we must not let those things have us. Let us be people who seek first the Kingdom of God, knowing that when we invest in eternal things, we find joy, peace, and purpose that no thief or rust can ever take away.

In the pursuit of worldly treasures, it's easy to become ensnared by the allure of material wealth, blinded to the deeper riches that await in spiritual fulfillment in abiding in Jesus Christ. The admonition to "Lay not up treasures for yourself" resonates God’s profound wisdom, urging us to redirect our focus from the transient pleasures of accumulation towards the eternal treasures of the heart and soul. Material possessions, while momentarily satisfying, are fleeting and can never fully fill the hunger of the human spirit. Instead, we are called to invest in the intangible, far more precious wealth of love, compassion, and generosity, virtues that enrich not only our own lives but also the lives of those around us. As we minister to others and do good works in suppling or attending to people’s needs, we are storing up treasures in heaven. In the absence of greed-driven pursuits, we find a newfound freedom, unburdened by the weight of possessions and liberated to embrace a meaningful life of God’s true purpose for us. Let us heed this timeless counsel, seeking treasures that transcend the temporal, and in doing so, discover the boundless and imperishable abundance found in the spiritual virtues of Jesus Christ.

(119) The Eternal Perspective on Wealth:

In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus warns against the pursuit of earthly treasures, urging His followers to focus instead on storing up treasures in heaven. The emphasis is not on wealth in itself but on where one places their heart and what they value most. This passage is a powerful call to evaluate the priorities of our lives, shifting our focus from temporary, perishable treasures to eternal, imperishable ones. The heart, according to Jesus, follows what we treasure—this principle shapes not only our actions but also our worldview and our relationship with God.

This commentary will explore the biblical understanding of treasure, what it means to store up treasures in heaven, and how believers are called to live with an eternal perspective that transcends the fleeting allure of material wealth. By examining the deeper implications of this passage, we will discover the transformative power of having an eternal focus in a world that often values temporal success above spiritual treasures.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Treasures

The understanding of what true treasure is defined within God’s word, and it is used to describe both material wealth and the eternal spiritual virtues. Jesus calls us to reassess where we place our affections and trust, showing that our priorities shape our lives and our relationship with God.

1.1 Treasures on Earth: Temporary and Corruptible

Earthly treasures, as described by Jesus, are vulnerable to decay and theft. Whether material possessions, achievements, or status, these things are temporary and subject to the forces of time, decay, and destruction. The pursuit of earthly treasures carries the constant risk of losing what has been gained, fostering envy, greed, and a sense of emptiness, while preventing the acquisition of the truly valuable, eternal treasures.

Scripture Reference: James 5:2-3 (AKJV): "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. 3Your gold and silver is corroded; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. You have heaped treasure together for the last days."

This passage echoes Jesus' words, reminding us that earthly treasures are fleeting and can ultimately become a source of judgment. Wealth can be stolen, lost, or destroyed, and in the end, it provides no lasting value.

1.2 Treasures in Heaven: Eternal and Secure

In contrast, treasures in heaven are imperishable. They cannot be stolen, corrupted, or lost, and they carry eternal value. Jesus teaches that when we focus on the things of God—such as love, faith, righteousness, and service—we are storing up treasures that endure forever.

Scripture Reference: 1 Peter 1:4 (AKJV): "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you."

The apostle Peter describes the inheritance of believers as incorruptible and undefiled—an inheritance that remains secure. This inheritance is not like the fleeting possessions of earth but is something that is impervious to decay or theft, illustrating the eternal nature of treasures stored in heaven.

1.3 The Heart's Affection and its Direction

Jesus makes a profound connection between where our treasure is and where our hearts will be. What we value, prioritize, and pursue reveals the true condition of our hearts. This teaching aligns with other parts of Scripture, where the heart is seen as the seat of one's desires and motivations.

Scripture Reference: Proverbs 4:23 (AKJV): "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

The heart directs the course of our lives. If our hearts are set on earthly treasures, our lives will revolve around accumulating and protecting those things. However, if our hearts are set on heavenly treasures, our lives will reflect a focus on eternal values, aligning our actions with God's will.

2. The Command to Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

Jesus ’command to "lay up treasures in heaven" is not just a suggestion but a call to action and a vital instruction. This requires intentional living, shifting our focus away from earthly gain toward eternal pursuits. The phrase "lay up" implies an active effort—a decision to invest in things that have eternal significance.

2.1 Living with Eternal Priorities

The call to lay up treasures in heaven requires a shift in how we view our time, resources, and opportunities. It is not about neglecting earthly responsibilities, but about aligning our priorities with God’s eternal kingdom.

Scripture Reference: Colossians 3:1-2 (AKJV): "If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Paul encourages us to set our minds and affections on heavenly things. This involves a conscious choice to prioritize spiritual growth, relationships, and service to others, rather than getting consumed by the transient values of the world.

2.2 The Role of Faith in Storing Up Heavenly Treasures

Faith plays a critical role in how we lay up treasures in heaven. The values of the world often seem more immediate and tangible, but the life of faith encourages us to focus on unseen, eternal realities.

Scripture Reference: Hebrews 11:24-26 (AKJV): "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of God greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

Moses exemplifies the choice to prioritize eternal values over temporary comforts and wealth. His decision to suffer with God's people rather than enjoy the riches of Egypt demonstrates the kind of faith that lays up treasures in heaven.

3. The Heart's Focus: Where is Your Treasure?

Jesus teaches that the location of one's treasure is directly tied to the condition of the heart. If our treasure is on earth, our hearts will be consumed with worry, fear of loss, and a constant drive to accumulate. But if our treasure is in heaven, our hearts will be set on Jesus, God's kingdom, seeking His will and righteousness.

3.1 The Impact of Earthly Treasures on Our Spiritual Life

The pursuit of earthly wealth can easily lead to spiritual distractions. The desire for material gain can overshadow our relationship with God and hinder our ability to serve others.

Scripture Reference: Matthew 13:22 (AKJV): "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that hears the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful."

The deceitfulness of riches can choke the life of the word in our hearts. This highlights the danger of being overly attached to material wealth, which can lead to spiritual barrenness.

3.2 The Joy of Storing Treasures in Heaven

In contrast, laying up treasures in heaven brings lasting joy and satisfaction. These treasures are impervious to decay and will never disappoint. They include the fruits of a life lived in obedience to God, acts of kindness and generosity, and faithfulness in serving others.

Scripture Reference: 1 Timothy 6:17-19 (AKJV): "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy; 18That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. "

Paul encourages the wealthy to focus on doing good and storing up treasures in heaven by being rich in good works. This is the true joy of heavenly treasure—investing in God's kingdom through acts of love and service.

4. Cultivating an Eternal Perspective

Laying up treasures in heaven requires a shift in mindset. It involves living intentionally and making decisions based on eternal rather than temporary values. Christians are

called to cultivate an eternal perspective through prayer, Scripture, and a deep dependence on the Holy Spirit.

4.1 The Role of Prayer and Worship

Prayer and worship are essential in refocusing our hearts on heavenly treasures. By spending time with God in prayer, we align our will with His, gaining a heavenly perspective on life.

Scripture Reference: Matthew 6:33 (AKJV): "But you should seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you."

Jesus promises that when we prioritize God's kingdom, He will provide for our needs. This is the foundation of laying up treasures in heaven—trusting God to meet our needs while we focus on His will.

4.2 Serving Others and Giving Generously

An essential way to store up treasures in heaven is by serving others and giving generously. Acts of kindness, compassion, and generosity are eternal investments in God’s kingdom.

Scripture Reference: Acts 20:35 (AKJV): "I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Through service and generosity, believers lay up treasures in heaven, investing in relationships and ministries that have eternal value.

Conclusion: Living with a Heavenly Focus

Jesus ’words in Matthew 6:19-21 call us to reevaluate our priorities and fix our eyes on the eternal. By focusing on heavenly treasures, we align our hearts with God’s kingdom, seeking His righteousness and trusting Him to meet our needs. As believers, we are called to invest in things that matter for eternity, not being consumed by the temporary wealth of this world. May our lives reflect the true treasure that is found in Christ, and may we live with the joy of knowing that our reward is secure in heaven.

(120) Forgiving Others:

Forgiveness in the Bible

Definition

Forgiveness is the act of releasing someone from the debt of wrongdoing. Biblically, it means **letting go of offense**, **canceling the debt of sin**, and **restoring relationship**—as God has forgiven us in Christ, so we are called to forgive others.

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”
— *Ephesians 4:32*

Original Language Insights

Hebrew (Old Testament)

סָלַח(sālach) – To forgive, pardon, spare

- This word is used primarily for **God’s forgiveness** toward people.
- It indicates complete absolution of guilt.

“But with You there is forgiveness (***sālach***), that You may be feared.” – *Psalm 130:4*

Greek (New Testament)

ἀφίημι (aphiēmi) – To send away, release, forgive

- Literally means “to let go” or “to send away.”
- Used for canceling a debt, or releasing a person from obligation or penalty.

“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” – *Matthew 6:12*

χαρίζομαι (charizomai) – To freely give, to grant forgiveness

- Rooted in *charis* (grace); emphasizes gracious, undeserved forgiveness
- Often used in interpersonal forgiveness between believers

“Forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you.” – *Colossians 3:13*

Key Characteristics of Biblical Forgiveness

1. Rooted in God's Grace

God forgives **freely**, not because we deserve it, but because of His mercy and love.

“He does not deal with us according to our sins...” – *Psalm 103:10–12*

2. Total Release of Debt

True forgiveness is not partial—it fully releases the offender from the penalty and does not keep a record.

“Love keeps no record of wrongs.” – *1 Corinthians 13:5*

3. Requires Repentance (for Reconciliation)

While we are called to have a forgiving heart always, full reconciliation may depend on repentance and restoration of trust.

“If he repents, forgive him.” – *Luke 17:3–4*

4. Modeled After Christ

Our standard of forgiveness is not personal preference but the example of **Jesus**, who forgave even from the cross.

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” – *Luke 23:34*

5. Commanded, Not Optional

Forgiveness is a **command** for all believers. Unforgiveness is disobedience and hinders our fellowship with God.

“If you do not forgive others... neither will your Father forgive you.” – *Matthew 6:15*

6. Heals Both Sides

Forgiveness liberates both the **offender** and the **offended**. It frees the heart from bitterness, revenge, and emotional bondage.

“Forgive, and you will be forgiven.” – *Luke 6:37*

Summary

Biblical forgiveness is **grace in action**—a reflection of God's own mercy toward us. It is a core mark of the Christian life and a powerful witness to the Gospel. When we forgive, we imitate Christ and proclaim the message of the cross.

“Bear with each other and forgive one another... Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” – *Colossians 3:13*

It is God's will and essential for every Christian to have forgiveness in their minds and hearts towards everyone, regardless the wrong or injustice that someone has done to you. As God has forgiven you, so you must also forgive others or neither are you forgiven by God. Leave judgement to God, in his perfect timing and way.

Now this does not mean that we condone the evil done to us or others. However God does not want us to hold on to any resentment, bitterness, or revenge towards anyone. In fact, when we hold on to bitterness and unforgiveness, it hinders our own peace and lives, and can possibly have severe detrimental effects in our own spirit, emotion and our mental and physical health. Moreover, God even asks that we pray a blessing upon our enemies so that they might overcome the evil of their lives and be established in God's righteousness.

Forgiveness is at the heart of our Christian faith. As followers of Christ, we are called to extend forgiveness to one another, just as the Lord has forgiven us. Colossians 3:13 reminds us of the importance of bearing with each other and letting go of grievances.

Forgiveness is not always easy. It requires humility, grace, and a willingness to let go of hurt and bitterness. Yet, as we choose to forgive others, we experience the freedom and healing that come from releasing the burden of unforgiveness.

Jesus taught us to pray, "forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). In forgiving others, we reflect the mercy and grace that God has shown us. We are called to imitate His example of extravagant forgiveness, offering grace and compassion even to those who may not deserve it.

Again “forgiveness” does not imply condoning or excusing wrongdoing; instead, it is the deliberate choice to release the offender from the debt they owe us, as Jesus did for us. It is a decision to let go of resentment and, whenever possible, pursue reconciliation for the sake of peace and unity within the body of Christ. Furthermore, forgiveness serves as a powerful testimony of God's transformative grace and mercy, potentially becoming the very act that leads an unbeliever to encounter God's love, recognize their faults, and their need for salvation. Forgiveness to others is essential for a person’s own spiritual, mental and physical welfare and stability regardless if the offender ever has any remorse or changes their ways. Holding on to unforgiveness towards someone only hurts one’s own self, and produces resentment, hatred and bitterness. Commit everything into God’s hands, and he’ll make everything right in due time.

As we reflect on God's abundant forgiveness towards us, let us be quick to extend that same forgiveness to others. May we bear with one another in love, forgiving each other as Christ forgave us. Through the power of forgiveness, may we experience the transformative work of God's grace in our lives and in our relationships.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Matthew 6:12-15 (AKJV) “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For your is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.14For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Luke 6:35-37 (AKJV) “ 35But love you your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and you shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil. 36Be you therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. 37Judge not, and you shall not be judged: condemn not, and you shall not be condemned: forgive, and you shall be forgiven: “

Matthew 5:43-48 (AKJV) “You have heard that it has been said, You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy. 44But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you; 45That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46For if you love them which love you, what reward have you? do not even the publicans the same? 47And if you salute your brothers only, what do you more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

Mark 11:25,26 (AKJV) **“**And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have something against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

Matthew 18:21,22 (AKJV) **“**Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22Jesus says to him, I say not to you, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.”

Romans 12:14,17-21 Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not; 12:17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 12:19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Luke 17:3 Be on your guard ! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 17:4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, " I repent, " forgive him.

FORGIVING OTHERS - Continued…

Matthew 6:12-15 (AKJV) **“**And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For your is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.14For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.””

Introduction: The Command and Power of Forgiveness

In Matthew 6:14-15, Jesus teaches one of the most challenging and central aspects of the Christian life—**forgiveness**. The context of this passage is part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, where He lays out the radical values of the Kingdom of God. Forgiveness is not merely a suggestion or a desirable trait for believers; it is a direct command from Jesus, tied intimately to the forgiveness that we, as followers of Christ, have received from God.

Forgiving others can often be a difficult and painful process, particularly when we have been wronged in deep or personal ways. However, the Bible consistently teaches that forgiveness is not only a command but also an expression of God**’**s love, mercy, and grace, which we are called to reflect in our own relationships with others. This commentary will explore the biblical mandate of forgiveness, the reasons we forgive, and the practical ways in which we can embody the forgiveness that has been extended to us in Christ.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is rooted in the character of God. The Bible teaches that God is both just and merciful, and His forgiveness is extended to us freely through Jesus Christ. Understanding God's forgiveness towards us is essential to understanding why we must forgive others.

1.1 God’s Forgiveness Towards Us

The foundation for our ability to forgive others is the overwhelming and undeserved forgiveness that God has granted us in Christ. The Bible repeatedly emphasizes that we have been forgiven a debt that we could never repay—our sins against God. It is only through this forgiveness that we are able to forgive others.

- **Ephesians 4:32** (AKJV):“ And be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.”

Paul connects forgiveness with the forgiveness we’ve received from God. We are to forgive others, not because they deserve it, but because Christ has forgiven us. God’s forgiveness is the model and the motivation for how we forgive others.

- **Colossians 3:13,14** (AKJV):“ Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you. 14And above all these things put on (love)charity, which is the bond of perfection.”

God's forgiveness is not contingent upon our worthiness, and neither should our forgiveness be conditional upon the other person’s repentance or merit. We forgive because God has forgiven us freely, without reservation.

1.2 Forgiveness in the Old Testament

The theme of forgiveness is not new in the New Testament but is woven throughout the Scriptures. In the Old Testament, God repeatedly forgives His people, calling them to extend that same forgiveness to others.

- **Micah 7:18-19** (AKJV):“ Who is a God like to you, that pardons iniquity, and passes by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retains not his anger for ever, because he delights in mercy. 19He will turn again, he will have compassion on us; he will subdue our iniquities; and you will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. 20You will perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.”

God’s forgiveness in the Old Testament is often accompanied by His mercy and compassion. Micah reminds the Israelites of the grace God has shown them and calls them to reflect this mercy in their dealings with others.

2. The Command to Forgive Others

Jesus' teaching on forgiveness is clear and unequivocal. Forgiveness is not optional for believers; it is essential to our identity as followers of Christ. In Matthew 6:14-15, Jesus places a direct connection between our forgiveness of others and God’s forgiveness of us.

2.1 Forgiveness as a Condition for Receiving Forgiveness

Jesus teaches that our forgiveness from God is tied to our willingness to forgive others. This does not mean that we earn God**'**s forgiveness by forgiving others, but that the inability to forgive others reveals a hardened heart, unresponsive to the grace and mercy that God has shown us.

- **Matthew 18:21-22** (AKJV):" Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22Jesus says to him, I say not to you, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

In this passage, Jesus emphasizes the limitless nature of forgiveness. He calls us to forgive others, not just seven times, but an innumerable amount, illustrating that forgiveness must be a continual, ongoing practice in our relationships.

2.2 The Lord**'**s Prayer and Forgiveness

Forgiveness is so important that Jesus includes it in the Lord**'**s Prayer. In Matthew 6:12, we pray, **"**And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Here, Jesus connects the act of asking for forgiveness with the act of forgiving others. If we expect God to forgive us, we must be willing to forgive others.

- **Matthew 6:12** (AKJV):" And forgive us our debts , as we forgive our debtors.."

This phrase acknowledges that we are asking God to forgive us in the same way that we forgive others. It highlights the reciprocal nature of forgiveness—God**'**s forgiveness is not only a gift to be received but also a pattern to be imitated.

3. The Power and Freedom of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is not just a moral duty; it is a powerful act that brings freedom and healing to both the person who forgives and the one who is forgiven. Forgiveness has the power to restore relationships, heal emotional wounds, and release both parties from the burden of resentment and bitterness.

3.1 Forgiveness Breaks the Chains of Bitterness

When we withhold forgiveness, we allow bitterness and anger to take root in our hearts. Unforgiveness binds us to the past and prevents us from moving forward in peace. But when we choose to forgive, we release the person who has wronged us from the debt they owe and free ourselves from the emotional weight of unresolved conflict.

- **Hebrews 12:15 (AKJV):**" Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;"

Bitterness has the power to trouble our hearts and even spread to others. Forgiveness is the antidote to bitterness, healing the wounds caused by wrongs done to us and restoring peace.

3.2 Forgiveness Reflects God**'**s Love and Mercy

Forgiving others is one of the most profound ways we reflect God**'**s love to the world. It demonstrates the same mercy and grace that God has shown us. As we forgive others, we display to the world the heart of God and testify to the power of the gospel to heal and restore broken relationships.

- **Luke 6:36 (AKJV):**" Be you therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. "

Jesus calls us to show mercy to others because God has shown mercy to us. In forgiveness, we participate in the divine nature, reflecting God's love and grace to a watching world.

3.3 Forgiveness Leads to Reconciliation

Forgiveness does not mean that we condone or minimize the wrong that has been done to us, but it is the first step toward reconciliation. By forgiving others, we open the door for healing and restoration in relationships, allowing God to bring peace and unity where there was once division.

- **2 Corinthians 5:18-19** (AKJV):" And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.."

As believers, we are called to be agents of reconciliation, mirroring God**'**s work of reconciliation in Christ. Forgiveness is the first step in that process.

4. How to Forgive Others

Forgiveness is not always easy, especially when the offense is deep or ongoing. Yet, Jesus **'**command is clear, and the Bible provides practical guidance on how we can forgive others.

4.1 Acknowledge the Hurt and the Offense,

Forgiveness does not mean pretending that nothing happened or minimizing the hurt caused by the offense. We can still acknowledge the pain and the wrong that was done, but choose not to hold it against the offender any longer. When we forgive another, that does not mean that we condone the wrong done, just we forgive others as Jesus forgave us.

- **Ephesians 4:26-27** (AKJV):" Be you angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down on your wrath: 27Neither give place to the devil.."

It is okay to feel anger, but we are not to let it lead to unforgiveness. We must deal with our anger in a healthy way, choosing to forgive before the **"**sun goes down" and bitterness has time to take root.

4.2 Let Go of the Desire for Revenge

Forgiveness means letting go of our right to seek revenge or retribution. God alone is the ultimate judge, and He will deal with wrongdoing in His time and in His way.

- **Romans 12:19** (AKJV):“ Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord. .”

By letting go of the desire for revenge, we free ourselves to forgive and trust God to bring justice.

4.3 Pray for Those Who Have Wronged Us

Praying for those who have hurt us is one of the most powerful ways to forgive. Prayer changes our hearts and helps us to release resentment, replacing it with love and compassion.

- **Matthew 5:44 (AKJV):**“ But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you;.”

When we pray for our enemies, we align our hearts with God**’**s will and open ourselves to His healing power.

Conclusion: Living a Life of Forgiveness

Forgiving others is not only a command but a reflection of the gospel at work in our lives. As believers, we forgive because God has forgiven us. It is through forgiveness that we experience true freedom, peace, and reconciliation, both with God and with others. The act of forgiving others is a testament to the power of God**’**s grace and love, and it opens the door to healing and restoration in our relationships.

Do you hold a grudge against someone, or have bitterness and unforgiveness towards someone ? If you do, you must forgive them in your heart, according to what God has told us to do; This does not mean that you condone the wrong that they have done, but rather you just forgive their actions so that God can change their life. Jesus has commanded us to forgive everyone.

Unless we forgive all of those who have said or done something wrong against us then neither are we forgiven by God; We should continue to forgive a person for their wrong actions, even countless times, just as God continues to forgive us countless times even for the same sins that we may commit, to this very day.

May we, by the power of the Holy Spirit, live lives of forgiveness, reflecting the mercy and grace of our Savior. As we forgive others, we participate in the ministry of reconciliation, showing the world the transformative power of the gospel.

(121) The Act and Authority of Forgiveness:

Scripture: John 20:23

"Whosoever sins you remit (forgive), they are remitted (forgiven) to them; and who soever sins you retain, they are retained."

Forgiveness lies at the heart of our Christian faith. In John's Gospel, Jesus speaks to His disciples about the transformative power of forgiveness and the authority they have been given to extend it to others.

The act of forgiveness is not merely a gesture of goodwill but a profound expression of God's love and mercy. Through Christ's sacrifice on the cross, we have been granted the incredible gift of forgiveness for our sins. As recipients of such abundant grace, we are called to extend that same forgiveness to others.

Jesus' words to His disciples affirm the authority given to them to forgive sins. This authority is not rooted in their own merit but is derived from their union with Christ and their role as ambassadors of His kingdom. As followers of Christ today, we too share in this ministry of reconciliation, empowered by the Holy Spirit to extend God's forgiveness to those who have wronged us.

However, Jesus also highlights the weightiness of the responsibility entrusted to His disciples. The choice to forgive or withhold forgiveness carries eternal significance. By extending forgiveness, we participate in God's redemptive work, offering others the opportunity to experience His grace and restoration. Conversely, refusing to forgive erects barriers that hinder both our relationship with others and our own spiritual growth.

In our Christian faith, there is a clear distinction between the authority granted to Jesus' disciples and the ultimate sovereignty of God in judgment and forgiveness. In John 20:21-23, Jesus gives His disciples the authority to forgive or retain sins, symbolizing the role of the Church and its leaders in proclaiming the gospel and offering reconciliation through the message of forgiveness. This authority underscores the responsibility to extend God's grace and call people to repentance.

However, the final judgment and decision regarding forgiveness rest solely with God. In passages like Matthew 7:1-2 and Romans 14:10-12, it is emphasized that only God knows the heart and intentions of a person, and He alone has the final say in judgment.

While the Church's role is important in guiding people toward reconciliation with God, it does not replace God's ultimate authority. The authority to forgive or retain sins reflects the Church's role in bringing people into a right relationship with God, but it does not imply that the disciples or church leaders have the power to override God's judgment. Ultimately, the forgiveness of sins and judgment belong to God alone.

Let us, therefore, embrace the call to forgive as an act of obedience and love. May we draw upon the boundless well of God's forgiveness in our own lives, extending that same grace to those who have hurt us. As we forgive, may we bear witness to the transformative power of God's love and bring healing and reconciliation to broken relationships.

The Act and Authority of Forgiveness - Continued…

John 20:23 (AKJV):Whose soever sins you remit, they are remitted to them; and whose soever sins you retain, they are retained.

Forgiveness is one of the most profound and transformative aspects of the Christian faith. In John 20:23, Jesus imparts a deep authority to His disciples regarding the act of forgiveness, emphasizing its role in both personal and communal relationships. Through this passage, we see that forgiveness is not only a gracious act toward others but also a divine responsibility that carries the weight of God's authority.
This commentary will explore the biblical understanding of forgiveness as seen in John 20:23, the significance of its authority, and the relationship between forgiveness and the Christian calling. We will also discuss how Christians can both receive and extend forgiveness in light of Christ**'**s sacrificial love, and how this act reflects God's kingdom on earth.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is central to the message of the Bible, exemplified in the life of Jesus and commanded by God to His people. From the Old Testament through the New, forgiveness reveals God**'**s heart for reconciliation and restoration.

1.1 Forgiveness in the Old Testament In the Old Testament, " forgiveness" is closely linked to God**'**s mercy and covenant faithfulness. God continually extends forgiveness to His people, even when they stray. However, the ultimate forgiveness that would reconcile humanity with God was prophesied through the coming Messiah.

Joseph's Forgiveness of His Brothers Scripture Reference: Genesis 45:4-15 Joseph**'**s act of forgiveness towards his brothers is one of the most powerful illustrations of divine forgiveness in the Old Testament. Despite being betrayed and wronged, Joseph chooses to forgive and even bless his brothers. His forgiveness not only restores their relationship but also brings healing to the entire family.

"*And Joseph said to his brothers, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. 5Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that you sold me here: for God did send me before you to preserve life.* (Genesis 45:4-5)

Joseph's forgiveness is an act of divine grace, showing how God**'**s forgiveness can transform both individuals and communities.

1.2 Forgiveness in the Life of Jesus Jesus, as the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises, demonstrated the ultimate act of forgiveness through His death on the cross. His life was marked by a radical forgiveness that extended even to His enemies, reflecting the heart of God toward all humanity.

Luke 23:34 (AKJV):" Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Jesus **'**prayer for forgiveness for those who crucified Him reveals the depth of His mercy. His act of forgiveness not only provided salvation for humanity but also served as an example for how believers should live in the world.

1.3 Forgiveness in the New Testament In the New Testament, forgiveness is central to the gospel message. Jesus teaches His disciples that forgiveness is not optional but essential to living as a member of God's kingdom. In the Lord's Prayer, He commands believers to forgive as they have been forgiven.

Matthew 6:14-15 (AKJV):“ For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Forgiveness is not merely an act of mercy toward others; it is directly tied to our own relationship with God.

2. The Authority to Forgive

John 20:23 records one of the most profound moments of Christ**’**s post-resurrection appearance to His disciples, where He grants them the authority to forgive or retain sins. This verse reveals that forgiveness is not only an individual act but a powerful authority within the Church.

2.1 The Delegation of Forgiveness When Jesus says, **“**Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them,” He gives His disciples the authority to announce forgiveness in His name. This authority is not a license to forgive arbitrarily but is rooted in the person of Christ and His sacrificial death on the cross. The disciples' role is to declare and mediate the forgiveness that comes through faith in Christ.

2.2 The Responsibility of Forgiveness Forgiveness involves not only the act of pardoning but also the responsibility to maintain unity and peace within the Christian community. The authority to forgive comes with the weight of responsibility, as forgiveness affects both the individual and the larger body of believers. As stewards of God's grace, Christians are called to model the same forgiveness that Christ has shown toward them.

2.3 The Consequences of Retaining Sins Jesus also speaks of retaining sins, which is often misunderstood. Retaining sins does not refer to judgment in the final sense by God but to the withholding of forgiveness in the context of the Church. It serves as a call for repentance and reconciliation, as Christians are encouraged to restore relationships with those who are in sin. Retaining individuals sins of another also can be towards those who show no remorse before God, nor have a repentive heart or intention, towards those who reject Jesus, and so forth as the Holy Spirit directs. While it is still possible for anyone to genuinely repent and be forgiven by God through Jesus Christ in the future, it may be unlikely. Each person has the power to choose their own path—either to repent, follow Jesus as Lord, receive forgiveness, and find eternal life, or to reject Jesus, remain unforgiven, and face spiritual death and separation from God, in hell.

Matthew 18:15-17 (AKJV):“ Moreover if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone: if he shall hear you, you have gained your brother. 16But if he will not hear you, then take with you one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17And if he shall neglect

to hear them, tell it to the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be to you as an heathen man and a publican. ."

This passage shows that forgiveness involves a process and that forgiveness is meant to lead to reconciliation, not simply acquittal. The act of retaining sins, therefore, is not about vengeance but about calling others to repentance and spiritual healing.

3. Forgiveness and the Christian Life

Forgiveness is a key characteristic of the Christian walk, and it is integral to the life of every believer. Jesus repeatedly commands His followers to forgive others as they have been forgiven.

3.1 Forgiveness as a Fruit of the Spirit Forgiveness is a reflection of God**'**s grace at work within us. As believers grow in Christlikeness, they are called to forgive others, not as a mere duty but as an overflow of the forgiveness they have received. The power to forgive comes from the Holy Spirit, who enables believers to forgive even when it is difficult or painful.

Ephesians 4:32 (AKJV):" And be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ**'**s sake has forgiven you."

3.2 The Role of Forgiveness in Reconciliation Forgiveness is not just an individual experience; it is a communal act that brings healing to relationships. In the Church, forgiveness is crucial for maintaining unity and peace. By forgiving one another, believers can overcome division and restore broken relationships, reflecting the love and reconciliation Christ offers.

3.3 The Challenge of Forgiveness Forgiveness is not always easy, and Jesus acknowledges that it can be costly. It requires humility, surrender, and often, a great deal of grace. However, through forgiveness, believers demonstrate the love of God in action, and it serves as a powerful testimony to the world.

Luke 17:3-4 (AKJV):" Take heed to yourselves: If your brother trespass against you, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4And if he trespass against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to you, saying, I repent; you shall forgive him. ."

4. How Christians Can Cultivate the Act of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a spiritual discipline that requires practice, prayer, and dependence on God.

4.1 Through Prayer Prayer is central to cultivating forgiveness. Jesus teaches His disciples to pray for those who have wronged them (Matthew 5:44), and prayer enables believers to surrender their hurts and offenses to God.

4.2 Through Humility Forgiveness is an act of humility. Christians must recognize that they, too, have been forgiven by God, and that no offense against them is greater than the offense they have committed against God.

4.3 Through Dependence on the Holy Spirit The Holy Spirit enables believers to forgive from the heart. As they walk in the Spirit, Christians are empowered to extend the grace that they themselves have received.

Conclusion: Living Out the Authority of Forgiveness In John 20:23, Jesus gives His followers the authority to forgive and retain sins, emphasizing the power and responsibility that comes with this act. Forgiveness is not just an individual or personal matter; it is a communal act that shapes relationships and reflects the heart of God. As Christians, we are called to forgive as we have been forgiven, to extend grace and mercy in our relationships, and to be instruments of reconciliation in the world.

May we, empowered by the Holy Spirit, live out the act of forgiveness, reflecting the divine mercy of God and extending the same grace that has been shown to us through Christ.

(122) Sharing in the Sufferings of Jesus Christ:

Scripture: "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ." - 2 Corinthians 1:5 AKJV

As followers of Christ, we are called to share in His sufferings. Jesus Himself warned His disciples that in this world, they would face trials and tribulations. Just as Jesus endured suffering on our behalf, we, too, may experience hardships, persecution, and pain in our journey of faith.

The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, acknowledges the reality of suffering in the life of a believer. He writes that just as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also does the comfort we receive from Him. In other words, our sufferings are not without purpose or meaning; they are intimately connected to the sufferings of Christ and serve to deepen our relationship with Him.

When we face trials and tribulations, we can take comfort in the fact that Jesus understands our pain. He experienced rejection, betrayal, and ultimately, the agony of the cross. He knows what it means to suffer, and He walks alongside us in our own suffering, offering comfort, strength, and hope. Furthermore, our sufferings have a redemptive purpose. Just as Jesus' suffering brought salvation to the world, our sufferings can serve to bring about spiritual growth, character development, and ultimately, the glory of God. As we persevere through trials, our faith is refined, our dependence on God deepens, and our witness becomes a testimony to His faithfulness.

Now, suffering for Jesus Christ and fulfilling God’s call for us to share the good news of salvation, is never meant to be a purposeful self inflicted act, to make one’s self look like some sort of martyr, which would be in vain, but rather the suffering that we

sometimes encounter as a Christian may occur as we do the will of God but those trials and sufferings should not be intentional imposed on one's self as a display of false religious piety.

It's essential to remember that while we may suffer in this life, our suffering is temporary, and our hope is secure in Christ. Romans 8:18 reminds us, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (AKJV) In the midst of our trials, we can cling to the hope of eternity, where there will be no more suffering or pain. So, as we go through life, let us take heart in the words of Jesus: "These things I have spoken to you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33, AKJV). May we find strength in His victory and comfort in His presence, knowing that He walks with us through every trial and suffering we endure.

Sharing in the Sufferings of Jesus Christ - Continued…

Scripture 1 Peter 4:12-13 (AKJV) "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you: 13**But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy.** 14If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you; for the spirit of glory and of God rests on you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. 15But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men**'**s matters. 16Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. 17For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? 18And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 19Why let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as to a faithful Creator.."

Reflection

As followers of Christ, we often face trials and hardships that test our faith. Peter reminds us not to be surprised by these difficulties; they are a part of our walk and experiences with Jesus and serve as a testimony to others, demonstrating that His love for them, expressed through us, transcends our own self-interest.

There is no greater love than when a person lays down their life for their friends. That does not necessarily mean a physical death, (however it could) , but instead it means that you may suffer or be persecuted in some way, or give up something for the benefit of another. This act is not done with a self-serving or boastful attitude to appear righteous or pious. Rather, it comes from a genuinely humble desire to help others or to speak the truth, regardless of the potential harm to our own well-being. It prioritizes the welfare and salvation of others above any suffering we might endure ourselves.

As we die daily to our old sinful nature, repent, we become more Christlike by the working of God's Holy Spirit in our life. I Peter 4:1,2 (AKJV) For as much then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that

has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin; 2That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Scriptural Connections

- **Philippians 3:10-11**: (AKJV) “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; 11If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.." This verse highlights our desire to know Christ deeply, even through our shared sufferings.
- **James 1:2-3** (AKJV): "My brothers, count it all joy when you fall into may trials and temptations; 3Knowing this, that the trying (testing) of your faith works patience. 4But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.
- **Romans 8:14-17**:(AKJV) "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17**And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.**." Here, Paul emphasizes the blessing that comes with suffering for Christ, linking our trials to our future glory.
- **2 Corinthians 1:5-7**: (AKJV)“For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ. 6And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. 7And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall you be also of the consolation" This verse reassures us that in our suffering, we also receive Christ**’**s comfort, allowing us to support others who are struggling.
- **Hebrews 12:2**: "Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Jesus endured suffering with the promise of joy, encouraging us to keep our focus on Him as we navigate our own trials.
- **1 Peter 5:10-11** (AKJV) "But the God of all grace, who has called us to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. 11To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen..”
- **Matthew 24:9** (AKJV) "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and you shall be hated of all nations for my name**’**s sake. .”
- **John 15:18-20** (AKJV) If the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. 19If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20Remember the word that I said to you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also

As we proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and salvation to the world, and as we may encounter various trials and tribulations, let us remember that our sufferings are not in vain. The seeds of God's word that we we sow in the hearts of men will bring forth good everlasting fruit for the glory of God. God is faithful to work everything for good for those who love Him. His love will never fail.

(123) Self-Control and Discipline:

In our walk of faith in Jesus Christ, self-control and self-discipline are virtues that enable us to navigate life away from harmful situations with wisdom, restraint, and a steadfast commitment to following Christ. Self-Control and Discipline is a fruit and work of God's Holy Spirit in a person's life. Seeking and Praying to God for self control is essential to overcoming sin and temptations and further submitting to the direction and strengthening of the Holy Spirit.

Grounded in the teachings of the Bible, the principles of self-control and self-discipline provide a solid foundation for us seeking to align our lives with God's purpose. Let's explore these biblical insights and discover how these truths of God's Word teaches us in establishing and maintaining a disciplined and controlled life through Jesus Christ and God's work of His Holy Spirit.

Scripture: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, self-control: against such there is no law." - Galatians 5:22-23

Self-control, one of the fruits of God's Spirit, is a virtue that holds profound significance in our daily walk with Jesus.. It is the ability to govern our desires, thoughts, emotions, and actions in alignment with God's will, even in the face of temptation or adversity. As followers of Christ, we are called to exercise self-control not through our own strength, but through the transformative power of the Holy Spirit working within us.

It would seem to reason if when we are tempted to sin, and if we do not have self control, then the spiritual fruit of self control has not come into maturity or that we are lacking that divine virtue all together. This is the indication that we need to draw nearer to Jesus Christ, and repent, and allow God's Holy Spirit transform our lives because we cannot achieve self control without Jesus, his grace and his love.

In a world filled with instant gratification and indulgence, practicing self-control can be challenging. Yet, it is essential for living a life that reflects the character of Christ. It enables us to resist the allure of sin, to withstand trials with perseverance, and to make choices that honor God in every aspect of our lives.

Self-control is not about suppressing our desires or denying ourselves of something that may be somewhat pleasurable or causes us to be happy or joyful, but rather it is about exercising restraint in our lives and turning away from anything that is an evil or sinful pleasure according to God's Word. We need discernment and have moderation in all things so that recognize and don't allow particular cares and evil pleasures choke the word of God out of our lives. Self control empowers us to prioritize

the eternal over the temporary, the spiritual over the fleshly, and the will of God over our own impulses.As we abide in Christ and allow His Spirit to work within us, we begin to bear the fruit of self-control. It is a gradual process of transformation, as we surrender our will to His and allow Him to shape our thoughts, desires, and behaviors according to His perfect plan.

KEY SCRIPTURES

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (AKJV): "Do you not know that they which run in a race run all, but one receives the prize? So run, that you may obtain. And every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beats the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

1 Peter 1:14-16 (AKJV): "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be you holy; for I am holy."

Building upon the foundation of self-control and discipline, We as disciples of Jesus Christ can explore deeper biblical insights that enrich our understanding of these virtues. The Bible provides the principles that guide individuals in developing a disciplined life characterized by restraint, wisdom, and a Christlike spirit. Let's learn some additional biblical insights that brings about more understanding of self-control and discipline, according to the Word of God. First pray to God and ask for His divine wisdom about self control and discipline.

Guarding the Heart and Mind:

Proverbs 4:23 advises us to guard our hearts, for from it flow the springs of life. Developing self-control begins with guarding the heart and mind away from sin and evil. This biblical principle encourages us to be vigilant in protecting our thoughts and emotions, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide them toward righteousness.

Exercising Control Over Speech:

Proverbs 15:28 highlights the impact of a controlled tongue, bringing forth wisdom. Christians extends to speech, and this biblical principle guides followers of Jesus Christ to exercise restraint in their words. It encourages them to speak with wisdom, grace, and words that build up rather than tear down.

Avoiding Impulsive Reactions:

Proverbs 29:11 cautions against giving full vent to one's anger. Cultivating self-control involves avoiding impulsive reactions, especially in moments of frustration or anger. This biblical principle encourages us to respond with patience, seeking God's guidance before reacting.

Setting Healthy Boundaries:

1 Corinthians 6:12 reminds us that not everything is beneficial and that they should not be mastered by anything. Self-discipline involves setting healthy boundaries in various areas of life. This biblical principle encourages us to assess our actions and habits,

ensuring that they are aligned with God's purpose and do not become controlling influences.

Exercising Control Over Desires:

Galatians 5:24 teaches that those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Developing self-control involves surrendering worldly desires to Jesus Christ and the Cross, and rather Love God and others in all purity as God desires. This biblical principle guides us to exercise control over our desires, seeking satisfaction in Christ alone.

Practicing Fasting and Prayer:

Matthew 6:16-18 introduces the spiritual disciplines of fasting and prayer. Self-discipline is evident in these practices, as we as sincere followers of Jesus intentionally set aside time for seeking God's presence. This biblical principle encourages us to incorporate fasting and prayer into our spiritual lives for greater self-discipline.

Living in the Spirit:

Galatians 5:22-23 identifies self-control as a fruit of the Spirit. Cultivating self-control is closely tied to living in the Spirit. This biblical principle encourages believers to rely on the Holy Spirit for strength, guidance, and the empowerment to exercise self-control in various aspects of life. One should always remember that Self Control is a work and fruit of God’s Holy Spirit within a believer and is not just us trying to have self-control by our own strength. God will be faithful to establish self-control within a Christian as they remain committed in following Jesus Christ. Self-Control isn’t instantaneous given or fully established in a person’s life but rather God develops self-control unto maturity over time within any Christian who desires to truly Love God and others over their own lustful and selfish desires.

Persevering in the Race of Faith:

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 draws parallels between the Christian life and a race, emphasizing the need for self-discipline. Believers are encouraged to run the race of faith with purpose and self-control, avoiding disqualification. This biblical principle guides us to persevere in our walk of faith with disciplined determination.

Discerning God's Will Through Renewed Minds:

Romans 12:2 calls us to be transformed by the renewal of their minds. Cultivating self-control involves discerning God's will through a renewed mind. This biblical principle encourages us to align our thoughts with God's truth, leading to disciplined and purposeful living.

Prioritizing Time With God:

Mark 1:35 highlights Jesus' habit of rising early to pray. Self-discipline is evident in prioritizing time with God. This biblical principle encourages us to establish daily quiet times of prayer, Bible study, and reflection, establishing a disciplined and focused relationship with God.

Avoiding the Entanglements of Sin:

Hebrews 12:1 exhorts us to lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely. Self-discipline involves avoiding the entanglements of sin that hinder spiritual progress. This biblical principle guides us to cast off sinful habits and patterns through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Love Anchored in Self-Control:

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 beautifully describes love as patient and kind, not easily angered, and keeping no record of wrongs. Within the context of the Fruit of the Spirit, self-control is intrinsic to the manifestation of love. As true Christians are called to exercise restraint, patience, and kindness, showcasing a love that mirrors God's boundless and self-disciplined love.ent and wisdom, exercising self-discipline in our actions and choices.

Faithfulness Upheld by Self-Control:

Proverbs 3:3-4 highlights the importance of binding love and faithfulness around one's neck. Faithfulness, within the Fruit of the Spirit, is intertwined with self-control. Believers are guided to remain steadfast and committed, exercising discipline in their faith towards the one true God and not other false gods.

Self-Control as a Response to Temptation:

1 Corinthians 10:13 assures us that God provides a way of escape from temptation. In the context of the Fruit of the Spirit, self-control becomes a crucial aspect of resisting temptation. We are guided to rely on the Holy Spirit's strength to exercise self-discipline when faced with trials.

Cultivating Self-Control through the Word:

Psalm 119:11 emphasizes the importance of hiding God's Word in one's heart to avoid sin. Within the Fruit of the Spirit, self-control is cultivated through a deep understanding and application of God's Word. We are guided to rely on the Scriptures, allowing them to shape their thoughts and actions.

Handling Conflict with Self-Control:

Proverbs 15:18 emphasizes the importance of responding to conflict with a gentle answer. In the context of the Fruit of the Spirit, self-control is crucial in handling conflict. We are instructed to respond with measured words and actions, seeking reconciliation with a disciplined and humble spirit.

Confronting Sin with Self-Control:

Matthew 18:15-17 outlines a process of confrontation for sin within the body of believers. In the context of the Fruit of the Spirit, self-control is crucial in addressing sin. We are taught to exercise discipline in confronting sin, seeking restoration with a spirit of humility.

Submitting to God's Discipline:

Hebrews 12:11 underscores the purpose of God's discipline for believers. Maturing in self-discipline involves submitting to God's loving correction and instruction constantly. This biblical principle guides us to view challenges as opportunities for growth under the God's guidance.

Seeking Accountability:

Proverbs 27:17 highlights the importance of iron sharpening iron. Developing self-control includes seeking accountability and support from fellow Christians. This biblical principle encourages us to surround ourselves in an interaction with other Christians that fosters growth and challenges each to live disciplined lives.

Choosing the Narrow Path:

Matthew 7:13-14 contrasts the narrow and wide gates, emphasizing the disciplined choice to follow the narrow path. Implementing self-control involves intentional decision-making aligned with God's Word. This biblical principle guides us to choose the narrow path of obedience and righteousness.

Mastering the Tongue:

James 3:2 acknowledges the challenge of taming the tongue, emphasizing the significance of self-control in speech. Mastering the tongue becomes an ongoing discipline that requires vigilance and dependence on the Holy Spirit. This biblical principle guides us to use words that edify and bring glory to God.

Pursuing Righteousness in Thought:

Philippians 4:8 directs us to dwell on whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and praiseworthy. Effectuating and exhibiting self-control involves disciplining one's thought life. This biblical principle guides us to focus on thoughts aligned with God's truth and righteousness.

Fleeing from Temptation:

1 Corinthians 10:13 assures us that God provides a way of escape from temptation. Bringing about self-control includes fleeing from situations that may lead to temptation and doing some sort of evil. This biblical principle encourages us to actively seek God's way out when faced with temptations.

Taking Thoughts Captive:

2 Corinthians 10:5 encourages us to take every thought captive to obey Christ. Effectuating self-discipline involves actively managing and directing one's thoughts in obedience to Christ. This biblical principle directs us to guard against negative and ungodly thoughts.

Living as a Living Sacrifice:

Romans 12:1 calls us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. Developing self-control involves living in submission to God's will. This biblical principle encourages us to offer every aspect of our lives as an expression of worship and discipline.

Staying Alert in Prayer:

Colossians 4:2 urges us to continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful with thanksgiving. Applying self-discipline involves staying alert in prayer. This biblical principle encourages us to maintain vigilance in our prayer lives, remaining attuned to God's guidance.

Submitting to Spiritual Authority:

Hebrews 13:17 instructs us to obey our leaders and submit to their authority. Self-discipline involves submitting to spiritual authority in the context of the local church. This biblical principle guides us believers to exercise humility and discipline in following leadership.

Remaining Anchored in God's Word:

Psalm 119:11 emphasizes the importance of hiding God's Word in our hearts. Cultivating self-discipline involves remaining anchored in God's Word. This biblical principle encourages us to immerse ourselves in Scripture, allowing its truths to shape our thoughts, attitudes, and actions.

Setting Healthy Digital Boundaries:

Proverbs 4:23 urges us to guard our hearts, including what we allow into our minds. Cultivating self-control involves setting healthy boundaries in the digital realm. This biblical principle guides us to be disciplined in our use of technology, ensuring it aligns with our values.

Exercising Restraint in Entertainment:

Psalm 101:3 underscores the commitment to set no worthless thing before our eyes. Cultivating self-discipline involves exercising restraint in entertainment choices. This biblical principle guides us to be intentional about what we watch, read, and engage with, ensuring it aligns with our values.

Remaining Mindful of God's Presence:

Psalm 16:8 encourages us to keep the Lord always before us. Developing self-control involves remaining mindful of God's presence in every aspect of life. This biblical principle guides us to seek His guidance and live in constant awareness of His nearness.

Living with an Eternal Perspective:

Colossians 3:1-2 calls us to set our minds on things above. Having self-discipline involves living with an eternal perspective. This biblical principle guides us to prioritize heavenly values over worldly pursuits.

Walking in the Fear of the Lord:

Proverbs 9:10 declares that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Developing self-control involves walking in the fear of the Lord. This biblical principle guides us to live with reverence and obedience to God's commands.

Exercising Vigilance in Spiritual Warfare:

1 Peter 5:8 warns us to be sober-minded and watchful because the devil prowls around like a roaring lion. Self-control involves exercising vigilance in spiritual warfare. This biblical principle guides us to stay alert to the schemes of the enemy and stand firm in our faith.

Guarding Against Hypocrisy:

Matthew 23:27-28 warns against hypocrisy, emphasizing the importance of inner purity. Maintaining self-control involves guarding against hypocrisy. This biblical principle guides us to prioritize authentic faith and genuine obedience to God's Word.

Conclusion:

As we seek to bear the fruit of self-control within the broader context of the Fruit of the Spirit, we are invited to come before God in prayer and desire the Holy Spirit to cultivate a disciplined, wise, and Christlike character. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are intertwined virtues that develop in the life of a Christian surrendered to the transformative work of the Spirit. May we as disciples of Jesus Christ strive to develop the good Fruit of the Spirit, through submitting our complete lives to God, allowing self-control to be a distinctive mark of our walk of faith.

(124) Judging Others:

Judging Others in the Bible

Definition

Judging others can refer either to:

- Wrongful, hypocritical, or self-righteous judgment, which Scripture warns against, or
- **Righteous, discerning judgment** that is guided by truth, humility, and love.

The Bible does **not** forbid all forms of judgment, but rather condemns **unjust, prideful, or hypocritical judgment** that replaces God's authority with human arrogance.

“Judge not, that you be not judged.” — *Matthew 7:1*

Original Language Insights

Greek (New Testament)

κρίνω (krinō) – to judge, distinguish, decide, condemn

- Can mean to **discern or evaluate** rightly (positive use)
- Or to **condemn or criticize** harshly (negative use)

Context determines the meaning—Jesus both **warned against** wrongful judging (*Matthew 7*) and **commanded** right judgment (*John 7*).

Key Warnings Against Wrongful Judgment

1. Hypocritical Judgment

Condemning others for sin while ignoring your own is sinful and self-deceiving.

“Why do you see the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?” — *Matthew 7:3*

2. Self-Righteousness

Using judgment to elevate yourself over others violates the humility of Christ.

“God, I thank you that I am not like other men...” — *Luke 18:11* (Pharisee's prayer – condemned by Jesus)

3. Judging Motives

Only God can see the heart. We are not qualified to judge what we cannot know.

“Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” — *1 Samuel 16:7*

4. Condemning Others Without Grace

Harsh, unforgiving judgment denies the mercy that God has extended to us.

“Mercy triumphs over judgment.” — *James 2:13*

Righteous or Correct Judgment (What the Bible Allows & Commands)

1. Discernment of Truth vs. Error

Christians are called to judge doctrines, teachings, and behavior rightly—based on Scripture.

“Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.” — *John 7:24*

2. Correction Within the Church

When done humbly and biblically, correcting a fellow believer is a loving act.

“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private...” — *Matthew 18:15*

3. Accountability

Spiritual leadership and church discipline sometimes require judging actions for the good of the body.

“Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?” — *1 Corinthians 5:12*

Key Scriptures on Judging Others

- *Matthew 7:1–5* – Warns against hypocritical judgment
- *John 7:24*“ – Judge with righteous judgment”
- *Romans 14:10–13* – Don’t pass judgment on disputable matters
- *James 4:11–12* – There is only one Lawgiver and Judge
- *1 Corinthians 5:12–13* – Judge within the church for purity
- *Galatians 6:1* – Restore gently those caught in sin

As Christians we are to discern and in a way judge the actions of others, and respond to them as God's Word and Holy Spirit directs; However we are nor to judge other's with condemnation or unforgiveness, nor in vengeance. Moreover, before anyone of us should judge or discern the actions of others and bring any correction, reproof or rebuke, we need to remove the same in our own lives, by sincere repentance.

Primarily we are to discern the actions of those within the body of Christ, the Church and those claiming to be Christians. When necessary, we should bring correction with love and according to the word of God. We are not to be busybodies, nor meddlers, nor acting self righteous.

As Christians, we must remember that we are all at different stages of spiritual growth. We should extend grace to those who are immature or unaware of the ways of Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, those who have already been taught what is right and true, yet deliberately choose to continue in a sin, should be judged and reproofed more sternly or seriously in hopes that they will turn from their sin.

Without question, we are to judge and rebuke false teachers and false prophets who enter the Church with evil intentions and purposely deceive others. But don't be judgmental or harsh to a Christian teacher who may have said something with ignorance or by mistake, for we all are still learning and being led into all truth by the Holy Spirit, if we remain humble and teachable.

We should always continue to judge our own words and actions in light of God's word, and repent of anything that the Holy Spirit convicts our hearts of, before we try to advise someone or judge the character of anyone.

God will judge everything that we say and do in His time, we don't need to lord over others. Jesus is the King of Kings, and the Lord of lords, for the most part, let God be the judge, because He knows the intentions of a person's heart.

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 7:1-5 (AKJV) **Judge not, that you be not judged. 2For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again**. 3And why behold you the mote that is in your brother**'**s eye, but consider not the beam that is in your own eye? 4Or how will you say to your brother, Let me pull out the mote out of your eye; and, behold, a beam is in your own eye? 5You hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of your own eye; and then shall you see clearly to cast out the mote out of your brother**'**s eye.

John 7:24 (AKJV) Judge not according to the appearance, but judge (correctly) righteous judgment.

2 Timothy 3:10-17 (AKJV) But you have fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, 11Persecutions, afflictions, which came to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord

delivered me. 12Yes, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 13But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. 14But continue you in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them; 15And that from a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 **All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works.**

1 Corinthians 5:6-13 (AKJV) Your glorying is not good. Know you not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 9I wrote to you in an letter not to company with fornicators: 10Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortionists, or with idolaters; for then must you needs go out of the world. 11But now I have written to you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortionist; with such an one no not to eat. 12For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not you judge them that are within? 13But them that are without God judges. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

2 Timothy 3 : 1- 17 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. **2** People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, **4** treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— **5** having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

6 They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, **7** always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. **8** Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers oppose the truth. They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. **9** But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.

As disciples of Jesus we should learn and demonstrate correctly when and how we should judge others, and when and how we should not judge others. We are called to exercise wisdom, discernment, and love in accordance with the principles found in God's Word. Turning away from unnecessary disputes, understanding the context of someone’s spiritual immaturity and non-deliberate sin, promoting reconciliation, bearing one another's burdens, guarding against a critical spirit, exhorting and encouraging, promoting accountability, and focusing on heart transformation, believers can approach judgment with a Christlike spirit. By avoiding a critical spirit, using spiritual discernment, seeking wise counsel, responding to repentance, being mindful of personal weaknesses, examining fruits, considering intent and context, practicing accountability, responding to personal conviction, valuing unity in diversity in the body of Christ, practicing God’s Greatest Commandment of love, focusing on edification, cultivating a teachable spirit, and

practicing love in correction, believers can approach the matter of judging others with the grace and truth modeled by Jesus Christ. May these biblical principles guide us in building the body of Christ, the Church, marked by understanding, humility, and a commitment to building each other up in the faith.

Using Spiritual Discernment

In 1 Corinthians 2:14-15, we learn that the spiritual person judges all things. As followers of Christ filled with the Holy Spirit, we are equipped for spiritual discernment. This discerning judgment allows us to navigate complexities with divine insight, enabling us to distinguish between worldly and godly perspectives.

Seeking Wise Counsel

Proverbs 12:15 advises us that the way of a fool seems right in his own eyes, but a wise person listens to advice. Judging others wisely involves seeking counsel from godly sources, recognizing the limitations of our personal perspectives, and valuing the wisdom of others in forming righteous judgments.

Responding to Repentance

Luke 17:3-4 outlines the process of addressing a brother's sin and highlights the importance of forgiving when there is repentance. As Christians, we are called to respond to repentance with a spirit of forgiveness rather than harsh judgment, reflecting the redemptive nature of Christ's love.

Being Mindful of Personal Weaknesses

1 Corinthians 10:12 warns us that those who think they stand should be careful not to fall. When we judge others, we are reminded of our own vulnerabilities and encouraged to approach others with humility and an awareness of our personal weaknesses.

Examining Spiritual Fruits of Others

Matthew 7:15-20 encourages us to discern false prophets by their fruits. Judging others involves examining the fruits of their actions and teachings. This biblical principle guides us to assess the impact and character of individuals through the lens of God's Word.

Considering Intent and Context

Proverbs 18:13 reminds us that answering before listening is both folly and shame. Wise judgment requires us to consider the intent and context of a situation, avoiding snap judgments that may lead to misunderstanding or unfair assessments.

Practicing Accountability

James 5:16 encourages us to confess our sins to one another and pray for each other. This principle emphasizes the importance of mutual accountability within the Christian community, fostering an environment where we can support one another in our journeys of faith.

Responding to Personal Conviction

Romans 14:22 advises that whatever we do must be done in faith and love. We should not judge others based on incidental personal convictions and choices but should instead focus on the essential work of God regarding more crucial moral aspects. This biblical

principle guides us to refrain from imposing certain incidental personal convictions on others and emphasizes what we should truly be concerned about.

Valuing Unity in Diversity

Colossians 3:11 highlights that in Christ, there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, or free. Our judgments should not be based on worldly distinctions, as we are called to value the unity found in our shared identity in Jesus Christ.

Practicing the Greatest Commandment

Matthew 7:12 encapsulates God's Greatest Commandment, encouraging us to treat others as we would like to be treated. This principle of reciprocity guides us to approach judgment with empathy, kindness, and a desire to extend the same grace we ourselves receive.

Focusing on Edification

1 Corinthians 14:26 encourages us to let everything be done for building up. When we judge others, our focus should be on edification and building up rather than tearing down. This biblical principle guides us to use our words and actions to encourage and uplift others.

Developing a Teachable Spirit

Proverbs 9:9 advises us that the wise learn from instruction and those who are understanding gain guidance. Judging others wisely involves cultivating a teachable spirit, being open to correction, and recognizing the potential for personal growth through the insights of others.

Practicing Love in Correction

1 Corinthians 16:14 exhorts us to let all we do be done in love. When correction is necessary, we are guided to approach the process with love. This principle ensures that our motives behind judgment are rooted in genuine concern for the well-being and growth of others.

Relating to others with a Spirit of Forgiveness

Matthew 6:14-15 underscores the importance of forgiving others if we expect to be forgiven by God. Our judgments should be accompanied by a spirit of forgiveness, recognizing the grace and mercy extended to each of us and, in turn, extending that same grace to others.

Exercising Patience and Longsuffering

Proverbs 14:29 highlights the wisdom in being slow to anger, while James 5:7-8 encourages us to be patient like a farmer waiting for the harvest. Judging others requires patience and longsuffering, allowing God's timing and providence to unfold without hasty or impulsive reactions.

Practicing Empathy and Compassion

Colossians 3:12 encourages us to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Our judgments should be rooted in empathy and compassion,

understanding the struggles and challenges faced by others and responding with Christlike love.

Recognizing the Plank in Our Own Eye

Luke 6:41-42 expands on Jesus' teaching about the speck and log, emphasizing the need for us to address our personal faults before focusing on others. Judging wisely involves self-reflection and acknowledging our own areas of growth, fostering humility in the judgment process.

Creating Opportunities for Redemption

John 8:7 recounts Jesus' response to the woman caught in adultery, challenging those without sin to cast the first stone. Judging others offers us an opportunity to extend grace, promoting redemption rather than condemnation. This biblical principle encourages us to create environments conducive to repentance and restoration.

Avoiding Legalism and Pharisaical Attitudes

Matthew 23 exposes Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees for their legalistic and hypocritical judgments. We are cautioned against adopting a Pharisaical attitude in our judgments, recognizing the danger of self-righteousness and legalism.

Turning Away from Unnecessary Disputes

Titus 3:9 advises us to avoid foolish controversies and quarrels about the law. In our judgments, we are guided to turn away from unnecessary disputes and focus on matters that contribute to godly edification. This principle promotes a spirit of unity and constructive engagement.

Understanding the Context of Sin

James 4:17 reminds us that whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin. Judging others requires understanding the broader context of sin, recognizing that both commission and omission can fall under the scrutiny of righteous judgment.

Promoting Reconciliation and Unity

Matthew 5:23-24 instructs us to reconcile with others before offering our gifts at the altar. In our judgments, the emphasis is on promoting reconciliation and unity. This biblical principle encourages us to prioritize relationships and seek restoration whenever possible.

Bearing One Another's Burdens

Galatians 6:2 encourages us to bear one another's burdens. Judging others involves a compassionate response, understanding the weight of the burdens individuals may carry. This principle promotes a culture of mutual support and care within our Christian community.

Guarding Against a Critical Spirit

Proverbs 15:4 highlights the impact of a gentle tongue, contrasting it with a harsh word that stirs up anger. Our judgments should be characterized by a gentle and constructive spirit, guarding against a critical attitude that can sow discord and hinder the growth of others.

Exhorting and Encouraging Fellow Believers

Hebrews 3:13 encourages us to exhort one another daily, lest we be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Judging others involves exhortation and encouragement, guiding our fellow believers toward a path of righteousness and away from the deceitfulness of sin.

Promoting Accountability within the Body

1 Corinthians 5:12-13 discusses our responsibility to judge those within the church. This principle underscores the importance of promoting accountability within our community while maintaining a spirit of love and restoration.

Focusing on Heart Transformation

Ezekiel 36:26 speaks of God giving us a new heart and putting a new spirit within us. In our judgments, the focus should be on the potential for heart transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit. This perspective encourages us to approach judgment with hope for spiritual renewal.

May these biblical principles guide us in building the body of Christ, the Church, marked by understanding, humility, and a commitment to building each other up in the faith.

(125) Jesus' Instruction To Us: To Love Our Enemies:

Scripture: Matthew 5:44 " But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you"

In a world often marked by division and conflict, the commandment to love our enemies can seem daunting. Yet, as followers of Christ, we are called to embody His radical love even in the face of adversity. Here are some practical ways we can live out this commandment in our daily lives.

Loving your enemies is a profound and challenging principle taught in the Scriptures, and it stands at the heart of Christian ethics. The command to love one**'**s enemies is not merely a suggestion but a call to embody a radical form of love that transcends human limitations. Jesus, addressed this principle directly in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5:43-44, Jesus instructs, **"**You have heard that it was said, **'**Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. **'**But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." This teaching emphasizes a shift from the conventional understanding of love, which often limits kindness to those who reciprocate it.

The call to love one**'**s enemies is rooted in the nature of God**'**s love, which is unmerited and extends even to those who oppose Him. In Romans 5:8, the Apostle Paul writes, **"**But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." This verse illustrates that God's love does not discriminate based on our behavior or status; instead, it is a transformative divine virtue that reaches out beyond our friends and family, including those who may be considered adversaries. This divine 'Agape' love serves as the ultimate example for Christians to follow, modeling a love that persists despite opposition or unworthiness.

Furthermore, loving your enemies aligns with the broader biblical narrative of forgiveness and reconciliation. In Luke 6:27-28, Jesus expands on this command by saying, **“**But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” This directive encompasses not only a call for a change in attitude but also for active expressions of kindness and mercy. Such actions challenge us to rise above personal grievances and extend grace even when it is difficult to do so.

The thought of loving one**’**s enemies also serves to break cycles of hatred , evil and violence. In Proverbs 25:21-22, it is written, **“**If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you.” This metaphorical language suggests that acts of kindness towards one**’**s enemies have the potential to bring about their repentance and transformation, while also aligning with God**’**s justice and mercy.

In essence, loving your enemies is not about endorsing wrongdoing or condoning harmful behavior but about embodying a higher standard of love and forgiveness. It reflects the character of God and the transformative power of divine love, calling believers to act with grace and compassion in the face of hostility.

- **Pray for Them**: Prayer is a powerful tool for transforming our hearts and the hearts of others. Set aside time each day to pray for those who have wronged you, asking for God's blessings and guidance in their lives.
- **Extend Forgiveness**: Just as Christ forgave us, we are called to forgive others. Let go of bitterness and resentment, choosing to extend grace and mercy to those who have hurt you.
- **Practice Empathy**: Seek to understand your enemies' perspectives and experiences. Empathy opens the door to compassion and fosters reconciliation.
- **Show Kindness**: Look for opportunities to show kindness and generosity to your enemies. Small acts of kindness can soften hearts and break down barriers.
- **Speak Words of Blessing**: Instead of retaliating with harsh words, choose to speak words of blessing and encouragement. Your words have the power to bring life and healing.
- **Set Boundaries**: While loving your enemies doesn't mean subjecting yourself to harm, it does involve setting healthy boundaries. Boundaries protect both parties and create space for reconciliation to occur.
- **Lead by Example**: Let your life be a testimony to the transformative power of love. Live in such a way that others are drawn to the love of Christ shining through you.

(126) Reconciliation:

Reconciliation in the Bible

Definition

Reconciliation is the restoration of peace and relationship between two parties previously at odds. In Scripture, it refers primarily to:

- God reconciling sinners to Himself through Jesus Christ
- People being reconciled to one another through forgiveness, humility, and love

It moves beyond forgiveness—reconciliation involves restored **fellowship**, **peace**, and often **trust**, depending on the situation.

"God... reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." *— 2 Corinthians 5:18*

Original Language Insights

Greek (New Testament)

καταλλάσσω (katallassō) – to reconcile, bring back into harmony

- Root idea: changing from hostility to peace
- Often used to describe how **God removes enmity** between Himself and humanity.

"While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." – *Romans 5:10*

διαλλάσσομαι (diallassomai) – to reconcile with one another

- Refers to interpersonal reconciliation (e.g., between two people)

"First be reconciled to your brother..." – *Matthew 5:24*

Key Characteristics of Biblical Reconciliation

1. Initiated by God

God made the first move toward us—while we were still sinners, He reconciled us to Himself through Jesus.

"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself..." – *2 Corinthians 5:19*

2. Made Possible Through Christ's Sacrifice

Reconciliation with God required the **removal of sin** and the **satisfaction of justice**, which Jesus accomplished at the cross.

"Through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, making peace through the blood of His cross." – *Colossians 1:20*

3. Results in Peace with God

Once enemies, we are now **adopted children** and **friends of God**, enjoying spiritual peace and communion.

"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God..." – *Romans 5:1*

4. Empowers Reconciliation with Others

Just as God has forgiven and reconciled us, we are called to **forgive and seek peace** in our relationships.

“As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.” – *Colossians 3:13*

5. Requires Humility and Forgiveness

Human reconciliation depends on humility, honest repentance, and gracious forgiveness from both sides.

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him... if he listens, you have gained your brother.” – *Matthew 18:15*

6. It’s a Ministry, Not Just a Concept

Believers are entrusted with the **“ministry of reconciliation”**—bringing others to God and pursuing peace with one another.

“We are ambassadors for Christ... be reconciled to God.” – *2 Corinthians 5:20*

Summary

Reconciliation is central to the Gospel. God has made peace with us through Christ—and He calls us to be **peacemakers** in the world. Reconciliation with others reflects the heart of God, requires grace and humility, and results in unity and healing.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” – *Matthew 5:9*

All of us need to be reconciled to God to have New Life and to be able to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

We have been given the ministry of reconciliation by God.

Reconciliation is the re-establishing of the fellowship which was broken between two individuals; As Christians we serve God by encouraging and ministering others to be reconciled to God the Father through Jesus Christ.

Moreover we should reconcile our differences between each other wherever and whenever possible, forgiving one another as Jesus Christ forgave us. This does not mean that we condone any wrong done but rather overcome evil with good.

As Christians we should do and say everything to help reconcile everyone back into fellowship with God.

If we repent from our sin, God will reconcile us back to Himself, so that we can continue to have good fellowship with Him and so that we can continue to receive all the spiritual promises of God.

Moreover when we are reconciled with God, through Jesus Christ, we are saved, and abide in Him.

The Ministry of Reconciliation is mentioned in God's Word, particularly in the New Testament of the Bible. This calling of every Christian is reconciling those in the world with God through the message of Jesus Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit and a person's genuine relationship and faith in Jesus Christ. The central message is that Jesus, through his death and resurrection, reconciles people to God the Father, YaHWeH, mending the broken relationship caused by sin.

Scriptural references for the Ministry of Reconciliation can be found in various passages, including those written by the Apostle Paul in the New Testament. These references emphasize the role of believers in sharing the message of reconciliation and serving as ambassadors for Christ. Our ministry and calling is to encourage others to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus.

KEY SCRIPTURES

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 (AKJV) "Why from now on know we no man after the flesh: yes, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now from now on know we him no more. 17Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 18**And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation;** 19To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ**'**s stead, be you reconciled to God. 21For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him..

Romans 5:10 (AKJV):

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Colossians 1:19-20 (AKJV):

"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; 20And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

Ephesians 2:13 -18 (AKJV):

"But now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. 14For he is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of two one new man, so making peace; 16And that he might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17And came and preached peace to you which were afar

off, and to them that were near. 18For through him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Matthew 5:23-24 (AKJV) Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you; 24Leave there your gift before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Luke 15:20 -24 (AKJV): **“**And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son. 22But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23And bring here the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry..”

Isaiah 1:18 (AKJV)“Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. “

1 John 1:9 (AKJV) “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. “

Psalm 51:1-2 (AKJV): **“**Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving kindness: according to the multitude of your tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. ”

Acts 3:19 (AKJV): **“**Repent you therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. .”

Colossians 1:21-22 (AKJV):

"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled 22In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and blameless and unreproveable in his sight: .”

Romans 5:11 (AKJV)):”And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement (reconciliation).

Colossians 1:13-14 (AKJV): "Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: .”

(127) Beware Of False Teachers and False Prophets:

Jesus Christ instructed us to beware of false teachers; There are many false teachers who may at first glance not appear to be all that evil yet their doctrines can still be very devastating to anyone who attempts to follow what they teach.

These false teachers are associated with various religious groups and cults, such as Hinduism, Unity Church, New Age, Mormons, Freemasons, Jehovah Witnesses, Hare Krishnas, Islam, New Thought etc; or even will be within our own Christian churches.

Each of these may even falsely claim to be " Christian ", or to believe in Jesus Christ yet in reality when anyone closely examines what they actually believe in comparison to the scriptures of Bible, you can clearly see their lies, contradictions, and deceptions which are contrary to the truth of God.

Don't be deceived to follow their ways just because they do a few things that appear spiritual or benevolent acts, in order to entice you. Remember they themselves can be very sincere in what they believe, but that can be sincerely wrong.

There are also many false teachers even within our Christian denominations and churches, who are harder to discern. They know the Bible: They may even teach 99 % biblical truth, yet if they teach 1 % lies of a major doctrine, it's like eating 99 % good food with 1 % poison, that 1 % poison can still kill you.

Avoid these kind of teachers who deliberately teach a doctrine contrary the full gospel of Jesus Christ and who take scripture out of content.

"You shall know them by their fruits" comes from the Bible—Matthew 7:16 —and is part of Jesus ’Sermon on the Mount. The fuller context is:

"You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matthew 7:16,

Meaning:

This metaphor suggests that **a person's true character and intentions are revealed by their actions**, just as a tree is judged by the fruit it produces. If someone claims to be good or righteous, you can discern the truth by examining what they actually do, not just what they say.

Broader Usage:

Today, this quote is often used to:

- Evaluate a leader, teacher, or ideology by real-world consequences.
- Judge integrity or moral character based on consistent behavior, not appearances or rhetoric.

If you observe an unrepented pattern of sin in a teacher**’**s life, or if he causes others to sin through his teaching, then he should be recognized as a false teacher. Likewise, if a teacher or pastor consistently takes Scripture out of context and twists it to support unbiblical beliefs, he is a false teacher. Furthermore, if a person attempts to predict major events with absolute certainty—rather than presenting them as possibilities—and those events do not come to pass, then that person is a false prophet.

However don't reject a Christian teacher who ignorantly may be teaching an error if they are is open to correction and change.

Reflection:

In a world filled with spiritual deception, Jesus warns us to be vigilant and discerning when it comes to false teachers, false christs, and false prophets. These individuals may appear to be harmless or even genuine on the surface, but their teachings lead astray from the truth of God's Word.

False teachers often distort Scripture, twist the truth, and promote teachings that contradict the core doctrines of the Christian faith. They may appeal to emotions, intellect, or personal experiences to lure people away from the narrow path of truth. However, Jesus reminds us that we can discern their true nature by examining the fruit of their lives and ministries.

Just as a good tree bears good fruit, so too do false teachers reveal their true character through their actions and the impact of their teachings. Their fruit may include division, strife, greed, manipulation, or moral compromise. By evaluating their lives and teachings against the standard of God's Word, we can recognize and guard against their influence.

Jesus also warns of false christs—those who claim to be the Messiah or to possess exclusive knowledge or spiritual authority. These individuals may deceive many with their charisma, signs, and wonders. However, Jesus declares Himself to be the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6), and warns against following anyone who leads away from Him.

Similarly, false prophets may arise, claiming to speak on behalf of God but delivering messages that are contrary to His Word. They may predict events, offer false hope, or promote self-serving agendas. Yet, God's Word instructs us to test the spirits and hold fast to what is true (1 John 4:1).

In a world filled with spiritual deception, let us heed Jesus' warning to be vigilant and discerning. May we anchor ourselves in the truth of God's Word, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit to recognize and avoid false teachings, false christs, and false prophets. Let us be wise as serpents and innocent as doves, standing firm in the faith and holding fast to the truth of Christ.

Contents

- Will false teachers bring in destructive heresies among us, even within our churches and fellowships ?
- Where does God's Word instruct us to TAKE HEED and to be BEWARE of false teachers, and false prophets ?
- WHY must we take heed and beware of false teachings ?
- WHAT detrimental results could happen if we allow ourselves to be deceived by every wind of doctrine ?
- How could a Christian be deceived by false teachers, false prophets, and by false brethren ? What would cause a Christian to be deceived ?
- Why would God allow hypocritical Christians and unbelievers to be deceived ?
- WHAT should we do ?

- HOW do we recognize and discern who is a false teacher, false apostle, false prophet, or an anti-christ ?
- Are various non-christian religious sects, organizations, occult, and New Age beliefs, destitute of the Truth, even though they sometimes use scriptures from the Bible or even believe Jesus existed ?
- Are there many individuals ...even within various Christian Churches, who lack the Truth and Why ?
- "How can I recognize a false teacher / false prophet?"

Beware Of False Teachers and False Prophets:

Will false teachers bring in destructive heresies among us, even within our churches and fellowships ?

YES, They will sure try.... **2 Peter 2:1 (AKJV) - 8 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privately shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.** 2And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not. 4For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved to judgment; 5And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample to those that after should live ungodly; 7And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

Acts 20:29-31 (AKJV) For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. .

Jude 4 (AKJV) For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 7:15-19 (AKJV) Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep**'**s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. 18A good tree cannot bring forth evil

fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20Why by their fruits you shall know them.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 (AKJV) For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Jeremiah 29:8,9 (AKJV) For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the middle of you, deceive you, neither listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. 9For they prophesy falsely to you in my name: I have not sent them, says the LORD.

2 Timothy 4:2-5 (AKJV) Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. 3For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables. 5But watch you in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of your ministry.

Jeremiah 23:11,12 (AKJV) “For both prophet and priest are profane; yes, in my house have I found their wickedness, says the LORD. 12Why their way shall be to them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil on them, even the year of their visitation, says the LORD.

Jeremiah 23:16 (AKJV) Thus says the LORD of hosts, Listen not to the words of the prophets that prophesy to you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.

Where does God's Word instruct us to TAKE HEED and to be BEWARE of false teachers, and false prophets ?

Where does God's Word also instruct us to not to be carried about with various and strange doctrines, and further not to believe in any perverted gospel of Christ, which is polluted with untruth, such as contradictions, profane and vain babblings, errors, philosophies, twisted and misconstrued scriptures, false knowledge, hypocrisy, doctrines of demons,... etc ?

Mark 13:21-22 (AKJV) And then if any man shall say to you, See, here is Christ; or, see, he is there; believe him not: 22For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. 23But take you heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

Hebrews 13:8,9 (AKJV) Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. 9Be not carried about with (various) divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. .

Matthew 7:15 (AKJV) Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep**'**s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. 18A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20Why by their fruits you shall know them.

Ephesians 5:5,-7 (AKJV) Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things comes the wrath of God on the children of disobedience. 7Be not you therefore partakers with them.

Deuteronomy 12:30-32 (AKJV) Take heed to yourself that you be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before you; and that you inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. 31You shall not do so to the LORD your God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hates, have they done to their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. 32What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: you shall not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Exodus 23:13 (AKJV) And in all things that I have said to you be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of your mouth.

Deuteronomy 4:16-19 (AKJV) Lest you corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, 17The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flies in the air, 18The likeness of any thing that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: 19And lest you lift up your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, should be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD your God has divided to all nations under the whole heaven

2 Peter 3:16-18 (AKJV) As also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction. 17You therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. 18But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Matthew 24:4.5 (AKJV) And Jesus answered and said to them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

Colossians 2:8 (AKJV) Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

2 Timothy 4:3-5 (AKJV) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables. 5But watch you in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of your ministry.

Galatians 1:6-10 (AKJV) I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ to another gospel: 7Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel to you than that you have received, let him be accursed.10For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Why must we take heed and beware of false teachers ? What detrimental results could happen if we allow ourselves to be deceived, by every wind of doctrine ?

Matthew 24:11,12 (AKJV) And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12And **because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.**

1 Timothy 6:20,21 (AKJV) O Timothy, keep that which is committed to your trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: 21**Which some professing have erred concerning the faith.** Grace be with you. Amen.

2 Peter 3:16-18 (AKJV) As also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction. 17You therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before, **beware lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.** 18But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Acts 20:29,30 (AKJV) For I know this, that after my departing shall **grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.** 31Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears

2 Peter 2:1 -3 (AKJV) But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privately shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: (by greed these teachers will exploit you) whose judgment now of a long time lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not.

How could a Christian be deceived by false teachers, false prophets, and by false brethren ? What would cause a Christian to be deceived ?

- BY BELIEVING FALSE SIGNS & WONDERS

Matthew 24:24 (AKJV) " For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

How could a Christian be deceived by false teachers, false prophets, and by false brethren ? What would cause a Christian to be deceived ?

- BY NOT GUARDING the pure Truths of the Gospel of Christ the was committed to your trust.
- BY NOT AVOIDING CONTRADICTIONS....

1 Timothy 6:20,21 (AKJV) O Timothy, keep that which is committed to your trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: 21Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.

- By occupying yourself with DIFFERENT DOCTRINES OF MEN, MYTHS, and ENDLESS GENEALOGIES, SPECULATIONS, and VAIN DISCUSSIONS.
- By occupying a different doctrine rather than DIVINE TRAINING, which teaches LOVE issues from a PURE HEART, and a GOOD CONSCIENCE and a SINCERE FAITH

1 Timothy 1:3-7 (AKJV) As I sought you to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that you might charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. 5Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: 6From which some having swerved have turned aside to vain jangling; 7Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

- By not receiving THE LOVE OF THE TRUTH By not believing the truth but had pleasure in UNRIGHTEOUSNESS; By believing the lying wonders & signs of Satan

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 (AKJV) Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10And with all delusion of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11And for this cause **God shall send them strong delusion**, **that they should believe a lie:** 12That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Why would God allow hypocritical Christians and unbelievers to be deceived ?

2 Thessalonians 2:12 ....because they did not believe THE TRUTH but had PLEASURE IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

God is very just & merciful if we ongoingly repent but if we continue to take pleasure in any evil and do not repent God will allow us to be deceived, and be condemned

How could a Christian be deceived by false teachers, false prophets, and by false brethren ? What would cause a Christian to be deceived ? Cont...

- BY GIVING HEED TO seducing (deceiving) spirits, and doctrines of devils (demons):

1 Timothy 4:1-3(AKJV) Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

- By not being BEWARE OF HYPOCRISY

Luke 12:1 . BEWARE OF the LEAVEN of the Pharisees, which is HYPOCRISY

- By not TAKING HEED By not being BEWARE OF...

Matthew 16:6 TAKE HEED AND BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN of the Pharisees & the sadducees.

- By receiving A DIFFERENT SPIRIT, or when someone preaches a different and perverted Gospel of Jesus, contrary to the Truth which Jesus actually taught and lived.

2 Corinthians 11:3,4 (AKJV) But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4For if he that comes preaches another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if you receive another spirit, which you have not received, or another gospel, which you have not accepted, you might well bear with him

How could a Christian be deceived by false teachers, false prophets, and by false brethren ?

- By BELIEVING false teachers who speak great SWELLING WORDS of EMPTINESS through LICENTIOUSNESS, THEY ALLURE THROUGH THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH

2 Peter 2:18,19 (AKJV) For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. 19While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

- By listening to & believing anyone who teaches things OTHERWISE THAN THAT OF THE TRUTH, and who does not consent to the WORDS OF JESUS CHRIST,

- or by believing anyone who DOES NOT CONSENT TO THE DOCTRINE which is ACCORDING TO GODLINESS

1 Timothy 6:3-5 (AKJV) If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; 4He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof comes envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 5Perverse disputings of men of

corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw yourself.

- By FOLLOWING DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES,

2 Peter 2:1,2 (AKJV) But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privately shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

- By the DECEPTION of false prophets & by LAWLESSNESS

Matthew 24:11-12 (AKJV) And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

- By BEING LED by a blind teacher who TEACHES UNTRUTH

Matthew 15:13,14 (AKJV) But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up. 14Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

How could a Christian be deceived by false teachers, false prophets, and by false brethren ?

- By being IMMATURE and LACKING KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WORD
- By BELIEVING EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE By the TRICKERY OF MEN

Ephesians 4:14 (AKJV) That we from now on be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

- By not being AWARE OF THE ERRORS of ignorant, unstable, and LAWLESS individuals who TWIST SCRIPTURE

2 Peter 3:16-17 (AKJV) As also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction. 17You therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness

- By ignorantly believing ....SPIRITS OF DEMONS who are PERFORMING SIGNS, out of the mouth of the beast and the false prophet or anyone else

Revelation 16:13 -14 (AKJV) And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Revelation 19:20 (AKJV) And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that worked miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of

the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

- By believing in EMPTY WORDS untruth spoken by those who are DISOBEDIENT TO GOD and By partaking with anyone who is disobedient and does not repent.

Ephesians 5:5-7 (AKJV) For this you know, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things comes the wrath of God on the children of disobedience. 7Be not you therefore partakers with them."

- By not AVOIDING those who cause divisions and offenses CONTRARY TO THE TRUE GOSPEL OF CHRIST By NOT AVOIDING SMOOTH WORDS and FLATTERING SPEECH

Romans 16:17,18 (AKJV) Now I beseech you, brothers, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them. 18For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple

How could a Christian be deceived by false teachers, false prophets, and by false brethren ?

- **By believing in perverse things....**

Acts 20:29,30 (AKJV) For I know this, that after my departing shall **grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.** 31Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears

WHAT should we do to protect ourselves and to know the Truth ?

- **Ask God in prayer for wisdom, discernment and protection by His Holy Spirit**
- **Watch and Remember the Warning**

Acts 20:29,30 (AKJV) For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. **31Therefore watch, and remember,** that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears

- **Learn God's Truth in His Word and receive the Spirit of Truth**

HOW will we as Christians KNOW the TRUTH in order to recognize false teachers ?

- **You shall know the truth, if you continue to learn, abide in and live Jesus' Word...**

JESUS SAID, " Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; 32And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. " **John 8:31 (AKJV)**

JESUS did NOT SAY - In order for us to learn the truth, and to be saved it was necessary to seek and listen to the words of teachers of other religions.

JESUS SAID, " I am the Way, **the TRUTH**, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me **" John 14:6**

- You will know the **TRUTH**, If you **LOVE Jesus** and **keep (Obey) His Commandments** and Jesus will give you another HELPER- THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH...

John14:16 (AKJV) " And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you. 18I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

John 16:13 (AKJV) " However, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. "

- You will know the **TRUTH, by HEARING and BELIEVING THE WORD** from the Father, which Jesus taught.

John 17:17 (AKJV) " Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth.

John 18:37- JESUS SAID... " Pilate therefore said to him, Are you a king then? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. **Every one that is of the truth hears my voice. "**

How Do We Recognize And Discern Who Is A False Teacher, False Prophet OR An Anti-Christ?

If anyone becomes a sincere follower of Christ, the Holy Spirit will give that individual the ability to discern who are false teachers, false prophets etc. with the gift of discerning of spirits.

Matthew 7:15-20“ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep**’**s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16**You shall know them by their fruits.** Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. 18A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20**Why by their fruits you shall know them..**

NOTE; If any Teacher or Prophet continues to bear bad spiritual fruit in their life without repenting or doesn't bear good fruit in their life, then that individual is to be recognized as a false prophet or a false teacher.

GOOD FRUIT -

Galatians 5:22,23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

BAD FRUIT

Galatians 5:19-21

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

How Do We Recognize And Discern Who Is A False Teacher, False Prophet OR An Anti-Christ? Continued…

- A false prophet or a false teacher is anyone who tries to persuade you to follow other gods or to accept the doctrines and belief of other religions. (See - Deuteronomy 13:2-5)
- A deceiver and an anti-christ is anyone who does not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh (See-2 John 7)
- A false teacher etc. is anyone who speaks lies in hypocrisy (See 1Timothy 4:1 Also Luke 12:1)
- A false teacher is a individual who speaks vain babblings and contradictions (See - 1 Timothy 6:20,21)
- False teachers and false prophets are ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 4)
- A false teacher is a person who teaches a different doctrine other than what Jesus and the Apostles taught or occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies. (See -1 Timothy 1:3)
- A false teacher is a person who teaches commandments of men rather than the commandments of God (See - Matthew 15:7-9)
- A false teacher is a person who teaches philosophy, empty deceit according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe. (See - Colossians 2:8)

Are various non-christian religious sects, organizations, occult, and New Age beliefs, destitute of the Truth, even though they sometimes use scriptures from the Bible or even believe Jesus existed ?

YES - They are destitute of the Truth from God, because just believing that Jesus existed means nothing in itself apart from believing and following the full gospel of Jesus Christ. One needs to sincerely believe that Jesus is the Christ our only Savior and obey His sayings, repent, abide in His Love and Grace, and receive His Spirit of Truth, in order to have the Truth.

Are there many individuals ...even within various Christian Churches, who lack the Truth and Why ?

YES - Even within various Christian denominations and churches which call their church " Spirit-Filled ," there are still many individuals who lack the Truth and are not truly filled with the Spirit of God, including pastors, elders, and those whom attend; While there are others of course, whom do have the Spirit of Truth, who may attend the same church.

just going to theology school and receiving a degree, does not insure that a person necessarily has God's Spirit of Truth nor does it insure that everything that they teach or say is of the Truth, nor does just attending any church.

In order for any individual to receive the Spirit of Truth and to have Godly insight into the word of God, a person must have an ongoing relationship with God, abiding properly in Jesus Christ, through His Grace, and by following Jesus , continuing in His word, in obedience, with a sincere faith, in prayer and in Love to God and one another.

Not just some outward religious appearance, by being a hearer of the Word but not a doer, - This is hypocrisy.

Therefore because these lukewarm persons choose to go their own ways, instead of praying to God and seeking His Way and obeying the voice of God;

God will send them a strong delusion and will not give them the Spirit of Truth, unless they repent.

(128) Beware:

Jesus instructed us to be BEWARE ...of false teachers, false christs and false doctrines...

I sometimes wonder which is the greater crime; The person who tells a lie or the person who carelessly believes in one.

Although forgivable, there can be no excuse for ignorance when each of our lives is constantly reflecting upon one another and the ability to become capable teachers of our own children relies mainly on the knowledge that we've obtained or rejected from other people.

We should therefore strive earnestly for understanding, asking God for His wisdom, discernment, and discretion, patiently subjecting the thoughts and words of others to the truths of Jesus Christ, found in the Bible, and with the help of God's Holy Spirit, before gullibly accepting everything a person says. We should beware and not prematurely accept falsehoods or human reasoning covered in partial truths of Scripture. Or make conclusions in error based upon shallow opinions, rather than seeking God's Truth wholeheartedly on essential issues.

For to many times what we had hastily accepted as truth on the surface, was nothing more than a hideous lie underneath.

Some good Christian teachers have unintentionally taught certain doctrines in error, while there are many false teachers that have come into the church and deliberately taught false doctrines, and lies against the Truths of God.

Satan is the father of lies, and his evil workers will try to deceive Christians in any way possible; Therefore we should take heed to Jesus' warning to Beware…

In a world filled with spiritual deception, Jesus warns us to be vigilant and discerning when it comes to false teachers, false christs, and false prophets. These individuals may appear to be harmless or even genuine on the surface, but their teachings lead astray from the truth of God's Word.

False teachers often distort Scripture, twist the truth, and promote teachings that contradict the core doctrines of the Christian faith. They may appeal to emotions, intellect, or personal experiences to lure people away from the narrow path of truth. However, Jesus reminds us that we can discern their true nature by examining the fruit of their lives and ministries.

Just as a good tree bears good fruit, so too do false teachers reveal their true character through their actions and the impact of their teachings. Their fruit may include division, strife, greed, manipulation, or moral compromise. By evaluating their lives and teachings against the standard of God's Word, we can recognize and guard against their influence.

Jesus also warns of false christs—those who claim to be the Messiah or to possess exclusive knowledge or spiritual authority. These individuals may deceive many with their charisma, signs, and wonders. However, Jesus declares Himself to be the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6), and warns against following anyone who leads away from Him.

Similarly, false prophets may arise, claiming to speak on behalf of God but delivering messages that are contrary to His Word. They may predict events, offer false hope, or promote self-serving agendas. Yet, God's Word instructs us to test the spirits and hold fast to what is true (1 John 4:1).

This world filled with half-truths, spiritual deception, let us heed Jesus' warning to be vigilant and discerning. May we anchor ourselves in the truth of God's Word, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit to recognize and avoid false teachings, false christs, and false prophets. Let us be wise as serpents and innocent as doves, standing firm in the faith and holding fast to the truth of Christ.

(129) Where does God's Word instruct us to TAKE HEED and to be BEWARE of false teachers, and false prophets ?

Where does God's Word also instruct us to not to be carried about with various and strange doctrines; and further not to believe in any perverted gospel of Christ, which are polluted with untruth, such as contradictions, profane & vain babblings, error, philosophies, twisted and misconstrued scriptures, false knowledge, hypocrisy, doctrines of demons,... etc ?

Mark 13:22,23 (AKJV) For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. 23**But take you heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.**

Hebrews 13:8,9 (AKJV) Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. **9Be not carried about with divers (various) and strange doctrines.** For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein

Matthew 7:15,16 (AKJV) Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep**'**s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16You shall know them by their fruits. .

Ephesians 5:5-7 (AKJV) - 5For this you know, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. **6Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things comes the wrath of God on the children of disobedience.** 7Be not you therefore partakers with them."

Deuteronomy 12:30-32 (AKJV) TAKE HEED ...That you do not inquire about their gods, "Take heed to yourself that you be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before you; and that you inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. 31You shall not do so to the LORD your God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hates, have they done to their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. 32What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: you shall not add thereto, nor diminish from it."

Exodus 23:13 (AKJV) "And in all things that I have said to you be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of your mouth.

Deuteronomy 4:16 (AKJV) BEWARE lest you act corruptly "Lest you corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, 17The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flies in the air, 18The likeness of any thing that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: 19And lest you lift up your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, should be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD your God has divided to all nations under the whole heaven."

2 Peter 3:16-18(AKJV) " As also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction. 17You therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before, **beware lest you also, being led away**

with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. 18But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

Matthew 24:4.5 (AKJV) TAKE HEED THAT NO ONE DECEIVES YOU, "And Jesus answered and said to them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many."

Colossians 2:8 (AKJV) ; " Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

2 Timothy 4:3 (AKJV) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables. **5But watch you in all things,** endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of your ministry.

Galatians 1:6-10 (AKJV) I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ to another gospel: 7Which is not another; **but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.** 8But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9As we said before, so say I now again, **if any man preach any other gospel to you than that you have received, let him be accursed.**10For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.For do I now persuade men or God ? or do I seek to please men ? For if I seek still to please men**, i would not be a servant of Christ.**

(130) Beware of False Gods and Idols:

Scripture References:

- **Exodus 20:3-5**:(AKJV) **"** You shall have no other gods before me. 4You shall not make to you any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them:..."
- **1 John 5:21**:(AKJV) **"** Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."
- **Isaiah 44:9-10**: (AKJV) **"**They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. 10Who has formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing?."

Anyone who desires to spend eternity in the Kingdom of Heaven and be with the one true living God must not follow or believe in false gods or idols of any kind. Adoring or worshipping anything or anyone other than the triune Godhead who is YaHWeH (God the Father) Yeshua (Jesus Christ) and the Holy Spirit is a sin that deeply displeases God. False gods and idols include Satan, and the pseudo gods and man made idols (wood and

stone) of any world religion or ritual practice contrary to Juedo-Christian teachings in God's word the Bible. This misdirected devotion can also take many additional forms—whether it be material possessions, fame, or even personal ambitions—that draw our hearts away from the divine truth.

The sin and evil that everyone has committed creates a spiritual chasm that separates us from God. Each of us has fallen short of His glory, and this separation can lead to a life devoid of true peace and fulfillment. However, there is hope. Only Jesus Christ, through His sacrifice and resurrection, can reconcile us and restore our relationship with God the Father. He offers us grace and forgiveness, inviting us to turn away from our sins and embrace a life centered on Him.

By accepting Jesus as our Savior, we are not only forgiven but also empowered to live in accordance with God**'**s will. This journey of faith calls us to seek His presence daily, to worship Him in spirit and truth, and to reflect His love and light in a world often filled with darkness. In doing so, we align ourselves with the purpose for which we were created—to glorify God and enjoy eternal communion with Him.

In **Exodus 20**, God reminds us of the importance of placing Him above all else. He calls us to a relationship marked by devotion and loyalty, warning us against the dangers of idolatry. When we allow anything to come between us and God, we open the door to spiritual emptiness and deception.

The Apostle John emphasizes this in **1 John 5:21**: **"**Dear children, keep yourselves from idols." This instruction is not just a suggestion; it is a command for our spiritual well-being. Idols promise fulfillment but ultimately lead to disappointment. They distract us from our purpose and diminish our relationship with the one true God.

Isaiah further illustrates the futility of idols in **Isaiah 44:9-10**. He describes the absurdity of creating something to worship that has no power. When we place our hope in temporary things, we become blind to the reality of God's sovereignty and love.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, help me to recognize the idols in my life—those things that compete for my attention and devotion. Open my eyes to the areas where I may be placing my trust in false gods. I desire to worship You alone and to seek fulfillment in Your presence. Grant me the wisdom and strength to turn away from distractions and to cling to You, my true source of life. Amen.

Action Step:

This week, take some time to reflect on what may be competing for your attention and devotion. Write down any areas where you feel tempted to put something or someone before God. Repent as God's Holy Spirit reveals and convicts your heart, don't harden your heart. Pray to God regarding these areas and ask God to help you refocus your heart and mind on Him. Remember, true fulfillment and peace are found only in worshiping the one true God and abiding in Him and His love.

(131) Beware of false Christs and Antichrists:

Definition

In Scripture, false Christs are individuals who claim to be the Messiah or Savior but are deceivers. Antichrists are those who oppose Christ, deny His identity, or seek to lead others away from the truth.

Jesus and the apostles warned repeatedly that many false teachers, false prophets, and even false "christs" would arise—especially in the last days.

“See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ, ’and they will lead many astray.” — *Matthew 24:4–5*

Original Language Insights

Greek Terms

- ψευδόχριστος (*pseudokhristos*) – *false Christ*
  - Appears in *Matthew 24:24* and *Mark 13:22*
  - Refers to impostors claiming the identity, authority, or role of Christ
- ἀντίχριστος (*antichristos*) – *Antichrist*
  - Appears in *1 John* and *2 John*
  - Means “opponent of Christ,” or “in the place of Christ”
  - Refers both to individual deceivers and to a spirit or system opposing Christ

Biblical Warnings and Insights

1. Jesus Warned They Would Multiply in the Last Days

“False Christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.” — *Matthew 24:24*

2. Antichrists Deny the Truth About Jesus

“Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist.” — *1 John 2:22*

3. They Come from Among Us

“They went out from us, but they were not of us...” — *1 John 2:19*

4. They Preach a Different Gospel or Jesus

“If someone comes and proclaims another Jesus... you put up with it readily enough.” — *2 Corinthians 11:4*

5. The Spirit of the Antichrist Is Already at Work

“Every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist.” — *1 John 4:3*

The Ultimate Antichrist (The “Man of Lawlessness”)

Scripture also speaks of a **final, personal Antichrist** who will rise in the end times.

“The man of lawlessness... exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship.” — *2 Thessalonians 2:3–4*

This figure will:

- Oppose God
- Perform counterfeit miracles
- Deceive many
- Be destroyed by Christ at His return (*2 Thess. 2:8*)

How to Recognize and Guard Against Them

1. **Know the True Christ** Study Scripture to know who Jesus really is—His nature, mission, and words.
2. **Test the Spirits** Compare teachings and claims with the Word of God.“ Test everything; hold fast what is good.” – *1 Thess. 5:21*
3. **Stay Grounded in the Gospel** Cling to the true Gospel of grace through faith in Christ alone.“ Even if we... preach a different gospel, let him be accursed.” – *Gal. 1:8*
4. **Abide in the Word and Spirit**“ The anointing that you received from Him abides in you...” – *1 John 2:27*
5. **Beware of Signs and Wonders Without Truth** Not all supernatural acts are from God. Deception often comes through impressive signs.“ Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.” – *2 Corinthians 11:14*

Summary

False Christs and antichrists are deceptive, persuasive, and spiritually dangerous. They deny the truth of Jesus, distort the Gospel, and often come from within religious contexts. Scripture calls believers to be vigilant, discerning, and rooted in the truth of Christ.

“Let no one deceive you in any way.” – *2 Thessalonians 2:3*“ Little children, abide in Him...” – *1 John 2:28*

As Christians, we are warned throughout Scripture to be vigilant and discerning, especially in these last days, because many false Christs and antichrists will rise to deceive. Jesus Himself gave us a clear warning in *Matthew 24:24*, saying, *“For false Christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.”* This means that deception will often appear convincing, even spiritual, and unless we are firmly rooted in God’s Word and guided by

the Holy Spirit, we risk being misled. These false messengers often twist Scripture, promote self-centered doctrine, or claim divine authority while leading people away from the truth of the gospel.

As the body of Christ, we must stay grounded in the truth of God's Word and remain in close fellowship with Him. *1 John 2:18* warns us, *"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists..."* The spirit of the antichrist opposes Christ's teaching and leads hearts away from His lordship. We must be people of prayer, discernment, and obedience, always testing the spirits (*1 John 4:1*) and holding fast to the truth. Let us walk carefully, encourage one another, and stay alert—trusting that as we abide in Christ, He will guard us from deception and guide us in truth.

"Beware of False Christs and Antichrists"

Key Scriptures

- Matthew 24:24 (Jesus speaking):

"For false christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."

- 1 John 2:18:

"Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come."

1. Understanding False Christs

A **false Christ** is anyone who falsely claims to be the Messiah or Savior. Jesus warned that in the last days, many would come **"in My name"** claiming to be Him, deceiving many (Matthew 24:5). False Christs do not just appear as religious figures—they may also come as political saviors, spiritual gurus, or even charismatic influencers who promise peace, prosperity, or enlightenment apart from the gospel.

Characteristics:

- Claim divine authority or messiah-like status
- **Distort Scripture** to suit personal or political agendas
- Often perform signs and wonders to impress or deceive
- Aim to draw followers after themselves, not Christ

Jesus clearly stated these figures would be a sign of the **end times** (Matthew 24:23-26). The danger is not just their false claims, but their ability to **deceive**, especially through charisma, false miracles, and manipulation of truth.

2. Understanding the Antichrist

The term **"Antichrist"** is used primarily in the letters of John. The word means *"against Christ"* or *"in place of Christ."*

Biblical Definitions:

- **1 John 2:22:** “Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son.”
- **1 John 4:3:** “Every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist…”

There are two key understandings in Scripture:

1. **The Antichrist (singular)** – a future individual, often associated with end-time prophecy (see 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4; Revelation 13).
2. **Many antichrists (plural)** – people or movements already in the world that oppose or distort the true gospel.

3. The Spirit of Antichrist

The “spirit of antichrist” refers to ideologies, teachings, or movements that:

- **Deny the incarnation** of Christ (1 John 4:2-3)
- **Reject the gospel message** of salvation through Christ alone
- **Promote deception**, lawlessness, and rebellion against God’s authority

This spirit is subtle and pervasive, often masquerading as truth, progress, or spirituality. It can even operate **within the church** through false teachers (2 Peter 2:1-3).

4. How to Identify and Resist False Christs and Antichrists

A. Know the True Christ

- Study the **Scriptures** carefully (John 5:39; 2 Timothy 3:16)
- Develop **discernment** by walking in the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20-21)
- Hold fast to the **apostolic gospel**: Jesus as the divine Son of God, crucified, risen, and returning (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

B. Test the Spirits

“Test the spirits to see whether they are from God…” (1 John 4:1)

Don't accept every claim or teaching at face value. Use the Word of God to test whether something aligns with the truth.

C. Stay Rooted in Christ

“Abide in Him, so that when He appears we may have confidence…” (1 John 2:28)

Remaining in Christ through prayer, obedience, and Christian fellowship is the believer’s safeguard against deception.

5. The End-Time Antichrist: A Coming Global Deceiver

Paul warns of a **“man of lawlessness”** who will exalt himself above God and demand worship (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). He will come with false power and signs, leading a global rebellion against Christ before the Lord returns.

This figure is also seen in **Revelation 13** as the **Beast**, who will:

- Persecute believers
- Deceive nations
- Be empowered by Satan

Ultimately, he will be destroyed at Christ's second coming (Revelation 19:20).

6. Encouragement for Believers

While deception is real and increasing, believers are not helpless. Jesus promised:

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish..." (John 10:27–28)

The true Church is kept by Christ, and the Holy Spirit enables us to **stand firm in truth**, resist deception, and proclaim the real gospel with boldness and clarity.

Conclusion

The Bible calls us to be **watchful, discerning, and steadfast**. False Christs and antichrists are real threats to spiritual health, but they are no match for the power of the true Christ. Knowing the truth, loving the truth, and living the truth will keep us safe until the day we see Him face to face.

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols." (1 John 5:21)

(132) The Dangers of Idolatry:

God commands us to make any idols nor worship anything that is an idol.The dangers of idolatry extend beyond mere distraction; they can lead to spiritual corruption that causes a person to depart from the one true living God. .

In **Romans 1:21-32,** Paul describes how humanity can become futile in its thinking when anyone turns away from God:

Romans 1:21-32 (AKJV) **"**Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. 24Why God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: 25Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26For this cause God gave them up to vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. 28And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to

a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." These passages illustrates the devastating consequences of replacing God with created things. When we fail to acknowledge God's sovereignty, we open ourselves to a cycle of deception, ultimately leading to emptiness and despair.

Idolatry can also distort our understanding of love and relationships. When we place people or romantic relationships on a pedestal, we risk creating an unhealthy dependence. Jesus reminds us in Matthew 10:37, (AKJV)**"***He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ."* This challenge underscores the importance of prioritizing our relationship with God above all else. Healthy relationships are rooted in our understanding of God's love, enabling us to love others without expectation or idolatry.

Moreover, we can be tempted to create idols out of our ambitions and desires. In Luke 12:15, (AKJV) Jesus warns, **"***And he said to them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses."* The pursuit of wealth and success can become an all-consuming idol, blinding us to the true purpose of our lives. When our identity becomes intertwined with our achievements or material possessions, we lose sight of the eternal significance of our relationship with God.

Finding Freedom from Idolatry

The good news is that freedom from idolatry is possible through a renewed commitment to God. In 1 John 5:21, we are encouraged: **"***Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."* This simple yet powerful exhortation calls us to actively guard our hearts against anything that might detract from our devotion to God. Recognizing and confessing our tendencies to idolize can pave the way for spiritual renewal.

To combat the influence of false gods, we should develop spiritual disciplines that strengthen our relationship with God. Prayer, worship, and studying God's word, remind us of God's sovereignty and faithfulness and his truth will us free from all idols by His Holy Spirit. Regularly engaging in community with fellow believers can also serve as a source of accountability and encouragement. Hebrews 10:24-25 emphasizes the importance of fellowship: **"***And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another."*

(133) Guard Your Heart and Mind in Christ Jesus:

Key Verse: Philippians 4:6-7 (AKJV) *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

Guarding our hearts and minds is a key exhortation in Scripture, emphasizing the need for spiritual awareness and the impact of our relationship with Christ. This commentary explores what it means to protect our innermost selves in a world full of distractions, confusion, temptations and sin. .

Understanding the Heart and Mind

In the Bible, the "heart" represents our emotional, spiritual, and moral core. It is where our desires, intentions, and will reside. Proverbs 4:23 advises, **"***Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."* This highlights that our thoughts and actions are shaped by the condition of our hearts. Therefore, guarding our hearts requires active effort to shape our desires and choices.

The "mind" refers to our thoughts and understanding. Romans 12:2 encourages believers, **"***Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* This transformation is essential for understanding God**'**s will and aligning our lives with His purposes.

The Need for Protection

Our world is filled with influences that can compromise our hearts and minds. Ephesians 6:12 reminds us, **"***For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."* Recognizing this spiritual battle is crucial for understanding why we must guard our hearts and minds.

In a world filled with distractions and temptation, it**'**s easy for our hearts and minds to be swayed. The enemy uses lies, deception, diversions, fears, and doubts to weaken our faith. Thus, proactive guarding becomes vital, involving both the avoidance of spiritually detrimental evil influences and rather the intentional filling of our hearts and minds with God's truth and pure love.

The Role of Christ

Philippians 4:7 assures us when we pray and ask God, that He will be faithful and the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds **"***in Christ Jesus."* This phrase is significant. Our ability to guard ourselves is closely tied to our relationship with Christ. He is the source of true peace, which goes beyond human understanding.

In John 14:27,(AKJV) Jesus states, **"***Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you: not as the world gives, give I to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."* Here, Jesus emphasizes that His peace is different from the temporary comfort the world provides. His peace comes from His presence and the assurance of salvation.

Practical Steps for Guarding Hearts and Minds

1. **Prayer and Supplication:** Philippians 4:6 encourages us, **"***Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,*

present your requests to God." Regular prayer helps us align our hearts and minds with God**'**s will, allowing us to share our worries with Him.

2. **Meditation on God's word:** Psalm 119:11 states, **"***I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."* Engaging with Scripture fills our minds with God**'**s truth and helps protect our hearts against temptation and discouragement.
3. **The Church and Accountability:** Hebrews 10:24-25 reminds us of the importance of gathering with other believers: **"***And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."* Being part of a supportive Christian group or fellowship provides encouragement and accountability in our spiritual walk.
4. **Focusing on the truth and good:** Philippians 4:8 provides guidance on what to think about: **"***Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."* This encourages us to fill our minds with uplifting and godly thoughts.
5. Faith in Jesus Christ- The shield of faith is able to quench every fiery dart from satan, and guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Faith in Jesus Christ is a powerful defense against the attacks of the demonic forces and principalities. . Just as a shield protects a warrior from harm, our faith shields us from the lies, temptations, and accusations of the devil. By holding firm to the promises of God and trusting in His truth, we can stand strong against every assault. The enemy may throw fiery darts of doubt, fear, and discouragement, but with faith in Jesus, we have the assurance of His victory and protection. This shield not only defends us, but it also guards our hearts and minds, keeping us centered in Christ and focused on His peace and promises.

The Result of Guarding

The result of guarding our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus is significant. Primarily we are not lead astray by satan or demonic forces and we stay on the narrow path that leads to life. As we engage in this practice, we experience the working of God's Holy Spirit, and the peace of God will protect us from anxiety, fear, doubt and from repeating various sins and evil behaviors that are spiritually detrimental to our well being. This peace enables us to face life**'**s challenges with confidence and faith, reminding us that we are not alone.

In conclusion, guarding our hearts and minds is an essential part of our spiritual walk. By relying on Christ and taking practical steps to protect ourselves from worldly influences, we can develop a life that is on coarse and able to fufill God's purpose, for us to bear good fruit. As we seek to align our thoughts and emotions with God**'**s truth, we will find strength in Him and a deeper connection to Him and abide in Him without hinderence.

(134) Walking in Good Behavior:

Colossians 3:12-14 (AKJV) - "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you. And above all these things put on charity (Love), which is the bond of perfection."

1 Peter 2:12 (AKJV) "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." -

These verses emphasizes the importance of walking in good behavior and conducting ourselves with integrity and righteousness, especially in the presence of unbelievers.

Walking in good behavior involves living a life that is characterized by honesty, integrity, and righteousness. It's about aligning our actions with God's commands and reflecting His character in all that we do.

As Christians, our conduct serves as a powerful witness to the world around us. Unbelievers are watching us, and our behavior can either draw them closer to God or push them further away. Therefore, it's essential that we strive to live lives that are pleasing to God and that bring glory to His name.

Peter encourages believers to have their conversation (or conduct) honest among the Gentiles, meaning that our behavior should be above reproach even in the eyes of those who do not share our faith. This includes being truthful, trustworthy, and ethical in all of our interactions, whether in our workplaces, communities, or families.

Our good behavior can have a profound impact on those around us. When unbelievers observe the integrity and righteousness of our lives, it can challenge their misconceptions about Christianity and draw them to consider the truth of the gospel. Our good works become a testimony to the transforming power of God's grace at work in our lives.

Furthermore, our conduct can glorify God by demonstrating His character and His love to the world. As we reflect the love, kindness, and compassion of Christ in our interactions with others, we point people to the reality of His kingdom and His reign in our lives.

Walking in good behavior is not always easy, especially in a world that often values self-interest and moral relativism. It requires humility, self-discipline, and reliance on the Holy Spirit to empower us to live according to God's standards.

(135) Christian Behavior:

The call for all of us as Christians to have and to continue in good behavior resonates throughout the Scriptures as a reminder for us to conduct ourselves in a manner that reflects the transformative power of God's grace, and love, through our relationship with Jesus Christ. This call goes beyond mere external actions; it encourages us to embody a Christlike character in every aspect of our lives.

So in what ways should our behavior be as outlined in the Bible?

Christian behavior encompasses how we live out our faith in everyday actions, reflecting the values and teachings of Jesus Christ. As followers of Christ, our behavior should be marked by love, holiness, purity, humility, integrity, godly virtues and a commitment to righteousness. In Romans 12:9-10, the apostle Paul instructs us, "Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor." This passage emphasizes the importance of love in our interactions with others, encouraging us to prioritize genuine care, compassion, forgiveness and regarding the spiritual and physical needs and livelihood of others, as Jesus loved us. Most of all. our behavior towards God should be with thankfulness, willful obedience and loving Him with all of our being.

Our behavior as Jesus's disciples should be holy, free from unrepented sin. It should be kind, compassionate, faithfully doing God's will in the ways that bring glory to God, and not ourselves. Not carousing, beligerant, rebellious

Our behavior as Christians should also be characterized by humility, following the example of Jesus who humbled Himself to serve others (Philippians 2:3-8). Humility involves acknowledging our dependence on God, valuing others above ourselves, and using our gifts and resources to benefit the community. When we practice humility, we cultivate unity and harmony within the Body of Christ, fostering an environment where everyone feels valued and supported.

Integrity is another hallmark of Christian behavior. Psalm 15:1-2 poses the question, "O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart." As Christians, we are called to live with honesty and sincerity, aligning our words and actions with God's truth. Integrity strengthens our witness and credibility, demonstrating our commitment to following Christ wholeheartedly.

Furthermore, our behavior should reflect a commitment to righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:22-24 exhorts us, "Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." This transformation involves actively resisting sin and pursuing a life that honors God in thought, word, and deed. It requires intentional effort to cultivate virtues such as patience, kindness, forgiveness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

In all aspects of our behavior, whether at home, work, school, or in our communities, we are called to be ambassadors of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). Our words and actions should reflect His love and grace, drawing others to Him through our testimony and example. As we strive to live out our faith authentically, guided by the Holy Spirit and grounded in God's Word, we fulfill the commandment to love God and love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). In doing so, we contribute to building a community of believers characterized by compassion, unity, and a shared commitment to glorifying God in everything we do.

HOW should we behave ?

Romans 13:13 (AKJV): **"Let us walk honestly, as in the day;** not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."

1 Samuel 18:30 (AKJV): "Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, that David **behaved himself more wisely** than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by."

Ephesians 4:32 (AKJV) - "And be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you."

Philippians 2:3-4 (AKJV) - "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

Colossians 3:12-14 (AKJV) - "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you. And above all these things put on charity (Love), which is the bond of perfection."

1 Peter 3:8-9 (AKJV) - "Finally, be you all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brothers, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that you are thereunto called, that you should inherit a blessing."

Love as Jesus Christ Loved Us:

Ephesians 5:2-5 (AKJV) " And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling smell. 3But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becomes saints; 4Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5For this you know, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

How Our Behavior Should Be as Christians:

1. **Loving and Compassionate:**
    - **"Love your neighbor as yourself."** (Matthew 22:39)
    - We should show love, kindness, and empathy toward others. This love extends not just to family and friends, but to strangers, and even those who may not agree with us. We are called to reflect God**'**s unconditional love in all of our interactions.
2. **Forgiving:**
    - **"Forgive as the Lord forgave you."** (Colossians 3:13)
    - Forgiveness is at the heart of the Christian faith. We are to forgive others, just as God has forgiven us. Holding onto grudges or seeking revenge contradicts the spirit of grace we have received.
3. **Humble:**

- **"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."** (1 Peter 5:6)

- Christians are called to humility, not arrogance or pride. Jesus demonstrated humility, and we are to follow His example. Humility involves putting others before ourselves and not seeking to elevate our own importance.

4. **Honest and Truthful:**

   - **"Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices."** (Colossians 3:9)

   - Integrity and honesty should mark our behavior. Christians are called to speak the truth, even when it's difficult, because God is truth, and we are His representatives on earth.

5. **Peaceful and Gentle:**

   - **"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."** (Matthew 5:9)

   - We should strive to be peacemakers in a world that is often filled with conflict. Gentleness and self-control should guide our interactions, especially when disagreements arise.

6. **Patient and Enduring:**

   - **"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."** (Ephesians 4:2)

   - Patience is essential, as life can be difficult and sometimes people are hard to love. Christians are called to endure through trials and hardships with a spirit of perseverance and trust in God.

5. **Generous and Giving:**

   - **"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."** (2 Corinthians 9:7)

   - We should be generous with our time, resources, and love. We are called to give freely, not out of obligation, but with a joyful heart, knowing that we are serving God in doing so.

8. **Grateful and Content:**

- **"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus."** (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

- Gratitude is vital in a Christian**’**s life. Whether in good times or bad, we are to give thanks to God for His faithfulness. Contentment in God**’**s provision helps us focus on His will instead of worldly desires.

9. **Zealous for Good Works:**

    - **"For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."** (Ephesians 2:10)

    - We should be actively engaged in good works and acts of service. Our faith should be demonstrated in our actions, and we should seek to serve others and advance God's kingdom.

10. **Holy and Pure:**

    - **"But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do."** (1 Peter 1:15)

    - As Christians, we are called to pursue holiness in every aspect of our lives. This includes avoiding sinful behaviors, guarding our hearts and minds, and striving to live in a way that honors God**’**s righteousness.

In summary, Our behavior should reflect God’s love, humility, and grace, while avoiding pride, selfishness, and judgment. We are to live as examples of Christ's character, offering forgiveness, peace, and truth to those around us. Our actions should be marked by an authenticity and devotion that shines as a testimony of God's love and goodness.

How should we NOT behave ?

Psalm 106:6 (AKJV): "We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done (behaved) wickedly.”

Romans 13:13 (AKJV): "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; **not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.”**

Romans 12:9 (AKJV) - "Let love be without (deceit,lying)dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; hold to that which is good.”

Philippians 2:3-4 (AKJV) - **"Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory;** but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

How Our Behavior Should NOT Be as Christians:

1. **Judgmental or Condemning:**

    - "Do not judge, or you too will be judged." (Matthew 7:1)

    - As Christians, we are cautioned against being judgmental. We are not called to point out the flaws in others unless prompted by God's Holy Spirit, but rather to encourage and uplift them. Instead of condemning, we should seek restoration and extend the same grace that has been shown to us. While we are called to discern right from wrong according to God's Word, this discernment is not for the purpose of condemning others. Rather, it should be motivated by hope for their transformation or to guide us in knowing whom we should avoid.

2. **Selfish or Greedy:**

    - "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves." (Philippians 2:3)

    - Selfishness and greed have no place in a Christian's life. We are to focus on the needs of others, not just our own desires. Materialism or a selfish pursuit of success can be distractions from God's greater purpose for us.

3. **Angry or Violent:**

    - "In your anger do not sin." (Ephesians 4:26)

    - While anger is a natural emotion, Christians should not act out of rage or violence. Instead, we are called to manage our anger constructively and to forgive those who wrong us.

4. **Prideful or Arrogant:**

    - "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18)

    - Pride is a major stumbling block in Christian living. When we think more highly of ourselves than we should, we put ourselves in opposition to God, who resists the proud. Humility is essential in maintaining a healthy relationship with God and others.

5. **Hypocritical:**

   - "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3)

   - Christians must avoid hypocrisy—saying one thing and doing another. Our lives should reflect the teachings of Christ. We are not perfect, but authenticity in our walk with God is crucial.

6. **Lukewarm or Halfhearted:**

   - "So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth." (Revelation 3:16)

   - God desires passion and commitment in our relationship with Him. A lukewarm faith, where we are neither fully engaged nor completely indifferent, is not what God calls us to. We are to love Him with all our heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37).

7. **Hypocritical or Two-Faced:**

   - "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." (Galatians 6:7)

   - We should not live in a way that is inconsistent with what we profess. Christians should avoid pretending to be something they are not. Hypocrisy not only harms our testimony but also damages relationships with others.

8. **Worldly or Conforming to Sinful Desires:**

   - "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Romans 12:2)

   - Christians are not to adopt worldly values or sinful behaviors. We are called to be set apart, living by a higher standard that reflects God's truth rather than conforming to societal pressures and sinful lifestyles.

9. **Critical or Arguing:**

   - "Do everything without grumbling or arguing." (Philippians 2:14)

- A critical or negative spirit can harm relationships and hinder the joy of the Christian life. Complaining and arguing show a lack of trust in God**'**s plan and His provision. Instead, we should strive to have an attitude of gratitude and hope.

10. **Envious or Jealous:**

    - "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me." (John 14:1)

    - Envy and jealousy arise when we focus on others **'**blessings rather than being thankful for our own. The Bible teaches that we should rejoice in the success of others and not be envious. These emotions often lead to bitterness and division, which contradict God's desire for unity and love in the body of Christ.

11. **Deceitful or Manipulative:**

    - "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." (Ephesians 4:31)

    - Christians are to be people of integrity and truth. Deception and manipulation, whether in words or actions, are harmful and not reflective of a Christ-like character. We should speak honestly and act transparently in all situations.

By embodying these Christlike virtues and behaviors and avoiding the evil ones, Christians can better reflect the image of Christ in the world. Our lives are meant to be a living testimony to the goodness and grace of God, offering hope to others through our words and actions.

(136) Overcoming Sin And Temptations :

When we are tempted, we should objectively ask ourselves: 'Are we willing to compromise our relationship with Jesus Christ and give in to some carnal pleasure? Or do we want to love God and others in the ways that we should?'

So how do we overcome sin and temptation and end repeating various sins, according to God's Word ?

By believing in Jesus Christ and having total faith in Him, Jesus has overcome the world;

Jesus declared in **John 16:33 (AKJV)** - "These things I have spoken to you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.."

By placing our faith in Jesus Christ and believing in all that He is and has done, we allow God's love and the image of Christ to increasingly take root within us. When we wholeheartedly commit to loving God or others, sin becomes impossible in those moments. Sin and love cannot coexist simultaneously in any given situation.

Jesus Christ has overcome the world (John 16:33) and only by the Grace and Mercy made possible by Jesus alone, can cleanse us of our sins. We are only justified before God by Faith, by believing in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Apart from believing in Jesus Christ, we cannot save ourselves, nor overcome any sin. Each one of us must surrender our entire lives unto Jesus Christ;

The grace of Jesus Christ is a free gift, it is freely given without merit, however in order to appropriate God’s grace, a person needs to believe in Jesus and repent of their sins.

Let us recognize and always remember just how much Jesus loves us that he would suffer so greatly and die for our sins to save us and to help us overcome sin and temptation. When we draw close to Jesus and desire and make a decision to Love God in response with all of our heart, mind, and strength and to love others, it is during those moments we will overcome temptation.

Let us purpose that Jesus Christ will reign supreme in our minds, thoughts, and actions through faith, above all else. Fully believe in God's perfect provision of grace, forgiveness, atonement, and justification for all our sins, freely offered to those who have faith in Jesus Christ alone as our Lord and Messiah.

If anyone of us earnestly desires to overcome a particular temptation or sin, let us continue to reflect that God does not want hypocrisy, lukewarmness nor double mindedness in our lives; We should then resist the devil, repent, and the tempter (satan) will flee. The word of God will set us free.

Now that we are justified by Faith alone, in Jesus Christ, do we continue in any sin, so that Grace will abound ? Absolutely not. God has given us His Son so that we can now, repent, and turn away from repeating doing various sins, and evil, and have the Grace from God, to be truly forgiven when we fail, and further God provides the Power of the Holy Spirit now, to turn away from sin.

We will still fail, sin, throughout our lives as Christians, and come short of Glory of God but God is Faithful, when we are faithless, we should just sincerely come unto Jesus Christ, and confess our sins to God.

- Anyone, at anytime, can receive God's cleansing grace by just asking in faith, with true godly sorrow; (2 Corinthians 7:10)
- No sin is too great for God to forgive except for blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. (Mark 3:28,29)
- God will be faithful and just to forgive us of all our sins, if we come to Him and confess (1 John 1:9) with sincerity to change.

Furthermore, God instructs us in His word that we must continue to repent and put an end to deliberately committing sin (Hebrews 12:1) that God reveals to us daily and to overcome temptation; When we Love God, and desire to do His will, we pray to God not to lead us into various temptations that lead to sin. Jesus then will answer our prayer and lead us away from from various sins. As we genuinely follow, Jesus Christ, by Faith, we find ourselves not doing evil, but rather the things of God.

The Love of God helps us, through Jesus Christ, to overcome temptation, and sin because Jesus sympathizes with our weaknesses; He is able to do more than we can comprehend to assist us in every way.

Hebrews 4:14-16 AKJV 14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

God will enable us to overcome temptation and repeating various sins, by the work of the Holy Spirit and by following Jesus, denying ourself, and obeying His Word.

Overcoming Sin and Temptation -Continued…

Temptation is a common experience for every Christian. However, as followers of Jesus Christ, we are not left to face temptation alone. 1 Corinthians 10:13 reminds us that God is faithful and provides a way out when we are tempted. He equips us with the strength and resources we need to overcome sin and resist temptation.

Jesus Himself faced temptation during His time on earth, yet He remained steadfast in obedience to the Father (Matthew 4:1-11). He understands the struggles we face and offers us His grace and power to overcome.

As we encounter temptation, it is essential to remember that we are not powerless. Through prayer, Scripture, and the power of the Holy Spirit, we can resist

The key to overcoming temptation lies in our reliance on God's strength rather than our own. We must arm ourselves with the truth of God's Word and rely on His Spirit to guide and empower us. By filling our minds and hearts with His truth, we can discern the lies of the enemy and choose obedience.

When we do fall into temptation, God's grace is always available to restore us and lead us back into His will. Confession and repentance open the door to His forgiveness and restoration, allowing us to experience the freedom and joy that come from walking in obedience to Him.

Let us, therefore, fix our eyes on Jesus, the author, and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). With His help, we can overcome temptation and live victorious lives that bring glory to His name.

WHY is it necessary for us to overcome sin and temptation each day ?

The main reason Why it is essential for us to be overcomers in Christ Jesus is so that we will love God, and others as Jesus loved us, bearing good spiritual fruit as God desires and intended.

It's vital that we dedicate ourselves entirely to Jesus Christ each day, allowing Him to cleanse and purify our lives from sin according to God's way and the work of His Holy Spirit. It is through our sincere repentance and the grace of Jesus Christ, we can triumph over evil and experience our lives renewed and transformed to be more Christlike.

As we turn away from evil we can become established in God's Love and further bear good spiritual fruit. This is also imperative so that God's Love will mature in us and abound to others and most important that we will be able to Love God with all of our Heart, Mind, and Strength.

We should seriously ask ourselves is the sinful behavior and the evil that we are doing more important to us to continue or is desiring to do God's Will our priority? We cannot do both nor be lukewarm, we need to be decisive and determined to do God's Will only, by His Holy Spirit helping us.

Although one of us may have sinned greatly, remember that the more forgiveness a person receives from God, the more they will love Him and others the most.

Luke 7:47 (AKJV): "Why I say to you, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

1 John 4:19 (AKJV): "We love him, because he first loved us."

There are sometimes many evil ways in our life, which we initially don't recognize as sin in our life, till God's Word and the Holy Spirit reveals the sin to us;

Yet while God so greatly Loves us and forgives us of all our sins He still wants all who sin to always turn from evil as His Spirit reveals our sin to us and come to Him to receive grace and forgiveness in the time of need. Even if we fall many times, throughout our walk as a Christian, God still desires us to come boldly to Him, to acquire mercy and to persevere not to commit that sin again.

God's Word Clearly Instructs Us Not To Continue In Sin;

Romans 6:1,2 AKJV What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Hebrews 12:1-2 AKJV Why seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us,** and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

2 Timothy 2:19 AKJV Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows them that are his. And, **Let every one that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.**

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts...

Romans 6:12 AKJV Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof

Ephesians 4:22 AKJV "That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23And be renewed in the spirit of your

mind; 24And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

1 Corinthians 15:34 Awake to righteousness, and do not sin...

J**ames 1:21,22** (AKJV): "Therefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be you doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to actively and intentionally turn away from our old sinful ways and wickedness through His grace. Out of love and willing obedience, we should humbly receive the teachings of His Word, recognizing its power to transform and save our lives. It's not enough for us to merely listen to these teachings; we must put them into action, lest we deceive ourselves by believing that mere hearing is sufficient for spiritual growth.

Colossians 3:5 (AKJV): "Mortify therefore your members which are on the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

We're urged to put to death the earthly desires that reside within us, including sexual immorality, impurity, uncontrolled passions, evil desires, and greed, recognizing that such desires amount to idolatry, diverting our allegiance from God.

Romans 8:13 (AKJV): "For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live."

If we continue to live according to our sinful nature, spiritual death awaits us. However, by relying on the guidance of the Spirit to put to death the sinful actions of our bodies, we will experience spiritual life.

1 John 2:1 (AKJV): "My little children, these things write I to you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

John addresses us affectionately, desiring that we abstain from sin. However, he reassures us that should any among us sin, we have an advocate before the Father in Jesus Christ, who is perfectly righteous and intercedes on our behalf.

1 John 3:6,9 (AKJV): "Whoever stays in him does not sin: whoever sins has not seen him, neither known him. Whoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

Those who maintain a close relationship with Christ do not habitually sin, as sin is incompatible with knowing Him intimately. Those who are born of God, having His seed within them, cannot continue in sin, for their new nature opposes it.

John 5:18 (AKJV): "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."

The Jews were further provoked to kill Jesus because, in addition to violating their Sabbath traditions, He claimed God as His Father, thereby equating Himself with God, a claim they found blasphemous.

1 Peter 1:14 (AKJV): "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance."

Peter urges us to live as obedient children of God, no longer conforming to the sinful desires we indulged in during our time of ignorance before coming to know Christ.

Matthew 13:3 (AKJV): "And he spoke many things to them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow."

Jesus frequently used parables to teach spiritual truths to the crowds, illustrating profound concepts through relatable, everyday stories, such as the parable of the sower.

1 Corinthians 5:11-13 (AKJV): "But now I have written to you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortionist; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not you judge them that are within? But them that are without God judges. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

Paul instructs us not to associate closely with anyone claiming to be a believer yet persisting in a sinful lifestyle, emphasizing the importance of maintaining purity within the community of believers. He reminds us that while we are responsible for addressing sin within the church, judgment of those outside the church belongs to God.

Romans 13:12-14 (AKJV): "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put you on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."

Paul urges us to recognize the urgency of the times, casting off the deeds of darkness and embracing the righteousness of Christ. We are called to live lives of integrity, avoiding indulgence in sinful behaviors and actively resisting the desires of the flesh.

1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:1 (AKJV): "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is without the body; but he that commits fornication sins against his own body...Now concerning the things whereof you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman."

Paul emphasizes the seriousness of sexual immorality, urging us to flee from it because it defiles our bodies, which are temples of the Holy Spirit. He advises that it's beneficial for individuals to abstain from physical intimacy outside the bounds of marriage.

1 Corinthians 10:6-12 (AKJV): "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted...Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."

Paul refers to historical events as cautionary examples for us, warning against the desire for evil things and reminding us to be vigilant. He stresses the danger of overconfidence, advising those who think they are standing firm to be careful, lest they fall into temptation.

Ephesians 5:3-7,11,12 (AKJV): "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becomes saints...And have no fellowship with the

unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."

Paul urges us to maintain purity and holiness, emphasizing that behaviors like sexual immorality, impurity, and greed should not even be mentioned among us as fitting for saints. He admonishes us not to participate in or condone the works of darkness but to expose and oppose them, recognizing that even discussing such shameful deeds is disgraceful.

So How do we overcome temptation and end re-committing various sins ?

Only through sincere faith in Jesus, His grace and the transformative power of God's Holy Spirit can our minds and hearts be renewed, and our old sinful nature be purged, preventing us from persisting in various sins.

Further still, It is God and His Word who guards and directs our steps away from temptation, if we do what He instructs in His word which pertains, so that we will no longer commit those sins.

Apart from God, we cannot overcome temptation and sin by solely our own abilities; However God has instructed us to follow Jesus and obey His word, so that God will complete that good work within us; We must not just be hearers of God's word, but doers of His word, only then will each of us be able to overcome various temptations and sin, that we encounter after becoming a Christian.

Any unbeliever or self-called christian will not and cannot overcome, who chooses to remain passive or lukewarm and hypocritical by deliberately continuing in various known sins, without a sincere ongoing repentance and thereby truly abide in God's grace.

God never forces us to lay aside sin nor will our old evil ways disappear on their own; Unless we willingly choose to repent daily and abide in God's grace. We willingly choose to repent and overcome because we recognize of much God has Loved us; God's steadfast kindness and the mercy which He gave us, leads us to repentance. (Romans 2:4)

Merely assuming that one can continue in any sin, knowingly, without ever repenting and still be under God's grace, is false.

Even though grace is truly received by faith, grace is still never given to condone the continuance of any sin; Any person who continues deliberately In sin can think and believe that he is under God"s grace and actually not be, because God has allowed a strong delusion to overtake that person, because that individual loves the pleasures of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:11,12) rather than being a Lover of God. Furthermore, if a person falsely assumes they can continue in sin without repentance, remaining lukewarm, and still be in right standing before God, that individual is deceiving themselves.

As Christians we don't have the option to choose which sins we personally want to overcome and which evil carnal ways we want to continue in. It would be ridiculous and hypocritical for any christian to say , " I might as well continue in fornication, or being rude or being covetous etc.. because it really doesn't matter, or because I like it, or for whatever reason contrary to God's way.

All sin is enmity against God, Therefore Let us lay aside every sin that besets us.

Upon recognizing the magnitude of our sins, we understand and acknowledge our helplessness without drawing nearer to Jesus, receiving His righteousness, and remain in Him. We must be willing to crucify our old sinful ways with Christ and deny ourselves as the Holy Spirit of God transforms us. Through repentance with godly sorrow, we find peace in His grace and forgiveness, allowing us to embrace the righteousness of Jesus Christ, maturing in our relationship with Him, and further taking on the virtues of Jesus Christ apart from the sins that so easy beset us.

Those of us who persistently and continually love God and repent will triumph over sin and satan through the Blood of the Lamb (the grace of Jesus Christ) Revelation 12:11;

When we have a genuine faith in Jesus, and His victory over the power of sin at the cross we will enable us to overcome sin and temptation;

When we abide and rely on God's word and follow Jesus, we will overcome sin and temptation;

When we obey God's Holy Spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to transform our lives we will overcome temptation and sin.

While it's impossible for man, with God, all things are possible. Trust in God's faithfulness; His love never wavers. Jesus Christ is indeed our Savior and deliverer from sin. Let us not return to sin, but instead, dedicate our lives anew to Jesus Christ—loving God with all our heart, mind, and strength, and loving one another.

So How do we overcome temptation and end re - committing various sins ? Here are 55 Points:

1. Recognize and believe how much God loves you and all that He has done to overcome sin. Moreover, perceive, acknowledge, and believe in what He is still doing to assist you in overcoming future temptation and sin.

HOW? By His Grace and by Faith in Him:

By His atoning grace and through faith in Him, we can walk in victory, for He has overcome the world. His triumph gives us the strength and hope to resist temptation and live in righteousness.

By us waking up and recognizing the greatest of God's Love and fully appreciate God for giving His only begotten Son so that we might have life and how much sacrificial Love Jesus has for us that He would lay down His life for us when we are so unworthy.

Understand and believe, that Jesus Christ truly came to save sinners, and discover the extent of How much God wants to forgive us so that we can overcome sin. God steadfast kindness leads us to repentance. It is here, through Jesus Christ and the cross

that we can overcome temptation and sin by the truth of Jesus washing us with His Word, by receiving His Grace and by His Holy Spirit working within us..

Simply we should have a sincere genuine Faith, and believe in Jesus Christ. This means not just believing that Jesus Christ existed, or just believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, while that's essential, rather it means to believe in all that He alone accomplished at the cross by dying for all our sins. Only Jesus Christ, is our Savior, Messiah, and the Son of God.

Understand that God is doing much to assist you in overcoming your old sinful ways, even though you don't comprehend all what He is doing.

God is actually working in you, and you can do nothing on your own without Him, to overcome sin.

Understand that Jesus Christ has overcome the world and you can overcome your sinful nature through Him, by committing your life wholly to Him, having faith in Him, obeying Him and abiding in Him.

Here are some Key Scriptures that indicate how God is working on our behalf so that we can overcome temptations and repeating certain sins:

Jude 24 AKJV Now to Him (Jesus) that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

Psalm 91:3,9-10 (AKJV): "Surely he shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. Because you have made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, your habitation; There shall no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling."

2 Peter 2:9-10 (AKJV): "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities."

Proverbs 3:11-12 (AKJV): My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: 12For whom the LORD loves he corrects; even as a father the son in whom he delights.

John 16:7-15 (AKJV): "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

John 3:16-17 (AKJV): "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

Proverbs 21:31 (AKJV): "The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD."

Proverbs 3:21,26 (AKJV): "My son, let not them depart from your eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion: So shall they be life to your soul, and grace to your neck. For the LORD shall be your confidence, and shall keep your foot from being taken."

Psalm 121:7 (AKJV): "The LORD shall preserve you from all evil: he shall preserve your soul."

Hebrews 12:2 (AKJV): "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Titus 2:13-14 (AKJV): "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Ephesians 2:1-9 (AKJV): "And you has he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace you are saved;) And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Hebrews 5:8-9 (AKJV): "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

Hebrews 8:10 (AKJV): "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

Hebrews 8:12 (AKJV): "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Hebrews 9:11 (AKJV): "But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building."

Hebrews 9:14 (AKJV): "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Hebrews 9:26 (AKJV): "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world has he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Hebrews 9:28 (AKJV): "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and to them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin to salvation."

Isaiah 1:25-26 (AKJV): "And I will turn my hand on you, and purely purge away your dross, and take away all your tin: And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning: afterward you shall be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city."

Hebrews 1:3 (AKJV): "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Colossians 1:12-14 (AKJV): "Giving thanks to the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

Colossians 2:13 (AKJV): "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

Here are a few Biblical principles which describes what God is doing or has already done for us, to help us overcome temptation and sin; and what we can do as well:

He has "Loved"us greatly.. He has made atonement for sins, and has given those who believe in Jesus Christ and follow Him, grace, forgiveness, redemption, sanctification, mercy, reconciliation, deliverance, salvation.

2. Continue in God's Word, willing obey Him and believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Believe that He is your Lord and Savior and Deliverer from every evil way.

Psalm 119:11 (AKJV): "Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against you."

Proverbs 11:8,9 (AKJV): "The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked comes in his stead. An hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered."

John 8:31 (AKJV): "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed;"

John 8:32 (AKJV): "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Revelation 3:10 (AKJV): "Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come on all the world, to try them that dwell on the earth."

1 John 5:2-5 (AKJV): "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

1 Corinthians 15:34 (AKJV): "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame."

3. We should Ask God for Wisdom;

We should ask God for Wisdom so that we can recognize deceptive temptations that cause us to sin and have discretion to turn from any evil; we should also ask God in prayer to reveal to us how to overcome specific temptations by His Wisdom and the power of His Holy Spirit. Resist temptation and evil will flee.

Key Scriptures:

James 1:5 (AKJV): "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him."

Proverbs 2:10-12 (AKJV): "When wisdom enters into your heart, and knowledge is pleasant to your soul; discretion shall preserve you, understanding shall keep you: to deliver you from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaks fraudulent things;"

Proverbs 3:21 (AKJV): "My son, let not them depart from your eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:"

Proverbs 3:23 (AKJV): "Then shall you walk in your way safely, and your foot shall not stumble."

Proverbs 4:1 (AKJV): "Hear, you children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding."

Proverbs 4:4-6 (AKJV): "He taught me also, and said to me, Let your heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve you: love her, and she shall keep you."

Proverbs 4:9 (AKJV): "She shall give to your head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to you."

Proverbs 4:12 (AKJV): "When you go, your steps shall not be straitened; and when you run, you shall not stumble."

Colossians 1:9-11 (AKJV): "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you might walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, to all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;"

Proverbs 2:1-5 (AKJV): "My son, if you will receive my words, and hide my commandments with you; so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to

understanding; yes, if you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures; then shall you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."

Proverbs 13:14 (AKJV): "The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death."

Proverbs 15:24 (AKJV): "The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath."

4. Ask God in Faith:

Ask God the Father in Faith through Jesus by pray, without doubting for the wisdom of God : Believe that God will give the Wisdom to overcome various sins:

Asking in faith means approaching God with confidence, trusting fully in His power, wisdom, and willingness to help us stand firm against temptation and turn from sin. When we pray with unwavering belief, we invite His strength into our weakness and His victory into our struggle.

James 1:6 (AKJV): "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."

5. We should Love God and our neighbor;

We should Love God with all our Hearts, with all of our Minds, and with all of our Strengths, and Love our Neighbor;

As we sincerely do this we will gain victory over temptation and sin, because love does no harm to his neighbor and this reveals our sincerity to love and obey God.

Loving God and our neighbor helps guard our hearts against temptation and doing evil, aligning our desires with His will. When we walk in love, we are less likely to act selfishly and more empowered to choose what is right and pleasing to God.

Key Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 13:8 " LOVE NEVER FAILS "

1 John 2:10 (AKJV): "He that loves his brother stays in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him."

Ephesians 5:1-7 (AKJV): "Be you therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becomes saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things comes the wrath of God on the children of disobedience. Be not you therefore partakers with them."

2 Corinthians 16:14 (AKJV): "Let all your things be done with love."

James 1:12 (AKJV): "Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him."

6. Fear the Lord:

It is essential that we understand that God is Holy, and will bring everything into judgement; We will reap what we sow, good or bad, Spiritual life or spiritual death unless we repent. We need to abide properly in the grace of Jesus Christ.

Fearing God out of respect knowing that He is truly just, righteous, we should therefore depart from evil. Throughout our lives the Holy Spirit is continues to reveal various sins in our lives and convicts (not condemns) our hearts to repent so we don't suffer the wrath of God. God is forgiving and loving, but we should not test the patience of God by practicing sin or deliberately sinning.

Key Scriptures:

Proverbs 16:6 (AKJV): "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil."

Proverbs 14:26,27 (AKJV): "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death."

Proverbs 9:10 (AKJV): "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."

Proverbs 8:13 (AKJV): "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate."

Exodus 20:20 (AKJV): "And Moses said to the people, Fear not: for God has come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that you sin not."

Psalm 34:11-14 (AKJV): "Come, you children, listen to me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is he that desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it."

Proverbs 2:1-5 (AKJV): "My son, if you will receive my words, and hide my commandments with you; so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures; then shall you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."

7. Confess our sins to God :

Confessing our sins to God is a vital step in overcoming temptation, as it humbles us before Him and opens the door for His forgiveness and cleansing. Through honest confession, we acknowledge our need for His strength and grace to walk in righteousness.

Key Scriptures:
1 John 1:9 (AKJV): "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Psalm 51:1-19 (AKJV): "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your lovingkindness: according to the multitude of your tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."

Psalm 32:5-7 (AKJV): "I acknowledge my sin to you, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord; and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. For this shall every one that is godly pray to you in a time when you may be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near to him. You are my hiding place; you shall preserve me from trouble; you shall compass me about with songs of deliverance."

Isaiah 43:25,26 (AKJV): "I, even I, am he that blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember your sins. Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare you, that you may be justified."

8. Let us not abuse the grace of Christ:

Let us not take the grace of Christ for granted by continuing in sin, but rather honor His sacrifice by striving to live in holiness. His grace empowers us to turn from sin, not excuse it.

Let us not abuse the grace of Christ and sin but rather choose to uphold and appreciate God's grace to overcome sin in our lives.

Key Scriptures:

Hebrews 4:14-16 (AKJV): "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Ephesians 1:7 (AKJV): "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

2 Corinthians 12:9 (AKJV): "And he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

9. We should Pray and ask for God's Holy Spirit:

We should Pray and ask for God's Holy Spirit to help us overcome our obsessions, addictions, lusts and various sins, through God's Strength and Truth. We should pray and ask for God's Holy Spirit to help us, for it is through His guidance and power that we can resist temptation and walk in obedience. The Spirit strengthens us, convicts us of truth, and leads us in the path of righteousness.

Key Scriptures:

Luke 11:13 (AKJV): "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

John 16:8 (AKJV): "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:"

John 16:13 (AKJV): "However, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."

10. We Should Not Harden Our Hearts:

We should not harden our hearts against the voice of the Holy Spirit who is giving us direction and a way to escape through Jesus Christ; Away from the sin and temptation that is confronting us.

We should not harden our hearts, but remain tender and responsive to God's voice. A humble and open heart allows His truth to transform us and keeps us from falling deeper into sin.

Key Scriptures:

Hebrews 4:7 (AKJV): "Again, he limits a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

1 Corinthians 10:13 (AKJV): "There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it."

11. Walk according to the Spirit:

Developing the ability to discern between the promptings of the Holy Spirit and other influences is essential. This may involve careful reflection, seeking and praying for God's Wisdom and discernment. Paying attention to one's inner convictions in light of God's word as Holy Spirit guides and directs us how to walk and live our daily lives.

To walk according to the Spirit means to live under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, rather than following the desires of the flesh. When we walk in the Spirit, we bear His fruit and are empowered to resist sin and live a life that pleases God.

Key Scriptures:

Galatians 5:16 (AKJV): "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

Galatians 5:22 (AKJV): "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,"

Galatians 5:25 (AKJV): "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Romans 8:1 (AKJV): "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

1 John 1:7 (AKJV): "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

12. Recognize What Baptism Represents:

Recognize through Baptism we symbolically crucified our freshly desires in Christ, remembering how much He gave by laying down His in Love for us. Therefore we should walk in the newness of life.

Key Scriptures:

Galatians 5:24 (AKJV): "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

Romans 6:4-7 (AKJV): "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that from now on we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."

Galatians 2:20 (AKJV): "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

13. Dead To Sin:

We should reckon ourselves dead to sin; We should not let reign in our hearts , but rather choose to put God first by doing His Will. We should reckon ourselves dead to sin, recognizing that through Christ’s death and resurrection, sin no longer has power over us. By embracing this truth in faith, we can live in the freedom and new life He has given us.

Key Scriptures:

Romans 6:11-14 (AKJV): "Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield you your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin: but yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace."

Colossians 3:3 (AKJV): "For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

14. We Should Repent From Evil:

We should be zealous to repent from evil; To persevere changing mind and actions that are contrary to Christ.

We should be zealous to “ change our mind” which is to repent from evil, turning from sin with sincere urgency and a heart eager to please God. True repentance reflects our love for Him and our desire to walk in righteousness.

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 4:17 (AKJV): "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Revelation 3:19 (AKJV): "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

15. We Should Deny Ourselves:

We should deny ourselves of selfish ambitions and carnal sinful pleasures, worrying about things and take up our cross daily and follow Jesus.

We should deny ourselves, surrendering our own desires and will in order to follow Christ wholeheartedly. This act of self-denial helps us resist temptation and align our lives with God's purpose and truth.

Key Scriptures:

Luke 9:23 (AKJV): "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Jesus)

Titus 2:11-12 (AKJV) "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;"

Matthew 16:24 (AKJV) "Then said Jesus to his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Mark 8:34 (AKJV) "And when he had called the people to him with his disciples also, he said to them, Whoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Matthew 16:25-26 (AKJV) "For whoever will save his life shall lose it: and whoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Luke 14:26-27 (AKJV) "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

Luke 14:33 (AKJV) "So likewise, whoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he has, he cannot be my disciple."

Matthew 19:29-30 (AKJV) "And every one that has forsaken houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred times, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first."

16. We should have Self Discipline in What we say and Do:

We should have self-discipline in what we say and do, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide our words and actions. A disciplined life reflects the character of Christ and helps us avoid sin while growing in spiritual maturity.

Key Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 9:27 (AKJV): "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

Psalm 39:1 (AKJV): "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me."

James 1:26 (AKJV): "If any man among you seems to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

Proverbs 21:23 (AKJV): "Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps his soul from troubles."

17. Have Faith to Overcome Sin and Not faith to continue in sin:

We are called to have faith that leads us out of sin, not faith that excuses it. True faith trusts in God's power to transform us and break the chains of sinful habits. It believes not only in His forgiveness but also in His ability to make us new and holy.

Key Scriptures:

1 John 5:4 (AKJV): "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith."

2 Peter 1:5-10 (AKJV): "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, you shall never fall."

18. Resist Sin and Satan

We must actively resist sin and Satan, standing firm in our faith and relying on God's strength. The enemy seeks to deceive and destroy, but through prayer, Scripture, and the power of the Holy Spirit, we can overcome his schemes. When we submit to God and resist the devil, he will flee from us.

Hebrews 12:4 (AKJV): "You have not yet resisted to blood, striving against sin."

19. Submit to God and Resist the Devil

We are called to submit to God, placing our lives fully under His authority and guidance. In doing so, we are empowered to resist the devil and stand firm against his temptations. When we walk in obedience and trust in God's Word, the enemy will flee, and we will walk in victory.

Key Scriptures:

James 4:7 (AKJV): "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

1 Peter 5:8,9 (AKJV): "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith."

20. Resist the Devil and Use God's Word:

We should eesist the devil by standing firm in our faith and refusing to give in to his lies and temptations. Just as Jesus overcame the enemy in the wilderness, we too must use God's Word as our weapon against every attack. The truth and authority of His Word is living and active and has the power over spiritual strongholds. His Word strengthens us, exposes the enemy's schemes, delivers and protects us and keeps our hearts anchored in God's will.

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 4:1-11 (AKJV): "Then said Jesus to him, Get you hence, Satan: for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve. Then the devil leaves him."

Ephesians 4:27 (AKJV): "Neither give place to the devil."

Luke 11:2-4 (AKJV): "And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. **And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil**."

21. Pray Constantly:

Pray constantly to God the Father, maintaining an open and trusting conversation with Him throughout every moment. Cast your cares upon Jesus Christ, knowing He lovingly carries your burdens and gives you peace. Through continual prayer and surrender, we find strength and comfort in His presence.

Key Scriptures:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (AKJV) - "Rejoice ever more. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Luke 11:2-4 (AKJV): "Our Father which are in heaven..."

Matthew 6:9-13 (AKJV): "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Matthew 26:41 (AKJV): "Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

1 Peter 5:7-9 (AKJV): "Casting all your care upon him; for he cares for you."

Psalm 51:1-19 (AKJV): "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your lovingkindness: according to the multitude of your tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."

Psalm 119:36,37 (AKJV): "Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken me in your way."

Psalm 34:17 (AKJV): "The righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles."

Psalm 51:10 (AKJV) - "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

Psalm 50:14,15 (AKJV): "Offer to God thanksgiving; and pay your vows to the most High: and call on me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me."

22. Be Sober, Be Vigilant

Be sober, be vigilant, for we live in a world where the enemy seeks to devour those who are unguarded. Staying spiritually alert and clear-minded helps us recognize temptation and resist it with God's strength. A watchful heart anchored in Christ will stand firm against every attack.

1 Peter 5:8 (AKJV): "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour."

23. Take Every Thought Captive To the Obedience of Christ:

Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, refusing to let sinful or deceptive thoughts take root in your mind. Align your thinking with God's truth, allowing His Word to renew and transform you. In doing so, you guard your heart and mind, walking in the freedom and clarity Christ provides.

2 Corinthians 10:4,5 (AKJV): "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

(24. Become Spiritually Minded:

Become Spiritually Minded, Think of Things Above :

Become spiritually minded by setting your thoughts on the things of God rather than the desires of the flesh. A mind focused on the Spirit leads to life and peace, guiding you to make choices that honor Christ. When we think the nature of Jesus Christ, His divine virtues with eternity in view, we grow in wisdom, strength, and holiness.

Key Scriptures:

Colossians 3:2 (AKJV): "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Philippians 4:8 (AKJV): "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

25. Obey God:

Obey God and Keep His Sayings, Be not just a hearer of God’s Word but a doer -

Obey God and keep His sayings, for true faith is shown through our actions, not just our words. Be not merely a hearer of God’s Word, but a doer—living out His truth in daily life. When we walk in obedience, we build our lives on a firm foundation that withstands every trial and temptation.

Key Scriptures:

1 John 2:4,5 (AKJV): "He that says, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word, in him truly is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."

James 1:22 (AKJV): "But be you doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

26. Do Not be Anxious For Anything;

Do not be anxious for anything, but bring every worry to God through prayer and thanksgiving. Trust that He cares for you and is faithful to provide, even in uncertain times. Anxiety only causes depression, and it accomplishes nothing. When we surrender our anxieties to Him, His peace will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Luke 12:22-34 (AKJV): "And he said to his disciples, Therefore I say to you, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat; neither for the body, what you shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them: how much more are you better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If you then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take you thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say to you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith? And seek not you what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, neither be you of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knows that you have need of these things. But rather seek you the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added to you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that you have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fails not, where no thief approaches, neither moth corrupts. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

27. Put on the Whole Spiritual Armor of God;

Put on the whole spiritual armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. Each piece—truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace,

faith, salvation, and the Word of God—equips you to fight the spiritual battle. Clothed in His armor, you can stand strong, protected, and victorious in Christ.

Key scripture:

Ephesians 6:10-18 (AKJV): "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Therefore take to you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, with which you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

28. Be Humble:

Be humble, recognizing your need for God's grace and submitting yourself under His mighty hand. Humility opens the door to wisdom, strength, and spiritual growth, as God gives grace to the lowly but resists the proud. When we walk in humility, we reflect the heart of Christ and live in harmony with His will. When we do this, we are less likely to sin and God can work in us to have victory over temptation and sn.

Key Scriptures:

Philippians 2:8 (AKJV): "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross."

Psalm 34:18 (AKJV): "The Lord is near to them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a contrite spirit."

29. We Should Allow Ourselves To Suffer The Loss:

We Should Allow Ourselves To Suffer The Loss of Unworthy Things That You May gain Christ And To be Able To Cease From Sinning -

We should be willing to suffer the loss of unworthy things so that we may gain Christ and grow in deeper fellowship with Him. Letting go of what hinders our walk allows us to be refined, strengthened, and more fully aligned with His purpose. In dying to the flesh, we learn to cease from sin and live for the will of God.

Key Scriptures:

1 Peter 4:1 (AKJV): "For as much then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin."

Philippians 3:8 (AKJV): "Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

Hebrews 11:25 (AKJV): "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

Hebrews 11:26 (AKJV): "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect to the recompense of the reward."

Romans 8:18 (AKJV): "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

30. Endure Temptation:

Endure Temptation - Don't Give In To Sin, Love God and believe That He Will Strengthen you;

Endure temptation with steadfast faith, refusing to give in to sin even when it's difficult. Love God with all your heart, trusting that His presence and promises are greater than any fleeting desire. Believe that He will strengthen you, and in due time, you will receive the crown of life He has promised to those who remain faithful.

James 1:12-16 (AKJV): "Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren."

31. Do Not Consent To Evil:

Do not consent to evil, no matter how subtle or appealing it may seem. Stand firm in righteousness, knowing that agreeing with sin distances us from God's will. Instead, cling to what is good and honor the Lord with your choices.

Proverbs 1:10-19 (AKJV): "My son, if sinners entice you, consent you not. If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privately for the innocent without cause: let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: we shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: cast in your lot among us; let us all have one purse: my son, walk not you in the way with them; refrain your foot from their path: for their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood. Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privately for their own lives."

32. Do Things Without Murmuring, Hold Fast To The Word of God;

Do all things without murmuring or complaining, for a grateful and humble heart guards us against the sin of pride, bitterness, and rebellion. Hold fast to the Word of God, allowing it to shape your thoughts and actions, keeping you grounded in truth and away from sin. When we live with the right attitude and cling to His Word, we walk in obedience and reflect the character of Christ.

Philippians 2:14,15 (AKJV): "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the middle of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."

33. Hate your self life in this World ;

Hate your self-life in this world, meaning you must turn away from selfish desires and worldly pursuits that lead to sin and separation from God. Jesus taught that those who love their life in this world will lose it, but those who lay it down for His sake will find true, eternal life. Dying to self allows Christ to live through you, leading to victory over sin and a life aligned with His will.

John 12:25 (AKJV): "He that loves his life shall lose it; and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal."

34. Sow to Spirit, Rather Than To The Flesh;

Sow to the Spirit, rather than to the flesh, for whatever we plant in our hearts and lives will bear fruit. When we invest in spiritual things—prayer, the Word, obedience—we reap life and peace. But sowing to the flesh leads to corruption and sin, while living by the Spirit empowers us to walk in righteousness.

Galatians 6:7,8 (AKJV): "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

35. Have No Fellowship With Those Who Do Evil.

Have no fellowship with those who do evil, for close association with sin can corrupt good character and weaken your walk with God. Instead, expose darkness by living in the light, setting yourself apart for His purposes. Walking in holiness means choosing relationships that encourage righteousness and honor Christ.

Have No Fellowship With Those Who Do Evil, Rather have Fellowship With Sincere Followers of Christ; (This doesn't mean that we shouldn't witness Jesus to unbelievers / sinners, rather it means that we shouldn't participate any of their wickedness or evil)

Key Scriptues:

1 Corinthians 15:33 (AKJV): "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."

Proverbs 4:14-15 (AKJV) - "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."

Thessalonians 3:6 (AKJV): "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."

Ephesians 5:11,12 (AKJV): "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."

Ephesians 5:7 (AKJV): "Be not you therefore partakers with them."

1 Corinthians 5:11 (AKJV): "But now I have written to you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."

Timothy 3:2-5 (AKJV): "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

James 4:4 (AKJV): "You adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

36. Overcome Evil With Good;

Overcome evil with good, responding to wrongdoing not with revenge or hatred, but with love, forgiveness, and righteousness. When we choose good in the face of evil, we reflect the character of Christ and disarm the power of sin. This kind of response honors God and breaks the cycle of darkness with His light.

Romans 12:21 (AKJV): "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Romans 12:17 (AKJV): "Recompense to no man evil for evil."

Romans 12:19 (AKJV): "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves."

37. Learn From Past Examples:

Learn from past examples—both the failures and the faithfulness of those who have gone before us—as they serve as powerful lessons for our own walk with God. Scripture reminds us that these examples were recorded to warn, instruct, and encourage us to stay faithful and avoid the pitfalls of sin. By reflecting on their journeys, we gain wisdom to live righteously and persevere in our faith.

Key Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 10:6-12 (AKJV): "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be you idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur you, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."

1 Corinthians 10:32 (AKJV): "Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God."

1 Corinthians 11:1 (AKJV): "Be you followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

38. Receive Teaching, Correction, Reproof:

Receive teaching, correction, and reproof with a humble heart, for they are essential to spiritual growth and protection from sin. God's discipline is a sign of His love, guiding us back when we stray and shaping us into the likeness of Christ. When we welcome His instruction, we walk in wisdom, maturity, and greater obedience.

Key Scriptures:

Proverbs 6:23 (AKJV): "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life."

Ephesians 4:11 (AKJV): "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

39. Just Don't Remain In Idolatry, Flee Evil:

Just don't remain in idolatry—flee from it and all forms of evil without hesitation. Anything that takes the place of God in your heart will lead you away from truth and into sin. To walk in true freedom and faithfulness, we must turn from idols and pursue the living God with wholehearted devotion.

1 Corinthians 10:14 (AKJV): "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry."

40. Flee, To Overcome Sexual Immorality:

Flee from sexual immorality to protect your heart and honor God with your body. Running away from temptation is a powerful step toward victory, keeping you from the destructive consequences of sin. By pursuing purity and relying on God's strength, you walk in freedom and holiness.

Key Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 6:18 (AKJV) "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is without the body; but he that commits fornication sins against his own body."

Proverbs 7:1-5 (AKJV) "My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with you. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers, write them on the table of your heart. Say to wisdom, You are my sister; and call understanding your kinswoman: That they may keep you from the strange woman, from the stranger which flatters with her words."

Proverbs 7:24-25 (AKJV) "Hearken to me now therefore, O you children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not your heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths."

Proverbs 2:1-5 (AKJV) "My son, if you will receive my words, and hide my commandments with you; So that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; Yes, if you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures; Then shall you understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God."

Proverbs 2:10-12 (AKJV) "When wisdom enters into your heart, and knowledge is pleasant to your soul; Discretion shall preserve you, understanding shall keep you: To deliver you from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaks fraudulent things;"

Proverbs 2:16 (AKJV) "To deliver you from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flatters with her words;"

Proverbs 5:7-8 (AKJV) "Hear me now therefore, O you children, and depart not from the words of my mouth. Remove your way far from her, and come not near the door of her house:"

Proverbs 6:20-22 (AKJV) "My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not the law of your mother: Bind them continually on your heart, and tie them about your neck. When you go, it shall lead you; when you sleep, it shall keep you; and when you awake, it shall talk with you."

Proverbs 6:23-25 (AKJV) "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: To keep you from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in your heart; neither let her take you with her eyelids."

(41) We should Consider our Lives Dead To Sin and Now Servants to Righteousness -

Considering our lives dead to sin and now servants to righteousness means recognizing that sin no longer has power over us through Christ. This mindset helps us resist temptation by shifting our identity from being controlled by sinful desires to being aligned with God's will. By actively choosing righteousness each day, we strengthen our spiritual resolve and walk in the freedom Christ provides.

Key Scriptures:

Romans 6:1-23 (AKJV) "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died to sin once: but in that he lives, he lives to God. Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,

that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield you your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin: but yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness? But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity to iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness to holiness. For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness. What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Colossians 3:5 (AKJV) "Mortify (Put To Death) therefore your members which are on the earth (whatever evil that exists within your earthly nature); fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:"

42. By Confessing Our Sins To God and Abide in The Grace Of Jesus Christ;

We can overcome by confessing our sins to God and abide in the Grace of Jesus Christ; Furthermore by the Word of our testimony of Jesus Christ And by not loving our lives even unto death.

We overcome sin by confessing our sins to God and remaining in the grace freely given through Jesus Christ. The power of our testimony about what Christ has done in our lives strengthens our faith and encourages others. True victory comes when we value eternal life in Christ more than our earthly lives, even to the point of facing death with unwavering faith.

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him [satan] by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the Word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives unto death.

43. Bring your body under submission To God:

Bring your body under submission to God: We must intentionally discipline our bodies, refusing to let fleshly desires rule over us. Through prayer, fasting, and obedience to God's Word, we train ourselves to honor God with our actions. By yielding every part of ourselves to His will, our bodies become instruments of righteousness rather than tools for sin.

1 Corinthians 9:25-27 (AKJV) - "And every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I

therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beats the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

44. Recognize and respond to the way of escape from temptation that God provides:

Recognize and respond to the way of escape from temptation that God provides: God is faithful and always makes a way out of every temptation we face. It's our responsibility to stay alert and sensitive to the Holy Spirit, so we can recognize that escape route when it comes. By choosing God's way over sin in those critical moments, we grow stronger in faith and obedience.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (AKJV) "There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it."

45. Flee and Abstain from Lusts, Follow Righteousness:

Flee and abstain from lusts, follow righteousness: We are called to actively turn away from sinful desires that wage war against our souls. Instead of entertaining temptation, we must pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with a pure heart. By running from sin and running toward God, we guard our hearts and align our lives with His holiness.

Key Scriptures:

2 Timothy 2:22 (AKJV) "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

1 Peter 2:11 (AKJV) "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;"

46. Ask God to create a clean heart within you:

Ask God to create a clean heart within you, it is His work to renew a right spirit within us. He is able and faithful to do so. It is His work to renew a right spirit within us. We cannot cleanse ourselves from sin, but God, in His mercy and faithfulness, can purify our hearts and restore us. When we sincerely seek Him, He is able and willing to transform us from the inside out.

Psalm 51:10 (AKJV) - "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

47. We should draw near to God, Submit To God, Resist the Devil, Receive God's Grace:

We should draw near to God, submit to Him, resist the devil, and receive His grace. When we humble ourselves and align our will with God's, His power strengthens us to stand firm

against the enemy's schemes. As we continually seek His presence, He surrounds us with grace that empowers us to live in victory and walk in truth

James 4:6-10 (AKJV) - "But he gives more grace. Why he said, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

48. Understand that Sin Has No Dominion Over You:

Understand that sin has no dominion over you: Through the finished work of Jesus Christ, sin's power has been broken, and we are no longer its slaves. We now live under grace, not under the law, and have the freedom to choose righteousness. Embracing this truth empowers us to walk boldly in the new life Christ has given us.

Romans 6:14 (AKJV) "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace."

49. Believe and Have Faith In Jesus Christ.

Believe and Have Faith In Jesus Christ. He is Greater Within You To Overcome Satan, Temptation and Sin:

Believe and have faith in Jesus Christ: Faith in Jesus is the foundation of our victory over sin and temptation. By trusting in His power, promises, and finished work on the cross, we receive strength to live a transformed life. True belief anchors us in His grace and enables us to overcome by His Spirit living within us.

1 John 4:4 (AKJV) "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

50. Love Not The World:

Love not the world: We are called to turn our hearts away from the temporary pleasures and values of this world that oppose God's truth. Loving the world draws us away from the Father and entangles us in sin. Instead, our affection should be set on eternal things, seeking God's kingdom above all else.

1 John 2:15-17 (AKJV) "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God stays for ever."

51. Cast Down Vain Imaginations:

Cast down vain imaginations: We must actively reject and take captive every thought that leads us away from God's truth and righteousness. By focusing our minds on what is pure, noble, and godly, we protect our hearts from deception and temptation. This discipline helps us maintain spiritual clarity and strength to walk in obedience.

Key Scriptures:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (AKJV) "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"

Psalm 119:113,114 (AKJV): "I hate vain thoughts: but your law do I love. You are my hiding place and my shield: I hope in your word."

52. Overcome The World By Faith In Jesus:

Overcome the world by faith in Jesus: Faith in Christ gives us the power to rise above the challenges, temptations, and values of this world. When we trust in His victory and promises, we are strengthened to live according to His Spirit, not the flesh. Through faith, we claim the abundant life He offers and walk confidently as overcomers.

When we believe in His atoning grace accomplished at the cross, we receive forgiveness and are made right with God. This powerful act breaks the chains of sin and opens the way for new life in Christ. Our faith in His sacrifice transforms us, giving us hope, freedom, and the strength to overcome temptation.

1 John 5:4 (AKJV) "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith."

53. Jesus is our Deliverer Of Sin, Satan and Temptation. Jesus Is Our Refuge:

Jesus is our Deliverer from sin, Satan, and temptation, offering freedom through His sacrifice. He stands as our refuge, a safe place where we find peace and strength. In times of struggle, we can run to Him for protection and guidance. His power breaks every chain that tries to hold us captive. Trusting in Jesus equips us to overcome every challenge and live in victory.

Key Scriptures:

Psalm 91:1-6 (AKJV): "He that dwells in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover you with his feathers, and under his wings shall you trust: his truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flies by day; nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday."

Psalm 32:5-7 (AKJV): "I acknowledge my sin to you, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord; and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. For this shall every one that is godly pray to you in a time when you may be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near to him. You are my hiding place; you shall preserve me from trouble; you shall compass me about with songs of deliverance."

Psalm 37:37,40 (AKJV): "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him."

Psalm 107: This Psalm is quite lengthy, covering various themes such as God's deliverance, redemption, and provision for His people. It would be best to read the entire Psalm for a comprehensive understanding of its message.

(54) Look to Jesus the Author and Finisher Of Our Faith:

Hebrews 12:1-2 (AKJV) "Why seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Jude 1:24-25 (AKJV) "Now to him (Jesus) that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

55. Remember:

This promise reminds us that overcoming temptation and sin is not just about endurance—it's about sharing in Jesus 'victory and authority. When we stand firm in faith and live in obedience, we are invited into intimate fellowship and honor with Christ Himself. It's a call to persevere, knowing that our struggles have eternal significance and reward.

Revelation 3:21 (AKJV) "To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

Overcoming Sin and Temptations - Continued…

1 Corinthians 10:13 AKJV 13 There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Romans 12:1-2 AKJV " 1 I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

The Bible consistently emphasizes the significance of conquering sin and resisting temptation in the lives of believers. It underscores the need to lead a life characterized by holiness and obedience to Gods will. Overcoming sin and temptation is crucial, for building an intimate relationship with God well as experiencing His abundant blessings and fulfilling His promises. The Word of God offers guidance and encouragement to believers emphasizing the importance of relying on Gods strength and utilizing practices to stand firm against temptation and live a life that pleases Him.

Self Control, is one of Spiritual fruits of God, it comes from His Holy Spirit working within each one of us throughout our whole lives; Our part is to respond to God's will.

The Bible repeatedly stresses the importance of triumphing over sin and resisting temptation highlighting the consequences of succumbing to deceitful allurements while recognizing that believers can find strength in God's grace to overcome temptation and sin. 1 Corinthians 10;13 assures that God is faithful and will never allow believers to face temptations beyond their capacity. This verse underlines the confidence we can have in Gods faithfulness knowing that He provides a way of escape when we encounter temptations. It reminds us to depend on His strength and guidance in order to resist the nature of sin. Therefore turning away and overcoming sin and temptation is vital for maintaining a relationship with God well, as experiencing His transformative grace during times of trials or challenges.

Overcoming sin and resisting temptation can be achieved by wholly committing one's self to God, trusting in Jesus Christ and relying on the strength provided by God. James 4;7 encourages us to surrender ourselves to God, resist and stand against satan and witness how he will flee from us. This verse emphasizes the significance of adopting an obedient mindset, towards God while actively resisting the influences of the enemy. To conquer sin and temptation believers must consciously strive to align with God's will and utilize practices, like prayer fasting and studying Scripture to strengthen their lives and resist the enticing nature of sin.

Furthermore overcoming sin and temptation is facilitated through renewing our minds and developing discernment. Romans 12;2 emphasizes the importance of not conforming to society's patterns but rather undergoing a transformation by renewing our thinking processes. This verse highlights the necessity of cultivating discernment and embracing a renewed mindset that aligns with Gods truth and values of being influenced by worldly standards and temptations.

To conquer sin and resist temptation it is essential to commit oneself to consistently renewing the mind through studying Scripture engaging in prayer and seeking guidance, from the Holy Spirit. These practices enable believers to discern Gods will and stand against the allure of sin.

When our daily focus as followers of Jesus Christ is to love God, Jesus Christ, and one another, we will find that sin has less of a hold on us. By prioritizing love in all that we do, we begin to live in a way that reflects God's will, and the temptation to sin diminishes as our hearts align with His purpose.

Moreover triumphing over sin and temptation is greatly facilitated by fostering a supportive fellowship with other mature Christians. Galatians 6;1 encourages us to restore those who have fallen into sin and share each others burdens. This verse

highlights the significance of accountability and support within the body of Christ emphasizing how fellow believers play a role in helping one another overcome sinful temptations. Therefore defeating sin and temptation requires involvement in a Christian church that promotes accountability, encouragement and mutual growth. This environment empowers believers to strengthen their faith and resist the enticement of sin through unity and fellowship.

Jesus Christ alone achieved absolute victory over sin at the cross, making it possible for us to also overcome sin through His grace. By having faith in Jesus, denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily, and dying to our selfish ways, we take on the righteousness of Christ.

Having victory over the practice of sin from our old nature and resisting temptation is crucial in developing a deep relationship with God while receiving His transformative grace.

Through God's Word, we learn what true love is, how to love as God intended, and what is not love—sin. Recognizing sin in light of God's Word is crucial, but it's even more important that we respond to God's desires and choose His will over our own sinful ways. If we truly love God, we will seek to live in obedience to Him, aligning our actions with His commands.

We should humble ourselves and surrender our lives to Jesus Christ to Love God, and do the will of God. Relying on God's grace plays a significant role, in overcoming sin and temptation. In 2 Corinthians 12;9 it is emphasized that God's grace is sufficient and that His power is made perfect in our weakness. This verse highlights how God's grace can transform us empowering us to overcome our weaknesses and resist the allure of sin. To conquer sin and temptation effectively we must humbly recognize our limitations. Depend entirely on God's grace, for strength to withstand temptations while living a life that pleases Him.

Furthermore pursuing righteousness while avoiding situations that may lead to temptation is another aspect of overcoming sin. According to 1 Timothy 6;11 believers are encouraged to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. This passage emphasizes the importance of seeking a life marked by righteousness and godliness while steering clear of circumstances or influences that might lure us into compromising situations.

By following Jesus Christ and these principles with humility and relying on God's grace while pursuing righteousness, we can successfully overcome sin and temptation in our lives, through God's Holy Spirit transforming our lives.

To conquer sin and resist temptation we must make an intentional effort to develop our behavior and create an environment that nurtures spiritual growth and moral integrity and thereby avoid being entangled in evil.

Additionally triumphing over sin and temptation is made possible by developing a prayer life, and a sincere intimate relationship and relying on God's guidance and strength. The significance of watchfulness and prayer, in avoiding temptation is emphasized in Matthew 26;41 where Jesus urges His disciples to remain alert and pray. This passage highlights the importance of maintaining an attitude acknowledging the challenges faced by believers and seeking God's guidance for protection against the

allure of sin. Consequently conquering sin and temptation requires a commitment to prayer that empowers believers to seek Gods wisdom and strength when facing trials that might lead to temptation.

Furthermore, conquering sin and resisting temptation becomes easier as we nurture our faith in God, along with trusting his promises and provisions. 1 John 5:4 reminds us that, as those born of God, we can overcome the world through our faith. This verse shows us how essential and effectual faith in Jesus and his word can be in transforming our lives, giving us victory over the trials and temptations we face. To overcome sin and temptation, we need to hold onto unwavering faith in God's promises and provisions. This faith helps us persevere through difficulties, knowing that God's grace and strength will empower us to overcome repeated struggles with sin—because of what Jesus Christ ,alone, accomplished on the cross and the work of the Holy Spirit within us.

In summary conquering sin and temptation is achieved by having faith and trust in Jesus, willfully loving God and others as Jesus loved us, nurturing humility, sincerely repenting, practicing biblical disciplines, changing our mindset, seeking support from the other Christians in the church, relying on God's grace, pursuing the righteousness and holiness in Jesus, maintaining a devoted prayer life and holding onto a resilient faith in God's promises and provisions. It requires engagement and commitment, from us as we strive to align their lives with God's will while resisting the temptations of sin with His guidance and strength. By embracing these principles we can overcome sin and temptation grow in our faith and witness the power of God's grace in our lives.

Here are a few brief summaries of particular scriptures pertaining to overcoming sin and temptation:

Matthew 26:41 (AKJV) "Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Matthew 26:41 - Encourages us to watch and pray, so that we may not enter into temptation, emphasizing the importance of spiritual alertness and reliance on prayer. This verse poignantly captures the tension between the desires of the spirit and the weakness of the flesh, urging us to remain vigilant in prayer to resist temptation.

Romans 6:14 (AKJV) "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace."

Romans 6:14 - Highlights the concept that sin will not have dominion over us, as we are not under the law but under grace, emphasizing the power of the grace of Jesus in overcoming sin. It emphasizes the transformative nature of grace, liberating believers from the bondage of sin and empowering them to live victoriously in Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (AKJV) "There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it."

1 Corinthians 10:13 - Provides reassurance that God is faithful and will not let us be tempted beyond what we can bear, but will provide a way out so that we can endure it, emphasizing the faithfulness of God in times of temptation. This verse reminds us that we are not alone in our struggles, and God always provides a path to victory in the midst of temptation.

Galatians 5:16 (AKJV) "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

Galatians 5:16 - Advises believers to walk by the Spirit, and we will not gratify the desires of the flesh, emphasizing the importance of living in accordance with the Spirit to overcome sinful desires. It speaks to the necessity of aligning our actions with the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit to resist the allure of sin and live a life pleasing to God.

Matthew 26:41 (AKJV) "Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Matthew 26:41 - Encourages watching and praying so that one may not enter into temptation, emphasizing the importance of spiritual alertness and reliance on prayer. This verse poignantly captures the tension between the desires of the spirit and the weakness of the flesh, urging believers to remain vigilant in prayer to resist temptation.

Romans 8:13 (AKJV) "For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live."

Romans 8:13 - Speaks of putting to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit, to live, emphasizing the role of the Holy Spirit in overcoming sinful desires. It underscores the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in enabling us to overcome the inclinations of the flesh and live a life pleasing to God.

1 Corinthians 15:57 (AKJV) "But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Corinthians 15:57 - Proclaims that God gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, emphasizing the source of victory over sin and death. This verse celebrates the triumph secured by Christ's sacrifice, reminding us of the assurance of victory we have in Him.

Galatians 5:24 (AKJV) "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

Galatians 5:24 - Galatians 5:24 - As those who belong to Christ, we have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. This emphasizes the transformative power of being united with Christ. It underscores the radical transformation that occurs in our lives as we are crucified with Christ and empowered to live according to His will.

Ephesians 4:22 (AKJV) "That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;"

Ephesians 4:22 - Advises us to put off the old self, which belongs to our former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires. This emphasizes the necessity of personal transformation through Christ. This verse underscores the ongoing process of sanctification in our lives as we continuously put off the old self and embrace our new identity in Christ.

Colossians 3:5 (AKJV) "Mortify therefore your members which are on the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:"

Colossians 3:5 - Instructs us to put to death what is earthly in us, such as sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. This emphasizes the need to eliminate sinful tendencies from our lives. This verse calls us to radical obedience, urging us to actively put to death sinful desires and behaviors, recognizing them as incompatible with our new life in Christ.

1 Peter 5:8 (AKJV) "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour:"

1 Peter 5:8 - Warns us against not being sober-minded and watchful, for the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. This emphasizes the need for spiritual vigilance and awareness of the enemy's tactics. This verse serves as a stark reminder of the ever-present spiritual battle and the importance of remaining alert to the schemes of the adversary.

1 John 3:8 (AKJV) "He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

1 John 3:8 - Declares that the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil, emphasizing Jesus' role in overcoming the power of sin and evil. It underscores the redemptive mission of Christ and His ultimate victory over the forces of darkness, providing hope and assurance to us in our struggle against sin.

1 John 5:18 (AKJV) "We know that whoever is born of God sins not; but he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not."

1 John 5:18 - Declares that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but the one who was born of God protects us, and the evil one does not touch us. This emphasizes the protection and power available to us through our relationship with God. This verse offers assurance of God's preservation and safeguarding of His children from the influence of the evil one, reinforcing the security found in union with Christ

Psalm 37:27 (AKJV) "Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for ever more."

Psalm 37:27 - Advises us to turn away from evil and do good, and dwell in the land forever. This emphasizes the importance of righteous living and obedience to God's commands. It serves as a practical exhortation to live a life characterized by righteousness and integrity, trusting in God's promises for eternal blessings.

Psalm 119:133 (AKJV) "Order my steps in your word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."

Psalm 119:133 - Prays for God to order our steps in His word and let no iniquity have dominion over us, emphasizing our reliance on God's guidance and protection in the face of temptation. It reflects our desire for divine empowerment to walk in obedience and holiness, recognizing the dangers of succumbing to sin's control. Proverbs 3:5-6 (AKJV) "Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths."

Proverbs 3:5-6 (AKJV) "Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths."

Proverbs 3:5-6 - Encourages us to trust in the Lord with all our hearts and not lean on our own understanding, acknowledging Him in all our ways, and He will direct our paths, emphasizing the importance of faith and dependence on God's wisdom. It underscores the need for complete trust in God's guidance and sovereignty, acknowledging His authority over every aspect of our lives and yielding to His direction for the journey ahead.

Proverbs 28:13 (AKJV) "He that covers his sins shall not prosper: but whoever confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy."

Proverbs 28:13 - Emphasizes the necessity of confessing and forsaking our sins to find mercy, highlighting the importance of humility and repentance in overcoming sin. It underscores the principle of genuine repentance as the pathway to experiencing God's mercy and restoration, contrasting it with the folly of attempting to conceal or justify wrongdoing.

Matthew 5:8 (AKJV) "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Matthew 5:8 - Speaks of the pure in heart seeing God, emphasizing the importance of inner purity and spiritual integrity in experiencing a close relationship with God. This verse highlights the transformative nature of purity of heart, which opens our eyes to behold the presence and glory of God in our lives.

Matthew 5:48 (AKJV) "Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Matthew 5:48 - Encourages us as Christians to be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect, emphasizing the pursuit of spiritual maturity and holiness. It challenges us to strive for moral excellence and completeness in our character, mirroring the perfection of God Himself. Perfection is only possible in Jesus Christ, not that we never sometime fail and sin again as Christians but we recognized as perfect before God the Father, by us having faith in Jesus as our Lord and Mediator.

Matthew 18:8-9 (AKJV) "Wherefore if your hand or your foot offend you, cut them off, and cast them from you: it is better for you to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if your eye offend you, pluck it out, and cast it from you: it is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire."

Matthew 18:8-9 - Urges us to cut off anything that causes us to sin, even if it is as necessary as a hand or an eye, emphasizing the seriousness of dealing with sin in our lives. This metaphorical language underscores the radical measures we should take to eliminate sin's influence and preserve our spiritual well-being.

Luke 22:40 (AKJV) "And when he was at the place, he said to them, Pray that you enter not into temptation."

Luke 22:40 - Advises praying that we may not enter into temptation, emphasizing the role of prayer in seeking strength and guidance in times of trial. It underscores the importance of spiritual preparedness and reliance on God's grace to overcome temptation and remain steadfast in faith.

Romans 12:21 (AKJV) "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Romans 12:21 - Instructs us not to be overcome by evil but to overcome evil with good, emphasizing the importance of goodness and righteousness in resisting the influence of sin. This verse encourages us to respond to evil with acts of kindness and love, demonstrating the transformative power of God's grace in overcoming darkness.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (AKJV) "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

2 Corinthians 7:1 - Advises us to cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God, emphasizing the importance of pursuing holiness and purity in all aspects of life. It underscores the call to personal sanctification and dedication to living a life that honors God in both outward actions and inward motives.

2 Timothy 2:22 (AKJV) "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

2 Timothy 2:22 - Encourages us to pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart, emphasizing the significance of cultivating virtuous relationships and lifestyles. It exhorts us to actively flee from the temptations of youth and pursue a life characterized by godliness and purity of heart.

James 1:13-14 (AKJV) "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."

James 1:13-14 - James 1:13-14 - Clarifies that God does not tempt anyone, but each person is tempted when they are lured and enticed by their desires, emphasizing the internal struggle and responsibility in resisting temptation. This passage highlights the deceptive nature of temptation and the need for personal accountability in guarding against its allure.

1 Peter 2:11 (AKJV) "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;"

1 Peter 2:11 - Advises us as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against the soul, emphasizing the necessity of self-control and spiritual vigilance in the face of worldly temptations. It reminds us of our identity as citizens of heaven, called to live in holiness and separation from the sinful desires of the world.

These references collectively underscore the importance of spiritual discipline, reliance on God's Grace, guidance, and the pursuit of holiness in overcoming sin and temptation in the life of every Christian.

(137) Guard Against Pride and Arrogance:

Proverbs 16:18 (AKJV): "**Pride goes before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall..**"

Introduction: The Dangers of Pride and Arrogance Pride and arrogance are recurring themes in the Bible, often mentioned as deadly spiritual pitfalls. Proverbs 16:18 serves as a stern warning against these traits, highlighting the destructive consequences that accompany them. Pride is not simply an inflated sense of self-importance but a heart attitude that places one's own desires, opinions, and status above those of others and, ultimately, above God Himself. Arrogance, a related trait, is often the outward manifestation of pride, marked by condescension, overconfidence, and disdain for others.

This commentary will explore the biblical perspective on pride and arrogance, revealing their spiritual dangers, contrasting them with the humility that God desires in His people, and providing practical guidance on how to guard against these destructive attitudes.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Pride and Arrogance

Pride is a subtle yet powerful force that leads people away from God and His ways. It is often associated with a refusal to acknowledge God**'**s sovereignty and a failure to see oneself rightly in relation to Him and others.

1.1 Pride in the Scriptures

The Bible consistently warns against pride, both as a personal sin and a societal issue. From the Garden of Eden to the downfall of kings, pride is shown as the root of many spiritual and moral failures.

- **Genesis 3:5 (AKJV):** *"For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. "* The first sin, which led to the fall of humanity, stemmed from pride. Satan tempted Eve with the notion of being like God, and her desire for autonomy from God's will led to disobedience. The essence of pride is the desire to replace God with oneself.

- **Isaiah 14:12-15 (AKJV):** *"*How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how are you cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations! 13For you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also on the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. 15Yet you shall be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. *"* The pride of Satan is vividly portrayed in this passage. His desire to exalt himself above God led to his fall. This prideful attitude, manifested as arrogance and rebellion, is the source of much evil in the world.

- **James 4:6 (AKJV):** *"But he gives more grace. Why he says, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."* James highlights the contrast between God's response to the proud and the humble. God actively opposes the proud but extends grace to the humble, making it clear that pride is antithetical to God's kingdom.

1.2 Arrogance as Pride in Action

Arrogance is often the outward display of internal pride. It is marked by an inflated sense of superiority over others and a lack of regard for their needs or feelings.

- **Luke 18:9-14 (AKJV):**And he spoke this parable to certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank you, that I am not as other men are, extortionists, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote on his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted." The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector demonstrates arrogance in prayer. The Pharisee, confident in his own righteousness, looks down on others, while the tax collector humbly asks for mercy. Jesus concludes that the tax collector, not the Pharisee, went home justified, showing that arrogance, even in religious devotion, leads to spiritual pride and rejection by God.

- **Proverbs 21:4 (AKJV):** *"An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin."* Arrogance is not just a private matter but has visible effects. A "high look" refers to the haughty gaze that accompanies a condescending attitude. It's an outward sign of a proud and arrogant heart that treats others as inferior.

2. The Consequences of Pride and Arrogance

The Bible is clear: pride and arrogance do not lead to lasting success or peace but rather to destruction and ruin. Proverbs 16:18 warns that pride precedes destruction, and a haughty spirit goes before a fall.

2.1 Spiritual Destruction

Pride leads to a spiritual hardening of the heart. It blinds individuals to their need for God's grace and can prevent them from repenting of sin. When people become proud, they are less likely to humble themselves before God or acknowledge their dependence on Him.

- **Proverbs 18:12 (AKJV):** *"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor is humility"* This verse emphasizes the inevitable downfall that follows pride. A haughty heart (prideful and self-exalting) blinds people to the approaching danger of their own destruction.

- **Matthew 23:12 (AKJV):** *"And whoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."* Jesus teaches that those who lift themselves up in pride will be brought low, while those who humble themselves

before God will be exalted. This reversal of fortunes illustrates that pride ultimately leads to spiritual ruin, while humility opens the door to God's favor.

2.2 Relational and Social Breakdown

Arrogance not only isolates the individual from God but also from others. The proud person often alienates themselves from community and creates division, as they elevate themselves above others.

- **Proverbs 13:10 (AKJV):** *"Only by pride comes contention: but with the well advised is wisdom"* Pride is the root cause of conflict and division. Arrogance leads to a lack of understanding and cooperation, while humility fosters peace and unity.

- **1 Peter 5:5-6 (AKJV):** *"*Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves to the elder. Yes, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. 6Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*"* Peter emphasizes mutual submission and humility, warning that God actively opposes the proud and grants grace to those who humble themselves. Arrogance disrupts harmony, whereas humility promotes unity and grace.

3. The Antidote to Pride: Humility

Humility is the virtue that directly counters pride and arrogance. Humility acknowledges one's limitations and dependence on God, recognizing that all accomplishments and gifts come from Him.

3.1 The Call to Humility

Humility is not self-deprecation but a truthful understanding of one's place before God. It involves recognizing God's sovereignty, being willing to serve others, and seeing them as more important than oneself.

- **Philippians 2:3-4 (AKJV):** *"*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*"* Paul calls believers to humility by esteeming others as better than themselves. True humility is not about thinking less of oneself but about thinking of oneself less, prioritizing the needs and well-being of others.

- **Micah 6:8 (AKJV):** *"He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"* God's expectation is clear: to walk humbly with Him. Humility involves an honest recognition of our dependence on God and an openness to His guidance and correction.

3.2 Christ as the Ultimate Model of Humility

Jesus Christ is the perfect example of humility. Though He was the Son of God, He humbled Himself to serve others, even to the point of dying on the cross for the sins of the world.

- **Philippians 2:5-8 (AKJV):** *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7But made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross."* The humility of Jesus is unmatched. He did not cling to His divine rights but voluntarily humbled Himself to serve humanity, even in the most sacrificial way imaginable.

4. How to Guard Against Pride and Arrogance

Guarding against pride requires intentional humility, self-awareness, and a constant reminder of God**'**s grace and our dependence on Him.

4.1 Regular Self-Examination

Believers must regularly assess their hearts to ensure they are not giving in to pride. This includes seeking God's help in identifying areas of arrogance or self-reliance and confessing them.

- **Psalm 139:23-24 (AKJV):** *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. ." David's prayer is a model for us to ask God to reveal hidden pride or arrogance in our hearts.*

4.2 Embrace a Servant's Heart

Following Christ**'**s example, we must choose to serve others rather than seek recognition or status. True greatness in God**'**s kingdom comes through humble service.

- **Matthew 23:11-12 (AKJV):** *"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12And whoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."* Jesus taught that true greatness is found in serving others, not in seeking to elevate oneself.

Conclusion: The Path of Humility and Grace

Pride and arrogance lead to destruction and spiritual downfall, but humility opens the door to God's grace and favor. As believers, we are called to reflect the humility of Christ and to guard against the subtle temptation of pride in all its forms. By living lives of humility, we demonstrate our trust in God**'**s sovereignty and our desire to serve others, rather than seeking our own glory.

May we remember that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble, and may we seek His help in cultivating a heart that reflects the humility of Christ, guarding against the dangers of pride and arrogance.

Guard Against Pride and Arrogance -Continued…

Proverbs 16:18 "Pride goes before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

Pride and arrogance are destructive evil characteristics that can lead to spiritual downfall, sin and relational strife. The Bible warns us repeatedly about the dangers of pride, emphasizing the importance of humility and self-awareness in our walk with God.

One of the key characteristics of pride is self-exaltation. When we become overly focused on ourselves, our accomplishments, or our abilities, we risk elevating ourselves above others and disregarding the contributions and worth of those around us. Pride blinds us to our own faults and weaknesses, preventing us from receiving correction or guidance from others. Moreover, pride can lead to a sense of entitlement and superiority. When we believe that we deserve special treatment or recognition, we become insensitive to the needs and struggles of others. This attitude of entitlement can breed resentment and division, undermining the unity and harmony of the body of Christ.

Pride and arrogance is direct rejection of God and his ways and rebelliousness, often directly associated with sexual immorality, such as homosexuality etc.

Another manifestation of pride is a refusal to admit wrongdoing or seek forgiveness. When we are unwilling to acknowledge our mistakes or shortcomings, we hinder our ability to experience true repentance and reconciliation with God and others. Pride erects barriers that prevent us from receiving the grace and mercy that God offers freely to the humble. Furthermore, pride can lead to rebellion against God's authority and sovereignty. When we exalt ourselves above God and His Word, we place our own desires and ambitions above His will, leading to spiritual disobedience and separation from His presence. Pride prevents us from submitting to God's authority and surrendering our lives to His divine plan.

Reflection:

In contrast to pride, humility is the antidote that guards against arrogance and self-importance. Humility recognizes our dependence on God and acknowledges His sovereignty and goodness. It fosters an attitude of gratitude and servanthood, enabling us to love and serve others with compassion and empathy.

(138) Avoid and Overcome Sexual Immorality, Adultery, Fornication Etc.

Sexual Immorality, Adultery, and Fornication

Definitions

- **Sexual Immorality** (*Greek: πορνεία, *porneia*) A broad biblical term covering **all unlawful sexual behavior** outside God's design for marriage. Includes adultery, fornication, homosexuality, incest, prostitution, and other sexual sins.
- **Adultery** (*Greek: μοιχεία, *moicheia*) Sexual relations where at least one party is married to someone else—unfaithfulness within marriage.
- **Fornication** (*Greek: πορνεία, *porneia*, often translated "sexual immorality" but more narrowly means sexual activity between unmarried people) Sexual intercourse outside the covenant of marriage.

Key Biblical Insights

1. God's Design for Sexuality

God created sexual intimacy to be enjoyed **within the marriage covenant** between one man and one woman.

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." — *Genesis 2:24*

2. Sexual Immorality Is Sin Against the Body and God

Because our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, sexual sin defiles both body and soul.

"Flee from sexual immorality... the body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord." — *1 Corinthians 6:18–20*

3. Adultery Is a Serious Breach of God's Covenant

Adultery is condemned in both Old and New Testaments as a violation of the marriage covenant and of God's law.

"You shall not commit adultery." — *Exodus 20:14* (The Ten Commandments)" But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart." — *Matthew 5:27–28*

4. Fornication Is Sinful Sexual Activity Outside Marriage

Fornication is treated as a grave sin in Scripture and is incompatible with inheriting God's kingdom.

"Now the works of the flesh are... sexual immorality... and the like. I warn you... that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." — *Galatians 5:19–21*

5. Repentance and Holiness Are Required

Though these sins are serious, God offers forgiveness and cleansing through Christ for all who repent.

“But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old self with its practices.” — *Colossians 3:8–9*

Galatians 5:16-26 (AKJV) This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that you would. 18But if you be led of the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, jealousies, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21Contentions, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24And they that are Christ**’**s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Sexual Immorality also includes the following, but not all are exclusively mentioned here: Fornication, adultery, lasciviousness, homosexuality, lesbianism, orgies, sexual molestation, pedophilia, bestiality, lust, pornography, incest etc Any unnatural sexual act other than the sexual relationship of a man and woman in marriage is a sin and wrong in God’s eyes.

Avoiding and overcoming sexual immorality is a vital aspect of the Christian walk. By understanding the biblical standards for purity, relying on the Holy Spirit, engaging with the community, and seeking repentance when needed, we can navigate the challenges to avoid and overcome sexual immorality with grace, strength and word of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, honoring God in our bodies reflects our commitment to His truth and His calling for our lives.

God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus Christ not to condemn us of sins, such a sexual immorality but to save us, and teach us how to love.

God designed us and purposed us to have sex only within the marriage of a man and woman, as an enjoyment , blessing and for the procreation of children.

Sexual immorality is not true love. The divine love that God desires for us is far greater and purer than any unnatural sexual act that strays from His intended design for our relationships and intimacy.

While individuals may seek out and justify various sexual acts based on personal desire, emotions or pleasure, this does not negate the potential harm they cause to themselves and the broader moral fabric of society., of which includes children whom are growing and learning certain behaviors. Regardless of legality or personal freewill, these actions can have detrimental effects that undermine social health and stability.

Some of the extremely devastating results of sexual immorality include the possibility of an unhealthy lifestyle, sexual transmitted diseases, psychological mental issues, spiritual

and moral degradation, demonic deception, confusion and control, eternal ramifications, separation from God, and His blessings.

If our actions were limited to just two consenting adults, it might seem like their private matter. However, that's seldom, if never true. Our behavior serves as an example and impacts those around us—through our words and actions, both good and bad.

This influence cannot be misrepresented or justified as OK simply based on human assumptions, feelings and emotions, if it continues to harm others. Instead, God has provided clear guidance on how we should live and why, through His Word in the Bible, His Holy Spirit, and the example set by the life of Jesus Christ.

Thank God for His steadfast love, grace, and faithful deliverance from any sexual immorality that we have done. May we learn, abide, and give the same pure, divine love as Jesus loved us.

"Avoid and Overcome Sexual Immorality"

Sexual immorality is a significant subject of concern throughout the Bible, highlighting the importance of purity and holiness in the lives of believers. The Scriptures provide guidance on how to avoid and overcome this challenge, emphasizing both the consequences of immorality and the path to righteousness.

1. Understanding Sexual Immorality

Sexual immorality encompasses a range of behaviors that fall outside God's design for human sexuality, including adultery, fornication, and lustful thoughts. The Bible consistently warns against these practices, urging believers to uphold God's standards.

- **1 Corinthians 6:18-20**: (AKJV) “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is without the body; but he that commits fornication sins against his own body. 19What? know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? 20For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s." This passage emphasizes that sexual immorality is a sin against oneself and highlights the believer's responsibility to honor God with their body.

2. The Call to Holiness

God calls His people to live in holiness, reflecting His character in their actions. This call to purity is a fundamental aspect of the Christian faith.

- **1 Thessalonians 4:3-5**: (AKJV)“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication: 4That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; 5Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:" Here, Paul emphasizes that sexual purity is part of God's will for believers, urging them to exercise self-control.
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3. The Power of the Holy Spirit

Overcoming sexual immorality is not solely a matter of willpower; it requires reliance on the Holy Spirit. Believers are empowered to resist temptation and live according to God's standards.

- **Galatians 5:16-17**: (AKJV) “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that you would. 18But if you be led of the Spirit, you are not under the law." Walking in the Spirit equips believers to resist the temptations that lead to sexual immorality.

4. Accountability and Community

Being part of a faith community can provide the support and accountability needed to maintain sexual purity. The church is called to help one another in living out God’s truth.

- **Hebrews 10:24-25**:(AKJV) "And let us consider one another to provoke to love and to good works: 25Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching.." This passage encourages believers to gather and encourage each other, fostering an environment where purity can thrive.

5. Repentance and Restoration

If one falls into sexual immorality, the Bible offers a path to repentance and restoration. God’s grace is sufficient for those who seek forgiveness.

- **1 John 1:9-10**: (AKJV) “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." This promise assures believers that, through genuine repentance, they can be restored to a right relationship with God.

(139) Overcoming Doubt And Unbelief:

As Christians, we might experience moments of doubt and unbelief about who God is and various verses and teachings found in His Word. However, it is crucial for our salvation and spiritual growth that we do not remain in these doubts and unbelief. Instead, we should actively seek through prayer God's wisdom to deepen our faith and trust in Him, loving Him with all our hearts, minds, and souls.

God can address and resolve our doubts and unbelief if we earnestly seek His help and follow His instructions in His word. By drawing near to God, He will draw near to us, revealing Himself to us in Spirit and Truth. God’s Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth and

we will receive daily more understanding.This divine process and revelation will set us free from our doubts, unbelief and strengthen our faith.

DOUBT - (GREEK-diakrino)-To hesitate, to be at variance with oneself

“ Doubt “ as used in context within the Bible;

" Doubt " is a hesitation of a belief in one's mind, pertaining to one's uncertainty to believe fully in God, a hesitation to fully believe in Jesus Christ, and/or an uncertainty to believe in part or in all of God's Word.

UNBELIEF - (GREEK- apistia)- unfaithfulness, distrust, weakness of faith, shown withholding belief and trust in God, in Jesus Christ, and/or His Word.

Whereas " Unbelief " is more of a decisive degenerated response and state of one's heart, which reveals that a person rejects what God says, by rejecting God's Word or rejects who God or Jesus Christ truly is, and thereby indirectly or directly calling God a liar.

Hebrews 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

When can a certain measure of doubt sometimes happen?

- When certain adverse circumstances and trials arise;
- When God seems to not answer our prayers in the way that we want
- When a person rejects Jesus Christ and His truth
- When we lack the knowledge of God's Word;
- When we have a lack God's Wisdom pertaining to various spiritual matters or lack understanding of God**’**s word;
- When we have not heard, nor remember a particular essential part of God's Word that would increase our faith;
- When we lack receiving God's Holy Spirit and not relying and trusting in God;
- When we lack faith in God or lack faith or lack belief of his word;
- " Doubt" can transpire when demonic spirits or individuals bring lairs and twisted half truths, taking scripture out of context;
- " Doubt " can transpire when the cares, pleasures, and some everyday circumstances choke out the Word of God in our hearts and minds.
- Complacency, lack of knowledge, lack of faithfulness to do God's Will, all contribute to cause more " doubt "

How does God help our unbelief and doubt?

God gives us His Holy Spirit to Help us - John 14:26

God reassures us through the truth of His Word as we continue in it- John 8:31,32

God**'**s Love helps us, to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, pertaining to His word. (1 Corinthians 13:7)

God gives us Wisdom and understanding – (James 1:5,6 **)**

What should a Christian do if they have some doubt or unbelief? And How can a Christian Overcome Doubt in their relationship with God?

- Pray for Wisdom and understanding - (James 1:5,6)
- Continue to listen to the Word of God to increase in faith– (Romans 10:17)
- Continue in God's Word / Truth of His Word sets us free of doubt – (John 8:31,32)
- Rebuke the evil spirit of unbelief – (Mark 9:25)
- Ask God for the help of the Holy Spirit; (John 14:26)
- Listen to the testimonies by other Christians who testify how God has worked in their lives. (Revelation 12:11)
- Receive any Encouragement from God by other Christians

Overcoming Doubt And Disbelief - Continued

Doubt and unbelief are common struggles that Christians may face in their spiritual walk with God. In times of uncertainty and questioning, turning to the Word of God provides a source of guidance, encouragement, and strength. The truth of God sets us free of doubt and unbelief as God personally reveals Himself and His way to us and as we continue in God's Word. We witness and clearly see more and more the love, goodness and mercy of Jesus Christ. Moreover God assures us that His Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. This overview covers several scriptural references that offer insight into overcoming doubt and unbelief, emphasizing the Biblical message of prayer, faith, attentively learning and hearing God's Word, and God's unwavering faithfulness.

Prayer and Seeking God: James (1:5-6) encourages us to seek wisdom through prayer, emphasizing the importance of unwavering belief. This teaches us to turn to God in times of doubt, trusting that He will provide clarity and understanding.

As Christians, overcoming doubt and unbelief is sometimes a deeply personal challenge deeply rooted in our faith and trust in God and reliance on God**'**s promises. First and foremost, we must recognize that doubt and unbelief are not uncommon among Christians. Throughout Scripture, even the most faithful individuals experienced moments

of uncertainty. For instance, Thomas, one of Jesus ’own disciples, struggled with disbelief until he saw the risen Christ with his own eyes (John 20:24-29). This acknowledgment can be comforting, reminding us that our struggles are shared and that God understands our human frailties.

Our salvation and eternal life depends upon believing in Jesus Christ and the work that He alone accomplished at the cross. It is crucial to understand that we cannot save ourselves apart from Jesus Christ. It is quite evident and without question it is impossible to save ourselves if we choose not to believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior we are condemned already.

John 3:16 - 21 AKJV) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. 21But he that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are worked in God.

To overcome doubt, we continue in the truth and way of Jesus Christ found in the Bible. The Word of God is living and active, speaking directly into our lives and circumstances (Hebrews 4:12). By regularly reading and meditating on Scripture, we fortify our minds against the seeds of doubt. As we contemplate the passages that reveal God’s character, His faithfulness, and His promises, we build a solid foundation of trust. For instance, reflecting on Romans 8:28, which assures us that God works all things together for our good, can help dispel feelings of doubt when life seems chaotic or unfair.

Prayer is another powerful wayl to overcome unbelief. As we bring our doubts before God in prayer, we open ourselves to His guidance and reassurance. It is essential to approach God with honesty, expressing our uncertainties and asking for His help to strengthen our faith. James 1:5 encourages us to seek wisdom from God, who gives generously to all without finding fault. In our prayers, we can ask God to reveal more of Himself to us and to help us trust Him more deeply.

Moreover, we should seek fellowship and support from our Christian community. Sharing our struggles with others who walk in faith can provide encouragement and insight. As we engage in honest discussions about our doubts and hear testimonies of others who have faced similar challenges, we find strength and solidarity. The early church exemplified this communal support in Acts 2:42-47, where believers shared their lives and supported one another in their faith journeys.

Faith in God's Promises: Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as confidence in the unseen, underlining the essence of trusting in God's promises. Romans 10:17 further emphasizes that faith is nurtured through hearing and meditating on the Word of God, reinforcing the significance of scripture in overcoming doubt.

Finally, it is crucial to remember that overcoming doubt is not about reaching a state of perfect faith, but about continually moving towards it. We grow in our faith through our experiences, struggles, and reliance on God's grace and listening attentively to God's word. Philippians 1:6 reassures us that God, who began a good work in us, will carry it on to completion. Embracing this promise helps us persevere, knowing that our journey of faith is a process, and God is faithfully working within us each step of the way.

The greatest obstacles and hindrances that lead to doubt, unbelief, and a lack of faith in Jesus Christ include the lies we have been told, the constant temptations and deceptions of Satan, and our own false preconceived assumptions, personal made-up beliefs, and lack of knowledge of God's word. When we pridefully choose to base our lives on false human reasoning, myths, and the false religious doctrines of men rather than the truth of God, it reveals the condition of our hearts—intent on following darkness, evil, and self-gratification instead of humbling ourselves and desiring to walk in the light, truth, and divine love of God.

If we are bent on disobeying God, continue to ignore or reject the truth of Jesus Christ, persist in unbelief, and harden our hearts, God will allow a strong delusion to overtake us. God desires those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and goodness, not the things of this world. We were created to do God's will and follow His way, not to be self-willed and adhere to any belief we think is right without a true basis in God's will.

It is essential that we learn God's word:

Ephesians 4:11-16 (AKJV) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: 14That we from now on be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love.

For many of us, it takes time and effort to learn and believe in the truths of Jesus Christ as the only way to life and to God the Father. As we hear God's word and perceive, and receive His exceeding grace, forgiveness, and unmerited love throughout our lives, we grow in faith and gain a clearer understanding of the height, breadth, and depth of God's love and truth. We come to recognize that the wisdom of Jesus Christ stands in stark contrast to all earthly doctrines and pseudo-religious beliefs—there is simply no comparison. Any doubts or unbelief we once had fade away, leaving us with the confidence to trust in Jesus Christ as the only solid rock on which to stand and live with full assurance.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the Bible offer a rich resource of wisdom and encouragement for Christians navigating the challenges of doubt and unbelief. Through prayer, faith, mind renewal, community, and the assurance of God's faithfulness, we can overcome doubt and unbelief being transformed by God's Holy Spirit through our continuing daily walk Jesus Christ. It is Jesus' intimate and loving nature that strengthens our relationship with God and ultimately overcomes doubt. As the scriptural truths are internalized, we find the courage and resilience needed to navigate the complexities of our faith.

Overcoming Doubt And Disbelief - Continued

Other Key Scriptures:

Mark 9:24 - **"**Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, **'**I believe; help my unbelief!'" This verse reflects the honest cry of a father seeking help with his doubts, highlighting the struggle between faith and unbelief.

Matthew 14:31 - (AKJV) **"**And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said to him, **O you of little faith, why did you doubt?** 32And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. 33Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth you are the Son of God.?'" This passage shows Jesus addressing Peter**'**s doubt when he began to sink while walking on water. Now faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God so it is essential that we don't neglect to gather together and hear God's word taught so that we can grow in faith and overcome doubt,

James 1:6-8 -(AKJV) **"** If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. 6But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers (doubts) is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." James emphasizes the importance of faith in prayer, warning against the instability of doubt.

John 20:27-29 -(AKJV) **"** Then says he to Thomas, Reach here your finger, and behold my hands; and reach here your hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28And Thomas answered and said to him, My LORD and my God. 29Jesus says to him, Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.'" Jesus addresses Thomas**'**s doubt about His resurrection, inviting him to see and believe. We are blessed for believing in Jesus and his teachings even though we have not seen Him.

Hebrews 11:6 (AKJV)- **"**But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. ." This verse underscores the necessity of faith in approaching God and overcoming doubt.

Matthew 21:21-22 -(AKJV) **"** Jesus answered and said to them, Truly I say to you, If you have faith, and doubt not, you shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if you shall say to this mountain, Be you removed, and be you cast into the sea; it shall be done. 22And all things, whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.'" Jesus teaches about the power of faith over doubt through the example of the fig tree.

2 Corinthians 5:7 - **“**For we walk by faith, not by sight.” This verse encourages believers to rely on faith rather than being swayed by doubts and what they see.

John 6:28-38 (AKJV) Then said they to him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he has sent. 30They said therefore to him, What sign show you then, that we may see, and believe you? what do you work? 31Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32Then Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33For the bread of God is he which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world. 34Then said they to him, Lord, ever more give us this bread. 35And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall never hunger; and he that believes on me shall never thirst. 36But I said to you, That you also have seen me, and believe not. 37All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out. 38For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.

John 11:20-27 (AKJV) Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. 21Then said Martha to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother had not died. 22But I know, that even now, whatever you will ask of God, God will give it you. 23Jesus says to her, Your brother shall rise again. 24Martha says to him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. 25Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26**And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Believe you this? 27She says to him, Yes, Lord: I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.**

(140) Overcoming Anxiety and Worries, Depression:

Scripture: Philippians 4:6-7 “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Proverbs 12:25 (AKJV) Heaviness (Anxiety) in the heart of man makes it stoop (causes depression): but a good word (from God) makes it glad.

Reflection:

In a world filled with uncertainties and challenges, it is natural to experience anxiety and worries. However, as followers of Christ, we are called to approach these concerns with a different perspective. Philippians 4:6-7 reminds us not to be anxious about anything but to bring our worries before God in prayer.

The key to overcoming anxiety lies in surrendering our concerns to God through prayer. Rather than dwelling on our worries or trying to handle them on our own, we are invited to cast our cares upon the Lord, trusting in His faithfulness and provision. As we

bring our requests to Him with thanksgiving, acknowledging His sovereignty and goodness, we open ourselves to receiving His peace that surpasses all understanding.

This peace, which comes from God, serves as a guard for our hearts and minds, protecting us from the overwhelming effects of anxiety. It is a peace that transcends our circumstances, rooted in our relationship with Christ Jesus. As we cultivate a lifestyle of prayer and dependence on God, we can experience His peace permeating every aspect of our lives, even in the midst of trials and uncertainties.

Moreover, overcoming anxiety involves renewing our minds with the truth of God's Word. By meditating on His promises and focusing on His faithfulness, we can combat negative thoughts and fears that fuel our worries. As we fill our minds with thoughts of God's goodness and power, we can find comfort and strength to face whatever challenges may come our way.

Let us, therefore, entrust our anxieties and worries to God in prayer, knowing that He cares for us deeply and is able to provide for all our needs. May His peace guard our hearts and minds, enabling us to navigate life's uncertainties with confidence and trust in Him.

(141) Overcoming Envy, Covetousness, Materialism with Gratitude and Contentment:

Hebrews 13:5 (AKJV) - Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for he has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.

Philippians 4:11-12 (AKJV) "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

1 Timothy 6:6-8 (AKJV) "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."

Luke 12:15 (AKJV) "And he said to them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses."

Matthew 6:19 (AKJV) - "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust does corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:"

Matthew 6:20 (AKJV) - "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:"

1 John 2:15 (AKJV) - "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

James 4:4 (AKJV) - "You adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

Colossians 3:2 (AKJV) - "Set your affection on things above, not on things on

Envy and covetousness are insidious attitudes and are sins that can poison our hearts and rob us of joy. When we covet what others have or envy their successes, we become discontent with our own lives and fail to appreciate the blessings that God has bestowed upon us.

The Bible repeatedly warns against the dangers of envy and covetousness, recognizing them as violations of God's commandments and detrimental to our spiritual well-being. Instead, Scripture encourages us to cultivate contentment and gratitude for the blessings we have received from God.

Hebrews 13:5 admonishes us to let our conduct be without covetousness and to be content with what we have. This command is rooted in the promise that God will never leave us nor forsake us—a promise that provides a firm foundation for our security and satisfaction.

One of the most effective antidotes to envy and covetousness is gratitude, and contenment in Jesus. When we cultivate a heart of gratitude, we shift our focus from what we lack to what we have been given. We begin to see God's provision and goodness in every area of our lives, and we find contentment in His abundant blessings.

Practicing gratitude involves intentionally acknowledging and appreciating the blessings, both big and small, that God has bestowed upon us. It's about recognizing His faithfulness in providing for our needs, His grace in forgiving our sins, and His love in surrounding us with relationships and opportunities for growth.

Moreover, gratitude fosters humility and generosity, as we recognize that everything we have is ultimately a gift from God. It empowers us to celebrate the successes and blessings of others without feeling threatened or envious, knowing that our worth and identity are found in Christ alone.

As we embrace gratitude and cultivate contentment in our hearts, we experience the freedom and joy that come from trusting in God's provision and sovereignty. We find peace in His presence and rest in the assurance that He is enough for us, regardless of our circumstances.

So, let us heed the exhortation in God’s Word to avoid envy and covetousness and to cultivate contentment and gratitude in our lives. May our hearts overflow with thanksgiving for the abundant blessings of our Heavenly Father.

(142) Overcoming the Cares and Deceit of the World

Matthew 13:22 (AKJV):

"He also that received seed among the thorns is he that hears the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23But he that received seed into the good ground is he that hears the word, and understands it; which also bears fruit, and brings forth, some an hundred times, some sixty, some thirty.."

Introduction: The Struggle of Distraction and Deception

In Matthew 13, Jesus tells the parable of the sower, explaining how different kinds of soil represent various responses to the gospel. Among these soils, the seed sown among thorns is particularly poignant because it reveals how external factors—such as the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches—can choke spiritual growth. This passage, though centuries old, speaks directly to the modern believer, offering profound insight into how distractions and deceptive temptations can hinder a fruitful Christian life.

Jesus is warning us that the pursuit of worldly concerns and material gain can crowd out the life-transforming power of God's Word in our hearts. The "cares of this world" are not inherently sinful, but when they become priorities that overwhelm our hearts and minds, they can lead to spiritual barrenness. Similarly, the "deceitfulness of riches" is a powerful temptation to trust in material wealth for security and meaning, rather than in God's provision. Together, these forces—distraction and deception—can derail our pursuit of God's Kingdom and leave us unfruitful.

This commentary explores the biblical teaching on overcoming the cares of this world and the deceit of riches, emphasizing how we can keep our hearts focused on eternal priorities, while navigating the temporal pressues of life.

1. The Nature of the Cares of the World

Jesus warns that the cares of the world are capable of choking the Word, rendering it unfruitful in our lives. What exactly are these "cares of the world"?

1.1 **The Anxiety of Life's Responsibilities**

The "cares of the world" refer to the worries, responsibilities, and pressures we face daily—concerns about our families, health, work, relationships, and finances. While these concerns are legitimate, they can easily become overwhelming if we allow them to dominate our thoughts and priorities. Jesus himself acknowledges these human concerns but urges us not to let them control us.

Matthew 6:25-34 (AKJV): *"Therefore I say to you, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they? 27Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature? 28And why take you thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29And yet I say to you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30Why, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. 33But seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all*

these things shall be added to you. 34Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof."

In this passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches that, while it is natural to be concerned about our physical needs, our first priority must be the Kingdom of God. The antidote to the cares of the world is a radical trust in God's provision and a commitment to seeking His will above all else.

1.2 **The Temptation to Control**

Often, the cares of the world are intertwined with a desire for control. We are tempted to believe that if we can manage every detail of our lives perfectly, we can ensure our happiness and security. This mindset is rooted in self-sufficiency and pride, and it leads us away from dependence on God.

Philippians 4:6-7 (AKJV): *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

Paul encourages believers to release their worries to God in prayer, trusting in His sovereignty and care. When we relinquish control, we receive God's peace, which guards our hearts against the overwhelming burdens of the world.

2. The Deceitfulness of Riches

The deceitfulness of riches is a critical warning in this passage. Jesus is not condemning wealth itself but pointing out that the pursuit of material gain can deceive us into thinking that security, joy, and fulfillment are found in possessions rather than in God.

2.1 **The Illusion of Fulfillment**

Riches promise security, comfort, and happiness, but they are ultimately empty. The more we accumulate, the more we find that wealth does not satisfy the deep longings of the soul.

Ecclesiastes 5:10 (AKJV): *"He that loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loves abundance with increase: this is also vanity.."*

King Solomon, in his wisdom, recognized the futility of seeking contentment in wealth. No amount of material gain can fill the spiritual void that only God can satisfy. The deceitfulness of riches lies in their ability to make us believe that they are the key to happiness, when in reality, they only lead to greater emptiness.

2.2 **Wealth and Spiritual Complacency**

Riches can also lead to spiritual complacency. When we rely on wealth for security, we may feel less need to depend on God or seek His kingdom. Jesus warns that the pursuit of wealth can distract us from eternal priorities and make us forget that our true treasure is in heaven.

Matthew 6:19-21 (AKJV): *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust does corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.."*

Jesus calls us to a kingdom-focused perspective, urging us to invest in eternal treasures rather than temporary wealth. The way we handle money is a reflection of where our hearts truly lie.

3. Overcoming the Cares and Deceit of the World

Jesus does not leave us without help in overcoming the cares and deceit of the world. Through faith, prayer, and a Kingdom-focused mindset, we can rise above the distractions and deceptions that threaten our spiritual fruitfulness.

3.1 **Seeking First the Kingdom of God**

To overcome the cares of this world, we must prioritize God**'**s kingdom above all else. This is not just a matter of making God a part of our lives but making Him the central focus. We must align our desires with His will, trusting that He will provide for our needs.

Matthew 6:33,34 (AKJV): *"But seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. 34Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof."*

Jesus promises that when we make the pursuit of His kingdom our top priority, He will take care of our material needs. This is not a call to abandon our responsibilities but to place them under God's sovereignty.

3.2 **Living with an Eternal Perspective**

To combat the deceitfulness of riches, we need to develop an eternal perspective. The things of this world are fleeting, but the things of God last forever. By fixing our eyes on the eternal rewards awaiting us, we are less likely to be deceived by the temporary allure of wealth.

Colossians 3:1-2 (AKJV): *"IIf you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. 2Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. "*

Paul calls believers to lift their focus from the temporary to the eternal. When our hearts are set on things above, we are less likely to be ensnared by the distractions of this world.

3.3 **Learning to Trust God’s Provision**

To overcome anxiety and fear about the cares of the world, we must trust in God's faithfulness. The more we learn to depend on Him, the more we experience His peace and provision. The opposite of anxiety is trust, and as we cultivate a deeper trust in God, we find freedom from the worries that once consumed us.

Psalm 55:22 (AKJV): *"Cast your burden on the LORD, and he shall sustain you: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."*

God promises to sustain us when we cast our cares upon Him. By surrendering our worries to Him, we can experience the peace that surpasses understanding.

Conclusion: Living in the World, Not of It

The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches are vain imaginations that can distract and deceive us. However, Jesus calls us to live differently—by seeking His kingdom first, living with an eternal perspective, and trusting in God's provision. These actions help us overcome the distractions of the world and remain fruitful in our spiritual walk.

As believers is Jesus, we are not called to withdraw from the world but to live in it with a clear focus on the things that truly matter, that are according to God’s will and word. May we, with the help of the Holy Spirit, keep our eyes on Jesus, loving and serving God and others, bearing good fruit that will last for eternity.

Overcoming the Cares and Deceit of the World - Continued

Scripture: Mark 4:19 "And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."

Reflection:

In a world filled with distractions, temptations, and competing priorities, it is easy for the cares and deceit of the world to hinder our spiritual growth and fruitfulness. Mark 4:19 warns us of the dangers of allowing worries, materialism, and worldly desires to choke the word of God in our lives, rendering it unfruitful.

The cares of this world include the anxieties and concerns that vie for our attention and rob us of the peace and trust we should have in God. The deceitfulness of riches lures us into pursuing wealth and possessions as sources of security and happiness, leading us away from the true treasure found in Christ. The lusts of other things encompass the various desires and cravings that distract us from our devotion to God and His kingdom.

To overcome the cares and deceit of the world, we must fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). We are called to prioritize our relationship with Him above all else, seeking first His kingdom and righteousness (Matthew 6:33). As we cultivate a heart of gratitude, contentment, and trust in God, we can resist the pull of worldly distractions and live lives that bear fruit for His glory.

Let us guard our hearts against the allure of worldly cares and deceit, anchoring ourselves in the truth of God's word and the riches of His grace. May we seek to live in obedience to His will, investing our time, talents, and resources in eternal pursuits rather than temporary pleasures. As we do so, we will experience the abundant life that Jesus offers and bear fruit that endures for eternity.

(143) Guarding Against Lustful Desires:

Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 10:13 (AKJV) “No temptation has taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

2 Corinthians 10:5 (AKJV) -“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”

Lustful desires are a common struggle faced by many individuals, but as disciples and followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to guard our hearts and minds against such temptations. The Scriptures admonish us to flee from sexual immorality and to pursue righteousness, purity, and holiness in our thoughts and actions. With the help of God's grace and the power of His Spirit, we can overcome lustful desires and walk in obedience to His Word.

James 4:7-8 (AKJV) Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded."

The apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that God is faithful and will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear. He assures us that when we are tempted, God will provide a way of escape so that we can endure it. This verse offers hope and encouragement to those struggling with lustful desires, reminding us that we are not alone in our battles and that God is always with us, providing strength and deliverance. Moreover, guarding against lustful desires requires intentional and proactive measures on our part. We must be vigilant in guarding our hearts and minds, being careful about the influences we allow into our lives and the places we frequent. This may involve avoiding certain media, setting boundaries in relationships, and seeking accountability with trusted fellow believers.

Furthermore, developing and maintaining a sincere relationship with God through prayer, worship, and the study of His Word is essential in guarding against lustful desires. As we draw near to God and allow His Spirit to fill us, our hearts are transformed, and our

desires align more closely with His will. The psalmist declares in Psalm 119:11, "Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against you."

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Book of Psalms and is known for its emphasis on the value and importance of God's Word. This particular verse underscores the practice of storing God's Word in one's heart as a safeguard against sin. By internalizing and meditating on Scripture, we develop a deeper understanding of God's will and His commandments, which helps them resist temptation and live in obedience to Him. This aligns with the principle that forgiveness is facilitated through understanding and applying God's Word, which guides us away from sin and towards righteousness.

By meditating on God's Word and hiding it in our hearts, we fortify ourselves against temptation and strengthen our resolve to live in purity. In addition, seeking support and accountability within the Christian community can be instrumental in overcoming lustful desires. Sharing struggles and praying with fellow believers can provide encouragement, accountability, and practical support in our walk toward purity and holiness, through Jesus Christ. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 reminds us, "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he has not another to help him up." (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 AKJV)

In conclusion, guarding against lustful desires requires a conscious effort to align our thoughts, desires, and actions with God's Word and His will for our lives. With the help of His Spirit, the support of fellow Christians, and intentional steps toward purity, we can overcome temptation and walk in the freedom and victory that Christ has provided for us.

(144) Compromise / Hypocrisy**:**

If we hope to overcome temptation or avoid committing a particular sin, we must first ask ourselves: Do we want to compromise our relationship with Jesus Christ and live in hypocrisy? Of course not! Therefore, we should resist temptation immediately. If we fail to do so and instead dwell on ungodly thoughts, it will inevitably lead to sin. When we say or act like we are living a holy and righteous life as a Christian yet are actually purosefully pursuing evil, that is hypocrisy. Compromise and Hypocrisy is knowing what is right to do according to the word of God, and choosing to deliberately to go against it in some way. As Christians, any time that we choose to compromise God's truth and disobey His word, there are many detrimental results;

Most important, we displease God, and when we sin, this always hinders God's true blessings upon our lives. The conviction of being a hypocrite is both degrading spiritually and emotionally and brings no lasting joy.

When we recognize and admit, and turn away from hypocrisy in any area in our life, only then will we grow further into the fullness of the maturity of Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 23:27-28 (AKJV): "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like to white washed sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but

are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

Hypocrisy is the practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform. Throughout Scripture, Jesus strongly condemned hypocrisy, warning against the dangers of outward piety without genuine inner transformation. He called out religious leaders who were more concerned with appearances than with true righteousness.

In Matthew 23:27-28, Jesus likened hypocrites to whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled with corruption and decay within. He emphasized the importance of authenticity and integrity, urging His followers to live lives of genuine faith and righteousness. Hypocrisy not only deceives others but also undermines the credibility of our witness for Christ.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to examine our hearts and motives, ensuring that our actions align with our beliefs. Romans 12:9 exhorts us to "hate what is evil; cling to what is good," emphasizing the importance of sincerity and truthfulness in our walk with God. We must strive to be people of integrity, whose words and actions reflect the character of Christ.

Let us guard against hypocrisy by cultivating a deep relationship with God and allowing His Spirit to transform us from the inside out. As we surrender our lives to Him and allow His love to flow through us, we can live authentically and bear witness to the transforming power of the gospel.

Compromise and hypocrisy are two pitfalls that can subtly infiltrate our lives as Christians, hindering our spiritual growth and witness. The Scriptures provide clear guidance on the importance of maintaining a steadfast commitment to God's truth and avoiding the snares of compromise and hypocrisy.

In our daily walk of faith, we are constantly faced with the choice between uncompromising commitment to God's truth and the allure of worldly compromise. Hypocrisy, too, threatens to undermine the authenticity of our witness. These adversaries can subtly infiltrate our lives, challenging the unchanging standard set by God's Word. As we delve into Scripture, let us explore further the dangers of compromise and hypocrisy, seeking God's wisdom to navigate the narrow path that leads to life. Let us maintain fidelity to God's truth and cultivating genuine, steadfast faith.

Compromise:

Compromise often creeps into our lives when we deviate from God's standards to accommodate worldly values. The Bible warns against being conformed to the patterns of this world (Romans 12:2). The Israelites, for instance, faced the consequences of compromise when they intermarried with pagan nations, leading to idolatry and a departure from God's commands (Ezra 9:1-2; Nehemiah 13:23-27). As Christians, we are called to be set apart, maintaining the integrity of our faith in the face of societal pressures.

Compromise often begins with small concessions that, over time, can lead to a departure from God's intended path or a person’s calling by God. Solomon, despite his initial wisdom, succumbed to compromise by allowing foreign influences in his life, leading to a gradual decline in his devotion to God (1 Kings 11:1-4). The New Testament echoes

this caution, urging believers not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14). We are reminded to guard our hearts and resist the temptation to compromise our convictions for the sake of worldly acceptance.

Compromise often emerges when we yield to the pressures of culture, prioritizing temporal comfort over eternal significance. The example of Daniel provides a powerful illustration of unwavering commitment in the face of compromise (Daniel 1:8). Similarly, the apostle Paul encourages believers to stand firm against the schemes of the devil and to put on the whole armor of God, including the belt of truth (Ephesians 6:11, 14). Compromise erodes the foundation of truth, and vigilance is essential in safeguarding the sanctity of our convictions.

Compromise:

Proverbs 25:26 (AKJV): "A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring."

1 Kings 11:1-4 (AKJV): "But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the LORD said to the children of Israel, You shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in to you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon joined to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father."

Matthew 16:26 (AKJV): "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

1 Corinthians 10:21 (AKJV): "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: you cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."

James 4:4 (AKJV): "You adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

Revelation 3:16 (AKJV): "So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth."

Ephesians 5:11 (AKJV): "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

2 Corinthians 6:14 (AKJV): "Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness?"

2 Timothy 2:4 (AKJV): "No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier."

Hypocrisy:

Hypocrisy involves a discrepancy between one's professed beliefs and actual behavior. Jesus strongly rebuked the Pharisees for their hypocritical practices, declaring,

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27). Our faith should not be a mere outward display; instead, it should permeate every aspect of our lives. James 1:22 urges believers to be doers of the Word, not hearers only, deceiving themselves.

The Scriptures continually emphasize the importance of genuine faith manifested through consistent actions. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, calls for authenticity in our worship and dealings with others (Matthew 6:1-6; 15:7-9). The apostle Paul, in his letters, exhorts believers to let love be genuine and to abhor what is evil, holding fast to what is good (Romans 12:9). A life marked by hypocrisy not only hinders personal growth but also tarnishes the reputation of the body of Christ.

Hypocrisy, characterized by a dichotomy between our confessing of Christ and the actual practicing truly what we say and believe, undermines the credibility of our witness. Jesus addressed this issue, cautioning against practicing righteousness for the approval of others (Matthew 6:1-2). The apostle Peter also emphasizes sincerity in love and the need for believers to put away hypocrisy (1 Peter 1:22). Hypocrisy hinders our effectiveness as ambassadors for Christ and diminishes the transformative impact of the Gospel.

Hypocrisy:

1 Timothy 4:1-2 (AKJV): "Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;"

Luke 12:1 (AKJV): "In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, so that they stepped one on another, he began to say to his disciples first of all, Beware you of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

Colossians 3:9 (AKJV): "Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds;"

1 John 2:4 (AKJV): "He that said, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Matthew 23:27-28 (AKJV): "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like to white washed sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

Galatians 2:13 (AKJV): "And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; so that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation."

James 1:26 (AKJV): "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

Matthew 6:2 (AKJV): "Therefore when you do your alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward."

Romans 12:9 (AKJV): "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; hold to that which is good."

1 Peter 2:1 (AKJV): "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, all evil speakings,”

James 3:17 (AKJV): "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

Matthew 23:13-15 (AKJV): "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for you neither go in yourselves, neither suffer you them that are entering to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore you shall receive the greater damnation. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."

The Consequences:

Compromise and hypocrisy have severe consequences. In Revelation 3:15-16, Jesus warns the church in Laodicea against being lukewarm, emphasizing the need for genuine commitment. The consequences of compromise and hypocrisy include a weakened witness, spiritual lethargy, and distancing ourselves from the transformative power of God's Word.

The Call to Repentance and Renewal:

The Bible teaches that there is hope and restoration for those who turn away from compromise and hypocrisy. In Revelation 2:5, Jesus urges the church in Ephesus to repent and return to their first love. The call to repentance is a recurring theme throughout Scripture, emphasizing God's mercy and the opportunity for a renewed and authentic relationship with Him (Joel 2:12-13; Acts 3:19).

The Unchanging Standard of God's Word:

God's Word serves as an unwavering standard that guides us in the midst of life's complexities. Psalm 119:105 declares, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." By anchoring ourselves in Scripture, we gain clarity and strength to resist compromise and live authentically. Hebrews 4:12 underscores the power of God's Word, piercing through the division of soul and spirit, discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The Role of Grace and Repentance:

Recognizing our human frailty, the Scriptures offer a message of hope through God's grace and the pathway of repentance. In 1 John 1:9, believers are assured that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The grace of God empowers us to overcome compromise and hypocrisy, leading us to a place of genuine repentance and transformation.

Conclusion:

As followers of Christ, we are called to uphold unwavering commitment to God's truth, avoiding compromise with the world and shunning hypocrisy. Let us heed the words of Proverbs 3:5-6, trusting in the Lord with all our hearts and leaning not on our understanding, acknowledging Him in all our ways. God’s Word serves as a lamp to our

feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105), guiding us toward a life of unwavering commitment to God and authenticity in our Christian walk. May we heed the warnings and encouragement found in Scripture, relying on the Holy Spirit to empower us to stand firm in the face of compromise and hypocrisy.

Compromise and Hypocrisy is knowing what is right to do according to the word of God, and choosing to deliberately to go against it in some way. As Christians, any time that we choose to compromise God's truth and disobey His word, there are many detrimental results;

Most important, we displease God, and when we sin, this always hinders God's true blessings upon our lives. The conviction of being a hypocrite is both degrading spiritually and emotionally and brings no lasting joy.

When God reveals hypocrisy in our life, and convicts our heart of sin and we purpose to turn away from it, only then will we grow further into the fullness of the maturity of Jesus Christ.

(145) Do Not Let Your Heart Be Hardened

Hebres 3:7-8 (AKJV): "Why (as the Holy Ghost says, To day if you will hear his voice, 8Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:"

Introduction: The Dangers of a Hardened Heart

In the Bible, Hebrews 3:7-8, warns us about the danger of a hardened heart. This is a repeated biblical instruction that extends from the Old Testament to the New, showing how a hardened heart prevents one from responding to God**'**s voice, limits spiritual growth, and creates barriers to intimacy with God. The warning is urgent: *"Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."* This appeal is not just a historical lesson but a timeless spiritual truth for every believer.

A hardened heart occurs when an individual repeatedly resists or ignores the convicting voice of God, whether through disobedience, doubt, or neglect. Over time, this resistance can lead to a spiritual numbness, making it increasingly difficult to hear God's voice and respond in faith. In this commentary, we will explore the nature of a hardened heart, the consequences of spiritual hardening, and how we can guard our hearts against this perilous condition.

1. Understanding the Hardening of the Heart

To understand the gravity of the warning in Hebrews 3, we must first examine what it means to have a "hardened heart." Biblically, a hardened heart refers to a condition where

the heart becomes insensitive, resistant, rebellious or calloused toward God's truth and His commands.

1.1 **Spiritual Insensitivity**

A hardened heart is one that has become numb to the leading of the Holy Spirit. When we continually reject or ignore God's Word, the sensitivity of our hearts dulls, making it more difficult to respond to God's conviction.

Ephesians 4:18 (AKJV): *"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: "*

Paul speaks of those who have hardened their hearts as being "alienated from the life of God" because their hearts have become "blind." This spiritual blindness means they are no longer able to discern God's will, and they walk in spiritual darkness, unaware of the life and light available in Christ.

1.2 **Resisting the Conviction of the Holy Spirit**

The hardening process is often gradual, beginning with small acts of disobedience and rejection of God's Word. Over time, this leads to a deeper resistance to God's conviction, as seen in the example of Pharaoh's heart in the book of Exodus.

Exodus 8:15 (AKJV): *"But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and listened not to them; as the LORD had said."*

Pharaoh's heart became hardened through repeated rejection of God's call. Each time he resisted, his heart grew more obstinate, making it harder for him to listen and respond. This is a tragic illustration of how persistent rejection of God's voice can lead to spiritual blindness and deafness.

2. The Root Causes of a Hardened Heart

Understanding the causes of a hardened heart can help us recognize the warning signs and avoid spiritual numbness. Several factors contribute to a hardened heart:

2.1 **Unrepentant Sin**

When we allow sin to remain unchecked in our lives, it has a hardening effect on our hearts. Unconfessed and unrepentant sin causes a spiritual callousness that makes us more resistant to the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 3:12-13 (AKJV): *"Take heed, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."*

Sin is deceitful, and when we give in to it, it progressively hardens our hearts. The more we entertain sin and disregard God's warnings, the more resistant we become to His voice.

2.2 **Pride and Self-Sufficiency**

Pride often leads to spiritual hardness because it fosters an attitude of self-sufficiency, arrogance and defiance. When we think we don't need God's guidance or help, we become less likely to listen to His Word or heed His instruction.

James 4:6-7 (AKJV): *"But he gives more grace. Why he says, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. 7Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ."*

God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. Pride shuts us off from God's grace, making it harder to receive His correction and direction. Humility, on the other hand, opens our hearts to God's work in our lives.

2.3 **Hardening Through Disappointment or Pain**

Sometimes, a person's heart becomes hardened due to unresolved hurt or disappointment. If someone has experienced deep pain, especially in the form of personal betrayal or suffering, they may close off their heart in order to protect themselves. Over time, this self-protection can lead to spiritual hardness.

Psalm 95:8 (AKJV): *"Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: "*

The psalmist recalls the Israelites' hardening of their hearts during their time in the wilderness. Their disappointments and trials led them to question God's goodness and faithfulness, which ultimately hardened their hearts and caused them to rebel. Unresolved pain can be a powerful force that leads to spiritual numbness if not surrendered to God.

3. The Consequences of a Hardened Heart

A hardened heart has serious spiritual consequences. It not only obstructs our relationship with God but also hinders our growth and fruitfulness in the Christian life.

3.1 **Loss of Spiritual Sensitivity**

As we saw earlier, a hardened heart leads to a loss of sensitivity to God's voice. The Holy Spirit may continue to convict, but if we continually resist, the conviction becomes less pronounced, and our awareness of sin fades.

1 Timothy 4:2 (AKJV): *"Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;"*

Paul warns that a person can reach a point where their conscience becomes "seared," like a wound that has been cauterized. A conscience that no longer feels the weight of sin is a dangerous state, as it means the person is no longer sensitive to God**'**s leading.

3.2 **Spiritual Hardship and Discipline**

A hardened heart can also invite God**'**s discipline. The Lord loves His children and will not allow them to remain in a hardened condition indefinitely. He may allow hardship or correction to break through our resistance and draw us back to Him.

Hebrews 12:6-8 (AKJV): *"For whom the Lord loves he chastens, and whips every son whom he receives. 7If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chastens not? 8But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons."*

God disciplines those He loves. While this correction is painful, it is ultimately for our good, as it brings us back into fellowship with Him.

3.3 **Failure to Enter God's Rest**

The most tragic consequence of a hardened heart is the failure to enter into God**'**s rest. In Hebrews 3 and 4, the writer draws from the example of the Israelites in the wilderness who failed to enter the Promised Land because of their unbelief and hard hearts. In the same way, anyone who harden their hearts may miss out on the spiritual rest, peace and potentially salvation and eternal life that comes from trusting Godand having faith in Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 3:19 (AKJV): *"So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."*

Unbelief is often the fruit of a hardened heart. When we resist God**'**s promises, we forfeit the peace and rest that He offers.

4. How to Guard Against a Hardened Heart

The key to avoiding a hardened heart is to remain soft and receptive to God**'**s voice. There are several practical ways we can protect ourselves from spiritual hardening.

4.1 **Daily Dependence on God's Word**

One of the most effective ways to prevent a hardened heart is to engage regularly with God**'**s Word. The Bible is living and active, and reading it allows the Holy Spirit to convict, encourage, and transform our hearts.

Psalm 119:11 (AKJV): *"Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against you. "*

By meditating on God**'**s Word, we keep our hearts open and tender toward Him.

4.2 **Confession and Repentance**

When we sin, we must confess our sins and repent. Unconfessed sin hardens the heart, but when we bring our failures before God and seek His forgiveness, we restore our fellowship with Him.

1 John 1:9 (AKJV): *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"*

Confession is a powerful antidote to spiritual hardening. It clears the path for God**'**s grace and keeps our hearts tender toward Him.

4.3 **Cultivating a Humble and Teachable Spirit**

A humble heart is one that remains open to correction, guidance, and growth. When we approach God with a willingness to learn and grow, we guard ourselves against pride, which is a major cause of spiritual hardening.

James 4:10 (AKJV): *"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."*

Humility before God is essential in maintaining a soft heart, willing to hear His voice and obey His will.

Conclusion: A Call to Not Let Our Hearts Be Hardened

The call to not let our hearts be hardened is a call to remain responsive and obedient to God. Moreover, by resisting sinful earthly pleasures and choosing to love and obey God instead, we align ourselves with His will. Each day presents an opportunity to choose being open to God's truth over hardness, self control over temptations, humility over pride, and openness over resistance. When we listen to God's voice, humble ourselves before Him, and repent of our sin, we keep our hearts tender and responsive to His leading.

Faith and abiding in Jesus dpends upon not to continue to harden one's heart and mind to the will of God.

May we heed the warning in Hebrews 3:7-8 and protect our hearts from becoming hardened, so that we can fully experience the rest and peace that God offers. Let us be vigilant in guarding our hearts and cultivating a deep, trusting relationship with Him, so that we may bear fruit and live out our calling as faithful disciples of Christ.

(145) Do Not Let Your Heart Be Hardened:

Hebrews 3:15 - "While it is said, To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.(rebellion) ”

The hardening of the heart is a spiritual condition characterized by resistance to the voice and leading of God. In Hebrews 3:15, the author warns believers against allowing their hearts to become hardened, as the Israelites did during their rebellion in the wilderness. As followers of Christ, we are called to guard our hearts against hardness and remain open and receptive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual lukewarmness is claiming to be a Christian while still clinging to worldly ways, continuing in sin, and failing to testify about Jesus or serve Him. It is disregarding His truth, following false beliefs, and neglecting our calling as disciples. Ultimately, it leads to complacency in loving God and others.

One of the primary causes of heart hardening is disobedience to God's Word. When we repeatedly ignore or reject God's commands, our hearts can become calloused and insensitive to His voice. It is essential to cultivate a spirit of obedience and humility, willing to heed God's instructions and follow His leadings.

Another factor that contributes to heart hardening is unbelief and doubt. When we allow skepticism and cynicism to take root in our hearts, we hinder our ability to trust in God's promises and guidance. Instead, we must choose to anchor our faith in the unchanging truth of God's Word, believing in His goodness and faithfulness. Moreover, unresolved sin and bitterness can lead to the hardening of the heart. When we harbor resentment, unforgiveness, or unconfessed sin in our hearts, it creates barriers that prevent us from experiencing the fullness of God's love and grace. Confession, repentance, and forgiveness are essential steps in softening our hearts and restoring fellowship with God. Furthermore, a busy and distracted lifestyle can contribute to heart hardening. When we become preoccupied with the cares and concerns of this world, we neglect to prioritize our relationship with God, allowing our hearts to become hardened by the deceitfulness of riches and the distractions of life. It is crucial to cultivate a heart of worship and devotion, making time for prayer, meditation, and fellowship with God.

(146) Overcoming Lukewarmness:

Lukewarmness in the Bible

Definition

Lukewarmness refers to a state of spiritual **indifference**, **complacency**, or **half-heartedness** toward God. It is the opposite of being spiritually hot (zealous) or cold (openly unbelieving). Lukewarm believers appear religious but lack true passion, conviction, or obedience.

“I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm... I will spit you out of my mouth.” — *Revelation 3:15–16*

Biblical Context: Revelation 3:14–22

Jesus addressed the **church in Laodicea**—wealthy, self-sufficient, and proud, yet **spiritually bankrupt**. Though they believed they were doing well, Jesus called them *"wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked."*

The Laodiceans were:

- Materially rich but spiritually poor
- Self-satisfied but unaware of their need
- Outwardly religious but inwardly indifferent

"Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent." — *Revelation 3:19*

Greek Word Insight

- **χλιαρός (chliaros)** – lukewarm, tepid
  - Used only in *Revelation 3:16*
  - Literally means "neither hot nor cold"
  - Carries a sense of **uselessness or distaste**, like water that's too warm to refresh or too cold to heal

Biblical Warnings and Consequences

1. **Jesus Will Reject Lukewarmness**" I will spit you out of my mouth." – *Rev. 3:16* This is not a loss of salvation by works, but a warning of the Lord's displeasure and possible judgment on lifeless religion.
2. **Lukewarmness is Deceptive**" You say, I am rich... not realizing you are wretched..." – *Rev. 3:17* Lukewarm believers often **don't realize** their true spiritual condition.
3. God Calls for Zealous Repentance" Be zealous and repent." – *Rev. 3:19*

Causes of Lukewarmness

- Worldly distractions
- Lack of prayer and Bible study
- Self-reliance and pride
- Unconfessed sin
- Spiritual fatigue or hurt
- Comfort and convenience over sacrifice

How to Overcome Lukewarmness

1. Repent Honestly

Acknowledge spiritual dryness or indifference. God honors humble repentance.

"Return to me, and I will return to you." – *Malachi 3:7*

2. Renew Devotion to Christ

Prioritize time in prayer, Scripture, worship, and communion with God.

“Abide in me... apart from me you can do nothing.” – *John 15:5*

3. Seek the Fire of the Holy Spirit

Ask God to renew spiritual hunger and empower you to walk in obedience.

“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” – *Romans 12:11*

4. Reorient Your Priorities

Let go of idols of comfort, wealth, or pleasure. Return to a life of surrender.

“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.” – *Colossians 3:2*

As Christians, overcoming lukewarmness is essential to living a vibrant, faithful life in Christ. Lukewarm faith—being spiritually indifferent or half-hearted—deeply concerns the Lord. In *Revelation 3:15-16*, Jesus says to the church in Laodicea, *“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm... I will spit you out of My mouth.”* This strong warning reminds us that God desires our full devotion, not a passive or casual relationship with Him. Lukewarmness leads to spiritual complacency, where we may go through the motions without true passion, commitment, or hunger for God’s presence.

To overcome lukewarmness, we must intentionally pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus. This begins with repentance and a renewed desire to seek Him daily in prayer, worship, and the Word. *James 4:8* encourages us, *“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.”* As we make space for God in our hearts and lives, the fire of His Spirit begins to stir within us again. We also overcome lukewarmness by surrounding ourselves with other believers who challenge and encourage us, by serving with purpose, and by remembering the incredible grace we've received. Let us ask God to reignite our love for Him, so we may live not with apathy, but with passion, zeal, and unwavering faithfulness.

Scripture References:

1. **Revelation 3:15-19** (AKJV): **“**I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I would you were cold or hot. 16So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth. 17Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear; and anoint your

eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

2. **Matthew 5:13-16 (AKJV)**: **"**You are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his flavor, with which shall it be salted? it is thereafter good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.You are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light to all that are in the house.."

Reflection:

Lukewarmness can creep into our lives quietly, often disguised as comfort or routine. It**'**s easy to drift into a state where our passion for God is dulled by the distractions and demands of daily life. Jesus addresses this in Revelation, expressing His distaste for being lukewarm. He desires fervent followers, those who are hot with love and zeal for Him.

Understanding Lukewarmness: Lukewarmness signifies a lack of commitment and passion. It may look like attending church, saying prayers, and participating in activities without a heartfelt connection to God. It can lead to spiritual stagnation, where our faith becomes more about routine than relationship. Lukewarmness also signifies when we try to still follow after our old carnal ways and worldliness and sin, while trying to serve God. We need to repent and follow Jesus wholeheartedly. No on can serve two masters.

Renewing Our Commitment:

1. **Self-Examination**: Take time to reflect on your spiritual life. Are you going through the motions? What areas of your faith feel stale? Bring these before God in prayer, asking Him to ignite a fresh fire in your heart.
2. **Rekindle Your Passion**: Engage in activities that draw you closer to God. This could be prayer, worship, or serving others. Surround yourself with believers who inspire you and challenge you to deepen your faith.
3. **Live with Purpose**: As Jesus teaches in Matthew, we are called to be the salt and light in the world. Ask yourself: How can I actively live out my faith in a way that impacts those around me? Being a vibrant witness for Christ requires intentionality and courage.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I acknowledge the areas where I have grown lukewarm in my faith. Ignite my passion for You, Lord. Help me to be a vibrant witness of Your love and grace. May I always seek to live as salt and light in this world, reflecting Your glory. Amen.

Conclusion: Overcoming lukewarmness is a daily journey that requires intentionality, prayer, and community. Let us strive to be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord with zeal and joy. Embrace the passion He offers, and watch as your faith transforms not only your life but the lives of those around you.

(147) Accountability:

As Christians, accountability is a vital part of our spiritual growth and walk with God. It means allowing others—trusted, mature believers—to speak into our lives, to encourage us, correct us, and help us stay on the path of righteousness. We are not meant to walk this journey alone. *Proverbs 27:17* says, *“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”* When we live in accountability, we open ourselves to growth, healing, and protection from falling into sin or spiritual drift. It requires humility, honesty, and a willingness to be challenged in love.

God has designed the body of Christ to function in unity and mutual support. Galatians 6:1-2 tells us, “Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently... Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Accountability helps us to live with integrity and keeps us grounded in truth. When we confess our struggles and pray for one another, as James 5:16 instructs, healing and strength follow. Let us not shy away from accountability, but embrace it as a gift from God—a tool that keeps us close to Him and helps us grow stronger together in faith.

I. Definition and Importance of Accountability

Accountability, in a biblical sense, refers to the responsibility of individuals to answer for their actions, decisions, and stewardship before God and others. It is a key theme throughout Scripture, emphasizing that believers are not independent but are held to God's standards in every aspect of life.

"So then each of us will give an account of himself to God." — Romans 14:12

II. Accountability to God

God is the ultimate judge of human actions, and every person must answer to Him. The Bible teaches that all people will stand before God's judgment seat, where their works, words, and thoughts will be evaluated.

- **God sees everything** – *Hebrews 4:13*
- **Judgment before Christ** – *2 Corinthians 5:10*
- **Accountability for words** – *Matthew 12:36*

III. Accountability to Others

Biblical accountability extends beyond personal responsibility to include our relationships with others. Scripture teaches that believers should encourage, correct, and hold one another accountable in love.

- **Iron sharpens iron** – *Proverbs 27:17*
- **Bearing one another’s burdens** – *Galatians 6:1-2*
- **Confessing sins to one another** – *James 5:16*

IV. Leadership and Stewardship Accountability

Leaders, pastors, and those in positions of influence are especially called to accountability because they are entrusted with guiding others. The Bible warns against negligence and emphasizes faithful stewardship.

- **Shepherds will give an account** – *Hebrews 13:17*
- **Stewards must be found faithful** – *1 Corinthians 4:2*
- **Warnings to teachers** – *James 3:1*

V. Consequences of Failing in Accountability

Ignoring accountability leads to spiritual downfall, as seen throughout biblical history. Scripture records numerous examples of individuals who suffered consequences because they failed to be accountable for their actions.

- **Adam and Eve's blame-shifting** – *Genesis 3:12-13*
- **David's sin and confrontation by Nathan** – *2 Samuel 12:7-10*
- **Ananias and Sapphira's deceit** – *Acts 5:1-11*

VI. Rewards of Embracing Accountability

Those who accept accountability experience spiritual growth, restoration, and God's blessing. The Bible encourages humility, confession, and a willingness to be corrected.

- **Restoration through confession** – *1 John 1:9*
- **Blessing for the faithful servant** – *Matthew 25:21*
- **Wisdom in accepting correction** – *Proverbs 12:1*

VII. Practical Ways to Cultivate Accountability

To live a life of accountability, Christians should actively seek ways to remain answerable to God and others.

1. **Daily self-examination** – *Psalm 139:23-24*
2. **Seeking wise counsel** – *Proverbs 11:14*
3. **Being an active part with other Church members** – *Hebrews 10:24-25*
4. **Accepting correction with humility** – *Proverbs 15:31-32*
5. **Being transparent before God and Others**
6. **Confess our sins to one another - Repent, turn from sin**
   James 5:16 says, **"***Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."*

   Confessing our sins to one another isn**'**t about shame—it**'**s about healing, accountability, and growing in Christ together. When we share our struggles with trusted brothers and sisters in Christ, we break the power of evil darkness, secrecy and allow God**'**s grace to work in us.
7. **Walk in the Light of Jesus -**1 John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin."

VIII. Conclusion

Accountability is an essential part of Christian life, ensuring that believers remain faithful to God's calling. By being accountable to God, to others, and in leadership, we walk in integrity, experience growth, and bring glory to Christ.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." — 2 Corinthians 5:10

Accountability - Continued…

Scripture Reference: Proverbs 27:17 (AKJV) - "Iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend."

Accountability is a vital part of our spiritual walk with God. It**'**s often seen as a burden or something uncomfortable, but in truth, it is one of the greatest gifts we can offer and receive. Just as iron sharpens iron, we are called to help one another grow, reflect, and strive towards holiness.

Consider the relationships in your life. Who do you turn to for guidance or support? Other well grounded seasoned Christians are not just to be your friends; they are your accountability partners. Their role is to encourage you, challenge you, and sometimes correct you—always with love. In a world that often promotes individualism, having someone to hold you accountable can be a powerful source of strength and motivation.

The Importance of Accountability in Our Walk with Christ

Accountability is crucial for maintaining holiness, purity, and being a faithful witness for Jesus Christ. In a world filled with distractions and temptations, having strong accountability helps us stay rooted in our faith and reflect the love of Christ to those around us.

1. Holiness and Purity

Holiness is not merely about following rules; it**'**s about living in alignment with God**'**s character. Accountability helps us stay vigilant against sin. When we know someone is there to support us and hold us accountable, we are more likely to resist temptation and pursue a life that honors God. James 5:16 encourages us, saying, **"**Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." This verse highlights that accountability fosters an environment where we can be transparent, confess our struggles, and seek healing together.

2. Strengthening Our Faith

Having accountability partners encourages us to grow in our faith. When we share our struggles, victories, and prayer requests, we create a community that uplifts and strengthens each other. This mutual support can deepen our relationship with God and enhance our understanding of His Word. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 reminds us, **"**Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up." We need each other to navigate the challenges of life.

3. Being a Good Witness

Our lives are often the only Bible some people will ever read. Accountability helps us live in a way that reflects Christ**’**s love and grace. When we hold ourselves accountable to others, we cultivate integrity, honesty, and consistency in our actions. Matthew 5:16 calls us to **“**let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” When we are accountable, we demonstrate the transformative power of the Gospel, encouraging others to seek Christ.

4. Building a Supportive Relationship With Other Chriistians

Accountability towards others within the Church is essential. The world often promotes excessive indepenance, being part of an accountable group helps us to feel connected to Jesus and supported. This fellowship is essential for spiritual growth. Hebrews 10:24-25 encourages us to **“**consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.”

Conclusion

In summary, accountability is not just a tool; it**’**s a necessary aspect of our Christian walk. It helps us pursue holiness, strengthens our faith, enhances our witness, and builds a supportive community. As we engage in relationships that prioritize accountability, we grow closer to God and reflect His love more fully in the world.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for the people You have placed in my life. Help me to embrace accountability as a gift rather than a burden. Teach me to be open to correction and guidance, and grant me the wisdom to be a supportive friend to others. May our relationships be filled with grace, honesty, and mutual growth. Amen.

Action Step:

Identify one person (a mature Christian) in your life who you trust and respect. Reach out to them and express your desire for mutual accountability. Discuss ways you can support each other in your spiritual and personal growth. Remember, true accountability thrives in an atmosphere of honesty and grace.

(148) Don’t Neglect Salvation:

Can a person who once believed in Jesus Christ neglect their salvation and not be saved?

YES > It is possible for a person to neglect their salvation and not be saved, if that person continues to willfully practice various sins, without repenting; However God wants every person claiming to be a Christian (and non-Christian) to truly repent, to continue to turn away from their sins, and not be lukewarm; So If that person does repent, and abide properly in the Grace of Jesus Christ, they can still be saved and receive eternal life. We are commandment by Jesus Christ, to love one another as He has Loved us, and that is

only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit, and if we purpose to turn away from deliberate sin.

If and when we deliberately sin, we are not walking in God's Love.

If we as a self proclaimed Christian, choose to purposely sin, we are hypocrites, and bearing bad spiritual fruit.

God help us to not be lead into temptation, but deliver us from evil, so that we can bear good spiritual fruit.

Therefore we should always purpose in our minds and hearts to turn away from all evil and overcome recommitting various sins, and with the power and help of the Holy Spirit, that is in Christ Jesus our Lord, to take up our cross daily and die to self, as we follow Jesus Christ. And thereby abide properly in God's grace, mercy, forgiveness and His Love. By so truly believing in and following Jesus Christ with sincere Faith in Him , we then will receive Eternal life, our Salvation will be secured, and not neglected.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Hebrews 2:1-3 (AKJV)

1Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward. **How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation;** which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard him;."

2 Peter 2:1-22 (AKJV)

1But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privately shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not. 4For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved to judgment; 5And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample to those that after should live ungodly; 7And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

9The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished: 10But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. 11Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. 12But these, as natural

brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; 13And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; 14Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: 15Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man**'**s voice forbade the madness of the prophet.

17These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. 18For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. 19While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. 20For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. 21For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22But it is happened to them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Galatians 5:13-24 (AKJV) 13For, brothers, you have been called to liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 15But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another.

16This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that you would. 18But if you be led of the Spirit, you are not under the law. **19Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, jealousies, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21Contentions, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.**

Matthew 25:31-46 (AKJV) 31When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: 32And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats: 33And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35For I was an hungered, and you gave me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: 36Naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me. 37Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we you an hungered, and fed you? or thirsty, and gave you drink? 38When saw we you a stranger, and took you in? or naked, and clothed you? 39Or when saw we you sick, or in prison, and came to you? 40And the King shall answer and say to them, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it to me.

41Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42For I was an hungered, and you gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink: 43I was a stranger, and you took me not in: naked, and you clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and you visited me not. 44Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we you an hungered, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to you? 45Then shall he answer them, saying, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me. 46And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless." - **James 1:26** (AKJV)

Willful Sin

Hebrews 10:19 -21 (AKJV)

19Having therefore, brothers, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20By a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21And having an high priest over the house of God; 22Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24And let us consider one another to provoke to love and to good works: 25Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching.

26For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, 27But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28He that despised Moses 'law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29Of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, with which he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite to the Spirit of grace? 30For we know him that has says, Vengeance belongs to me, I will recompense, said the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great fight of afflictions; 33Partly, whilst you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst you became companions of them that were so used. 34For you had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. 35Cast not away therefore your confidence, which has great recompense of reward. 36For you have need of patience, that, after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise. 37For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39But we are not of them who draw back to perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Lukewarmness

Revelation 3:14-22 (AKJV) - 14And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; 15I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I would you were cold or hot. **16So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth.** 17Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. **19As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.** 20Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. 22He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

If we love the world the love of God is not in us:

1 John 2:15-17 (AKJV) Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God stays for ever.

John 15:9-10. AJKV 9 Just as the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; remain in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love; just as I have kept My Father**'**s commandments and remain in His love.

Matthew 7:13-29 (AKJV)

Enter you in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads to life, and few there be that find it.

15Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. 18A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20Why by their fruits you shall know them.

21Not every one that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works? 23And then will I profess to them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity.

24Therefore whoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, which built his house on a rock: 25And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it fell not: for it was founded on a rock. 26And every one that hears these sayings of mine, and does them not, shall be likened to a foolish man, which built his house on the sand: 27And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. 28And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: 29For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

1 John 3:4-18 (AKJV) 4Whoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. 5And you know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. 6Whoever stays in him sins not: whoever sins has not seen him, neither known him. 7Little children, let no man deceive you: he that does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 8He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. **9Whoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother.** 11For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And why slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. 13Marvel not, my brothers, if the world hate you. **14We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brothers. He that loves not his brother stays in death. 15Whoever hates his brother is a murderer: and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.** 16Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17But whoever has this world's good, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him? 18My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

Matthew 6:15 (AKJV) **-** (Jesus said,) 15But if you forgive not men their trespasses, **neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

Eternal Salvation is only for those who purpose to " Obey " Jesus Christ while under His Grace that cleanses them from their sins as a Christian;

Hebrews 5:7-9 During the days of Jesus **'**life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8 Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered 9 and, once made perfect, **He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him.**

If we don't " Confess " our sins to God, and " Walk in Light " and " Repent " Turn away from our sins as the Holy Spirit reveals our sin as we walk in the light of Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:5-9 ; This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7 **But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.**

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.** 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and His word is not in us.

If we don't Repent of sin as the Holy Spirit reveals

Luke 13:2 Jesus answered, **"**Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? 3 I tell you, no! **But unless you repent, you too will all perish.**

Revelation 2:4-7 (AKJV) Nevertheless I have somewhat against you, because you have left your first love. **5Remember therefore from where you are fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come to you quickly, and will remove your candlestick out of his place, except you repent.** 6But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 7He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches; To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the middle of the paradise of God.

Apostasy - Falling away of pseudo christians;

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 (AKJV) ; 1Now we beseech you, brothers, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together to him, 2That you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, **except there come a falling away first,** and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Apostasy - Falling away of pseudo christians;

Some are " shipwrecked concerning the faith "; Without faith impossible to please God, nor can one be saved without a sincere faith;-

1 Timothy 1:18-20 (AKJV); 18This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on you, that you by them might war a good warfare; 19Holding faith, and a good conscience; **which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: 20Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered to Satan,** that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Apostasy - Falling away of pseudo christians;

1 Timothy 4:1-2; **But the Spirit says expressly that in later times some will fall away from the faith, (HOW is that possible ?)** paying attention to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men who speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron;

Hardened Heart of Unbelief HOW?

> By the deceitfulness of unrepented willful sin

Hebrews 3:7-14; 7Why as the Holy (Spirit) Ghost (Ruach HaKodesh) says, To day if you will hear his voice, 8Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10Why I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. **11So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.**

12Take heed, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end;

Some will be disapproved concerning the Faith, they will progress no further, if they don't repent. Counterfeit faith

2 TIMOTHY 3:1-9 (AKJV) - 1This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3Without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 6For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, 7Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8Now

as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. 9But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest to all men, as theirs also was.

Hebrews 12:15-17 (AKJV) -**Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God;** lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17For you know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

John 3:36 AJKV 36 The one who believes in the Son has eternal life; but the one who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."

If we kept Jesus **'**Commandments we remain in His Love

If we don**'**t kept Jesus **'**Commandments we don**'**t remain in His Love.

(149) Spiritual Warfare Against Satan and Demons:

Ephesians 6:10-20 -(AKJV) Finally, my brothers, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13Why take to you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14**Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16Above all, taking the shield of faith, with which you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;** 19And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

As disciples of Christ, we find ourselves in a constant battle that transcends the physical realm, a struggle against spiritual forces that seek to undermine our faith and disrupt our lives. This reality of spiritual warfare is emphasized in Ephesians 6:10-12, where we are called to "be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might." Paul reminds us that our conflict is not against flesh and blood but against a hierarchy of evil that includes "rulers," "authorities," and "spiritual evil powers over this present darkness." This understanding encourages us to recognize that our daily struggles often have spiritual roots, and as such, we must equip ourselves for this unseen battle.

To effectively engage in spiritual warfare, we must first understand the nature of our enemy. In 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, we learn that although we walk in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh. Our weapons are not physical but spiritual, possessing divine power to destroy strongholds. These strongholds may manifest as deeply entrenched lies or patterns of sin that ensnare us. Therefore, we must actively identify and confront these strongholds with the truth of God's Word and the power of prayer. For instance, if we struggle with anxiety, we can turn to Philippians 4:6-7, which encourages us to present our requests to God, promising that His peace will guard our hearts.

In our fight against the enemy, we also find assurance in James 4:7, where we are instructed to "submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." This two-step approach—submission to God followed by active resistance—provides a powerful strategy. When we yield ourselves to God's authority and guidance, we position ourselves to resist the enemy effectively. It is crucial to remember that this resistance does not stem from our strength but from our identity as children of God. By relying on His power, we can stand firm against temptations and attacks.

The Gospels illustrate Jesus 'authority over demonic forces, serving as a model for us. In Mark 1:34, we see Jesus healing many and casting out demons, highlighting His power and the reality of spiritual oppression. In Luke 10:19, Jesus empowers us, declaring, "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you." This promise reassures us that we possess authority through Christ to confront demonic influences. We must remind ourselves of this truth, especially in moments of doubt or fear, and step into the authority granted to us as His disciples.

In Ephesians 6, Paul provides a detailed description of the armor of God, which is essential for our spiritual battles. Each piece represents a vital aspect of our faith: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:13-17). By putting on this armor daily, we fortify ourselves against the schemes of the enemy. For instance, the belt of truth emphasizes integrity, encouraging us to live authentically and grounded in God's truth. The shield of faith allows us to extinguish the flaming darts of doubt and fear that the enemy hurls at us.

Additionally, we must recognize the importance of the church in spiritual warfare. In 1 Peter 5:8-9, we are urged to be sober-minded and watchful, as our adversary, the devil, prowls like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. This call to vigilance is a reminder that we are not alone in this battle; we have a fellowship of followers of Jesus Christ to support and encourage one another. By sharing our struggles and praying together, we can strengthen one another and resist the enemy's attempts to isolate us.

The New Testament also cautions us about the nature of demonic forces. In Matthew 12:43-45, Jesus warns of the dangers of an unclean spirit returning to a person from whom it has been cast out. This teaching serves as a powerful reminder that we must not only rid ourselves of evil influences but also fill our lives with God's presence. This involves immersing ourselves in Scripture, prayer, and fellowship, ensuring that our lives are filled with the Holy Spirit to guard against re-entry of the enemy.

Ultimately, our victory in spiritual warfare is assured through Christ. Colossians 2:15 tells us that Jesus disarmed the rulers and authorities, triumphing over them through the cross. This victory means that although we face spiritual battles, we do so with the confidence that the outcome is already secured in Christ. Revelation 12:11 further affirms that we conquer by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. Our testimonies, grounded in God's faithfulness, become powerful tools in the spiritual realm.

In conclusion, as disciples of Christ, we are called to engage in spiritual warfare with awareness and intentionality. By equipping ourselves with the armor of God, submitting to His authority, and standing firm in faith, we can confront the spiritual challenges we face. We must remember that our fight is not just for ourselves but for our communities and the world around us. Through prayer, Scripture, and mutual support, we can remain steadfast, knowing that in Christ, we have the victory. Let us approach this spiritual battle with hope and assurance, fully embracing the power and authority we have as followers of Jesus.

KEY SCRIPTURES

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 (AKJV) "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; 6And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled

Spiritual Warfare Against Satan And Demons:

As Christians, we must be fully aware that we are engaged in a spiritual battle against Satan and his demonic forces. This warfare is not against people, but against the unseen powers of darkness that seek to steal, kill, and destroy our faith, peace, and purpose. *Ephesians 6:12* reminds us, *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."* Satan constantly works to deceive, discourage, and distract us from walking in the truth. But through Christ, we are not powerless—we have been given authority and spiritual armor to stand firm.

God equips us with everything we need to fight and overcome in this battle. *Ephesians 6:11* says, *"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."* This includes truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God, and constant prayer. We must be alert, prayerful, and grounded in Scripture, resisting the devil with boldness and faith. *James 4:7* tells us, *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* Victory in spiritual warfare doesn't come from our own strength, but through our dependence on Jesus, who has already defeated the enemy at the cross. Let us stand together in faith, empowered by the Holy Spirit, knowing that in Christ, we are more than conquerors.

Because the battle is spiritual, our weapons must also be spiritual and rooted in the authority of God's Word. *2 Corinthians 10:4* says, *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."* As we grow in discernment and spend time in prayer and the Word, we become more sensitive to the tactics of the enemy—whether it's temptation, fear, condemnation, or confusion. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to expose these lies and stand firm in truth. The name of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, and the Word of God are powerful tools in our hands, and we must not neglect to use them daily.

Spiritual warfare also involves persistence. The enemy does not give up easily, but neither should we. We must remain watchful and committed to living holy lives, free from compromise. *1 Peter 5:8-9* warns us, *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith."* This resistance is not passive—it's active, intentional, and grounded in God's promises. As we walk in obedience, live in community, and continually seek the presence of God, we walk in victory. We are not fighting *for* victory; we are fighting *from* the victory already won by Jesus Christ. Let us stand united, armored up, and full of faith, knowing that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world (*1 John 4:4*).

Revelation 12:11 -(AKJV) And they overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives to the death. 12Therefore rejoice, you heavens, and you that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time."

Revelation 12:11 (AKJV) says, *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."* This powerful verse reminds us as believers that our victory over Satan is not through our own strength, but through what Christ has already accomplished. The *blood of the Lamb*—Jesus ' sacrifice on the cross—defeated the power of sin and death, stripping the enemy of his authority. When we stand under the covering of that blood, we are protected, redeemed, and empowered to resist the devil.

The verse also speaks of the *word of our testimony*, showing that our personal stories of transformation and faith in Jesus are weapons in spiritual warfare. When we boldly declare what God has done in our lives, it silences the lies of the enemy and strengthens others in the body of Christ. Finally, *"they loved not their lives unto the death"* reveals a deep level of surrender. These overcomers were willing to lay down their lives for Christ, showing that true victory often comes through sacrifice and unwavering commitment. As Christians, this verse calls us to live courageously—anchored in Christ's victory, unashamed of our testimony, and fully surrendered to God, no matter the cost.

Isaiah 54:17;

No weapon formed against you shall prosper,

And every tongue *which* rises against you in judgment

You shall condemn.

This *is* the heritage of the servants of the Lord,

And their righteousness *is* from Me,”

Says the Lord.

Proverbs 24:6 For by wise counsel you will wage your own war,

And in a multitude of counselors there is safety.(victory)

Jesus disarmed principalities and forgives us of all our sin; Now Jesus enables us and wants us to resist sin and overcome the sin and evil in our life, through Him (Jesus) by His spirit;

Colossians 2;13-15: (AKJV) And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15And having spoiled (disarmed) principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

John 16:33 (AKJV)

(Jesus said) "These things I have spoken to you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Hebrews 12:4

You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;

Zechariah 4:6; (AKJV) Then he answered and spoke to me, saying, This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the LORD of hosts.”

(150) Overcoming evil by others:

Overcoming evil directed toward us by others is one of the greatest challenges in life. However, Scripture provides clear guidance on how to respond to wrongdoing with righteousness, love, and faith. Instead of seeking revenge or harboring resentment, we are called to trust in God's justice and respond with grace. Romans 12:21 reminds us, **"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."** This verse emphasizes that responding to evil with more evil only fuels darkness, while responding with goodness brings God's light into the situation.

One of the most profound teachings of Jesus is found in **Matthew 5:44**, where He instructs, **"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute**

you." This command goes against our natural instincts, but it reflects the character of Christ. Jesus Himself exemplified this on the cross when He prayed, **"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).** When we choose to forgive and pray for those who harm us, we break the cycle of hatred and allow God to work in both our hearts and theirs.

Additionally, Paul encourages believers in **Ephesians 6:12**, saying, **"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."** This reminds us that when people act with malice, they are often influenced by deeper spiritual battles. Our response should not be retaliation but reliance on God**'**s strength and armor. Through prayer, faith, and the Word of God, we can stand firm against evil without being consumed by bitterness.

Lastly, **Proverbs 20:22** states, **"Do not say, 'I will repay evil'; wait for the Lord, and He will deliver you."** Trusting in God's justice allows us to release our anger and pain into His hands. God sees every wrong done against us, and He promises to vindicate His people in His perfect time. By surrendering our desire for revenge and choosing to walk in righteousness, we become living testimonies of God's grace and power. Overcoming evil with good is not a sign of weakness but of spiritual maturity and trust in the Lord**'**s ultimate plan.

Overcoming The Evil By Others

Through God's Word

Psalm 119:105 – "Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path."

God**'**s Word is our primary weapon against evil. It teaches us how to respond to wrongs with righteousness, strengthens our faith, and reminds us of God's justice.

1. Overcoming Evil Through God's Word

1.1 The Word Equips Us to Respond Righteously

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (AKJV)– "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works.."

The Bible provides guidance on handling evil without resorting to sin. It teaches us to respond with love, forgiveness, and truth.

1.2 Jesus Used the Word to Overcome Evil

Matthew 4:3-4 – "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

When Satan tempted Jesus, He overcame the attack by quoting Scripture. This shows that God's Word is a spiritual weapon that helps us resist evil and stand firm in righteousness.

1.3 The Word Renews Our Minds

Romans 12:2 (AKJV)– "And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.."

When faced with evil, it**'**s easy to react emotionally. But by immersing ourselves in Scripture, we train our minds to respond with godly wisdom instead of human anger or revenge.

2. Overcoming Evil Through Prayer

Philippians 4:6-7 (AKJV) – "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Prayer is a powerful tool in overcoming evil. It connects us to God, brings peace to our hearts, and aligns our responses with His will.

2.1 Praying for Strength and Guidance

Matthew 26:41 – "Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Jesus taught His disciples to pray to avoid falling into sin. When we pray, God strengthens us to respond to evil with wisdom and righteousness instead of anger or revenge.

2.2 Praying for Our Enemies

Matthew 5:44 – "But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you."

Prayer helps us release bitterness and overcome hatred. When we pray for those who wrong us, our hearts are softened, and we begin to see them through God's eyes.

2.3 Seeking God**'**s Justice in Prayer

Psalm 37:7-9 – "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not yourself in any wise to do evil."

Instead of taking revenge, we bring our burdens to God, trusting Him to bring justice in His perfect timing.

3. Overcoming Evil Through Wisdom

Proverbs 4:7 – "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all your getting get understanding."

Wisdom is essential for responding to evil in a way that honors God. It helps us discern when to act, when to remain silent, and how to navigate difficult situations.

3.1 Wisdom Helps Us Respond, Not React

Proverbs 15:1 – "A soft answer turns away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."

A wise response can de-escalate conflict and prevent further harm. Instead of reacting emotionally, wisdom teaches us to speak with grace and self-control.

3.2 Wisdom Teaches Us When to Walk Away

Proverbs 22:3 – "A prudent man foresees the evil, and hides himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished."

Not every battle is worth fighting. Sometimes, the best response to evil is to remove ourselves from the situation rather than engage in conflict.

3.3 Wisdom Guides Us to Seek Counsel

Proverbs 11:14 – "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety."

When dealing with difficult people, wise believers seek godly advice from mature Christians instead of making impulsive decisions.

4. Overcoming Evil Through the Holy Spirit

Galatians 5:16 – "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

The Holy Spirit empowers us to resist the temptation to respond to evil with sin. Instead, He fills us with love, patience, and self-control.

4.1 The Spirit Helps Us Bear the Fruit of Righteousness

Galatians 5:22-23 – "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

When confronted with evil, the Holy Spirit produces in us patience instead of anger, gentleness instead of harshness, and self-control instead of revenge.

4.2 The Spirit Gives Us Supernatural Strength

Acts 7:59-60 – "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, was able to forgive his enemies even while being killed. His strength did not come from himself but from God's power working within him.

4.3 The Spirit Gives Us Wisdom and Discernment

John 16:13 – "However when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."

The Holy Spirit helps us discern the right response to evil—whether it be silence, confrontation, forgiveness, or seeking justice.

5. Exercising Patience and Endurance

5.1 Patience as a Mark of Spiritual Maturity

James 1:2-4 – "My brothers, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

Trials refine our character, teaching us to trust in God rather than react emotionally to injustice.

5.2 Jesus 'Silent Endurance Before His Accusers

Isaiah 53:7 – "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth..."

When falsely accused and mistreated, Jesus remained patient, trusting in God's plan. His example teaches us to endure suffering without seeking personal revenge.

6. Overcoming Evil with Good

Romans 12:21 – "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Instead of repaying wrong with wrong, believers should respond in a way that honors God.

7. Keeping an Eternal Perspective

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 – "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory..."

Evil may seem victorious in the short term, but God will ultimately reward those who stand firm in faith.

Matthew 5:11-12 – "Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you... for great is your reward in heaven."

8. Overcoming the Evil of Others with Love

Luke 6:27-28 – "But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."

One of the most powerful ways to combat evil is through love. Instead of responding with hatred or revenge, showing kindness and grace can break cycles of hostility and reveal God**'**s love.

8.1 Responding to Hatred with Kindness

Romans 12:20 – "Therefore if your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head."

Acts of kindness toward those who mistreat us can convict their hearts and open the door for reconciliation.

8.2 Love Covers a Multitude of Sins

1 Peter 4:8 – "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."

Genuine love and forgiveness can heal broken relationships and prevent bitterness from taking root.

8.3 Jesus' Ultimate Example of Love

Luke 23:34 – "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Even while suffering on the cross, Jesus chose love and forgiveness over retaliation, setting the ultimate example for us to follow.

Showing love in the face of evil is not a sign of weakness but a reflection of God's strength working within us.

Romans 12:14-21 (AKJV) Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 15Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 16Be of the same

mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

17Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men. 19Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord. 20Therefore if your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head. 21Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Part of Spiritual warfare is the battle within you, and avoiding friendship with the world

James 4:4-10 (AKJV) You adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. 5Do you think that the scripture says in vain, The spirit that dwells in us lusts to envy? 6But he gives more grace. Why he says, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. 7Submit yourselves therefore to God. **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded.** 9Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. 10Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

The Lord will protect you

2 Thessalonians 3:3,4 (AKJV) - But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil. 4And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that you both do and will do the things which we command you. 5And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 (AKJV) - “Abstain (Flee) from all appearance of evil. 23And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ”

Mark 16:17-18:(AKJV) "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

- This passage underscores the authority believers have in Jesus **’**name to confront evil. It highlights the transformative power of faith, suggesting that spiritual warfare is a key aspect of the Christian life.

Luke 10:17-20:(AKJV) "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject to us through your name. 18And he said to them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19Behold, I give to you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.’"

- Here, Jesus affirms the effectiveness of His followers in spiritual ministry. The mention of Satan's fall symbolizes the defeat of evil, and it reassures believers of their protected status in the face of spiritual adversities.

Matthew 12:28-30:(AKJV) "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come to you. 29Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. 30He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathers not with me scatters abroad."

- Jesus 'statement connects the act of casting out demons with the establishment of God's kingdom. It emphasizes that His authority comes from the Spirit, indicating that such acts are a sign of divine presence and action in the world.

Acts 16:18:(AKJV) "And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour."

- This encounter illustrates the persistent challenge of spiritual oppression and the authority of Paul, acting in Jesus 'name. It also reflects the importance of discernment and direct confrontation in dealing with demonic influences.

Matthew 17:18: (AKJV) "And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. 19Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? 20And Jesus said to them, Because of your unbelief: for truly I say to you, If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you. 21However, this kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting."

- In this instance, Jesus demonstrates His power to heal and liberate simultaneously. It emphasizes faith and the necessity of divine intervention in overcoming deep-seated issues, showcasing Jesus 'compassion and authority.

(151) Fear Not, Jesus Has Overcome the World:

Text: *John 16:33 (AKJV)* - "These things I have spoken to you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.."

Context

This powerful declaration by Jesus occurs during the final discourse He shares with His disciples before His arrest, trial, and crucifixion. In John 16, Jesus is preparing His disciples for the trials they will soon face, as well as the coming of the Holy Spirit who will guide and comfort them. He is warning them of the hardships that are inevitable for those who follow Him, yet He provides an assurance that transcends those difficulties:

He has overcome the world. Moreover the trials and sufferings that we go through for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ brings salvation to those recieve our testimony that Jesus alone can save, forgive and give new life. Jesus has overcome all evil darkness and is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Today, this is also reassuring to all of us as Christians—not to fear any of the trials, tribulations, or spiritual attacks that we may encounter. We are called to persevere and trust in God, regardless of what happens, because Jesus already has the victory. We must keep our faith in Him. God works everything for the good of those who love Him, and whatever we might suffer is part of His eternal purpose to bring life—eternal life.

It's natural for us to fear under certain circumstances, however when we reflect on the words of Jesus, that He has overcome the world helps us to be strong and of good courage knowing that Jesus and God's Holy Spirit walks with us.

The **"**world" in this context refers not just to the physical creation, but to the system of values, powers, and forces opposed to God**'**s kingdom, which includes sin, death, and evil. This world, which is ruled by Satan and marked by suffering, rebellion, and chaos, often seeks to rob God's people of peace and hope. Jesus, however, assures us that despite the present struggles and opposition, He has already triumphed over the world.

Analysis

1. "In this world you will have trouble"

Jesus is blunt and realistic with His disciples. The Christian walk is not one of immediate success, comfort, or ease. In fact, it is marked by the promise of suffering, opposition, and trials. The word "trouble" (Greek: *thlipsis*) refers to pressure, distress, and affliction. It signifies the kind of challenges that believers will face from external forces (persecution, hostility from the world) and internal struggles (spiritual warfare, doubts, temptations).

Jesus does not promise His followers immunity from hardship. Instead, He gives a sober warning: life in this fallen world will be difficult. This truth is echoed throughout the New Testament (e.g., Acts 14:22, Romans 8:17, 2 Timothy 3:12). Yet, the message is not one of hopelessness, but of hope—because of what Jesus has done.

2. "But take heart!"

This phrase (Greek: *tharseite*) is a call to courage, boldness, and inner strength. It implies that believers are not to be passive or fearful in the face of hardship. The command to "take heart" is not merely a psychological or motivational boost. It is an invitation to embrace a new posture in the midst of suffering—a posture of faith and trust in God**'**s victory.

This courage does not come from our own strength but from the confidence in the victory Jesus has already won on our behalf. It**'**s a call to remember that the ultimate reality of our situation is rooted in Christ**'**s triumph, not the temporal struggles we face. To "take heart" is to remember that, despite the present darkness, God's kingdom is advancing and His purposes will prevail.

3. "I have overcome the world"

This declaration encapsulates the heart of the Christian gospel: Jesus has definitively defeated the powers of evil and sin. The word "overcome" (Greek: *nikao*) means to

conquer, to prevail, or to gain victory. Jesus is asserting that He has already triumphed over the very forces that bring trouble and suffering into the world. This victory is not in the future—it is a present reality, accomplished through His death, resurrection, and ascension.

The "world" here refers to everything that is in opposition to God's reign. It includes Satan, sin, death, and all the forces that hold humanity in bondage. Through His death on the cross, Jesus disarmed the powers of darkness (Colossians 2:15). Through His resurrection, He defeated death itself (1 Corinthians 15:54-57). And through His ascension, He reigns at the right hand of the Father, with all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18).

This victory, however, does not mean that we are exempt from suffering in this life. It means that the ultimate outcome has already been secured. Though we experience trouble in the present, we do so from a position of victory, knowing that the battle has already been won. Jesus ’victory over the world is a guarantee of the ultimate redemption and restoration that is yet to come.

Theological Implications

1. Peace Amidst Trouble

In the opening of the verse, Jesus says, "In me you may have peace." Peace is not the absence of trouble but the presence of God’s assurance and His presence in the midst of trouble. The peace Jesus offers is deeper than mere emotional calm or the cessation of conflict; it is the peace of knowing that, in Him, we are secure. This peace is grounded in His victory over the world. It’s a peace that transcends circumstances, rooted in the unshakable hope that Christ has already overcome all things.

2. Hope

While the statement "I have overcome the world" reflects a past reality, it also points to a present and future fulfillment. Now we also can have victory and overcome evil and sin in our personal lives because Jesus abides in us. The victory Jesus won at the cross and resurrection secures the believer’s hope that one day all things will be made new (Revelation 21:4). The suffering and troubles of the present age will be no more, and God's reign will be fully realized. Thus, this promise of victory provides a hope that encourages us to persevere through our trials.

3. Spiritual Warfare

Jesus' words underscore the reality of spiritual warfare. The world, in its fallen state, is aligned against God and His purposes. Yet, in Christ, believers are called to stand firm against the attacks of the enemy, knowing that the victory has already been won. This means that Christians are not fighting for victory but from a position of victory. They are called to resist the world’s values, which are opposed to God’s kingdom, and to live out the implications of Christ’s triumph in their everyday lives.

Practical Application

1. Trusting In Jesus’ Words - Courage in Trials

For every disciple, Jesus' words are living and active and a encoragement to be bold and courageous in the face of life’s difficulties. When we face persecution, suffering, or

hardship, we can take heart—Jesus has already conquered. This victory empowers us to persevere, knowing that our suffering is not in vain and that God is with us through it all.

2. Living in the Victory of Christ

Christians are called not to live in fear or anxiety, but in the victorious reality of Jesus ' completed work. The world, with all its troubles, cannot defeat the believer who is rooted in Christ's triumph. This means living with an eternal perspective, where the trials of this life are seen in light of the eternal victory won by Jesus.

3. Sharing the Hope of the Gospel

Finally, Jesus 'victory over the world is the ultimate good news we are called to share with others. In a world filled with fear, anxiety, and uncertainty, the message that Jesus has overcome the world is a message of profound hope. It is a call to look beyond the temporal and to place our trust in the eternal King who reigns victorious.

Conclusion

Jesus 'declaration in John 16:33—"Fear not, I have overcome the world"—is a message of profound hope and assurance for all believers. It acknowledges the reality of suffering and struggle in this world but points us to the greater reality of Christ's victory. This victory over sin, death, and evil secures our peace and our future, enabling us to endure present troubles with courage and faith. As we face trials, we can take heart, because Jesus has already triumphed. Our hope is not in our ability to overcome, but in the victory of Christ that assures us of ultimate triumph.

(152) Take Our Thoughts Captive:

2 Corinthians 10:5 (AKJV): "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"

Taking our thoughts to the obedience of Jesus Christ is an essential principle in overcoming temptation and sin.

As soon as we think of something wrong and evil and thereby we are tempted, we need to take those thoughts to the obedience of Jesus Christ, to keep us from falling into sin.

Tempting thoughts are not sin unless we purposely dwell on them with lustful desires to do evil. Unless we take our thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ the results will be develop into actual sin.

Every day many thoughts pass through our minds, some good and some evil. We should discipline our minds to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

What this means is, as we receive a significant thought of spiritual importance, during the day, we should make an effort to reflect and ask ourselves, " Is what I'm presently thinking to do or say, right and good, according to the word of God, in the Bible ?"

If the thought is against or contrary to the will of God, the Holy Spirit will show you, then that thought is to be regarded evil, and should not be entertained but rejected.

However, if a thought is in agreement to God's word, then we should pray and meditate on it; But only purpose to put into action a significant thought only when and how the Holy Spirit directs.

A thought coming from God will give you good vision and direction in doing the things according to the will of God.

We can have some good thoughts but those ideas may not be in God's purpose for our lives at a certain time; So we should wait upon God and pray to receive confirmation, before stepping out in faith to do something of major importance.

Once any thought is allowed to take root within our heart, we'll either produce a good or evil action.

In our walk of faith, we are often confronted with the challenge of controlling our thoughts. Our minds can easily become battlegrounds where doubts, fears, and worldly distractions wage war against the truth of God's Word. Yet, as followers of Christ, we are called to a higher standard. We are called to take every thought captive and align it with the obedience of Christ.

The apostle Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 10:5 that our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the spiritual forces of evil. Therefore, we must be vigilant in guarding our minds against the enemy's schemes. We must be intentional about filtering every thought through the lens of Scripture, discerning what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable (Philippians 4:8).

Taking our thoughts captive requires discipline and practice. It means acknowledging the lies and deceptions that try to take root in our minds and replacing them with the truth of God's Word. It means surrendering our thoughts and desires to the authority of Christ, allowing Him to renew our minds and transform us from the inside out (Romans 12:2).

When we take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, we experience a newfound freedom. We no longer allow our circumstances or emotions to dictate our reactions. Instead, we choose to trust in God's promises and rely on His strength to overcome every obstacle.

Key biblical principles that emphasize the importance of guarding one's mind, aligning thoughts with God's truth, and resisting destructive patterns of thinking.

The Battlefield of the Mind:

- **2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (AKJV)** - "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"

Renewing the Mind:

- **Romans 12:2 (AKJV)** - "And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Guarding the Heart and Mind:

- **Proverbs 4:23 (AKJV)** - "Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

Setting the Mind on Things Above:

- **Colossians 3:2 (AKJV)** - "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Casting Anxieties on God:

- **Philippians 4:6-7 (AKJV)** - "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Taking Every Thought Captive:

- **2 Corinthians 10:5 (AKJV)** - "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"

Meditating on God's Word:

- **Psalm 119:15 (AKJV)** - "I will meditate in your precepts, and have respect to your ways."

Capturing Thoughts of Praise:

- **Philippians 4:8 (AKJV)** - "Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Avoiding Evil Thoughts:

- **Proverbs 24:9 (AKJV)** - "The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men."

Guarding Against Worldly Wisdom:

- **Colossians 2:8 (AKJV)** - "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Overcoming Thoughts Fear with Faith:

- **Isaiah 41:10 (AKJV)** - "Fear you not; for I am with you: be not dismayed; for I am your God: I will strengthen you; yes, I will help you; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness."

The Mind Governed by the Spirit:

- **Romans 8:6 (AKJV)** - "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Avoiding Double-Mindedness:

- **James 1:8 (AKJV)** - "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

Guarding the Mind from Worldly Influences:

- **Romans 12:2 (AKJV)** - "And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

A Sound Mind Through God's Spirit:

- **2 Timothy 1:7 (AKJV)** - "For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Fixing Thoughts on Jesus:

- **Hebrews 3:1 (AKJV)** - "Why, holy brothers, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;"

Our hearts and minds are kept through Jesus and we are to Think on these things :

- **Philippians 4:6-8 (AKJV)** - "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, **whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."**

The Peace of Christ Ruling Hearts and Minds:

- **Philippians 4:7 (AKJV)** - "And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Avoiding Envy and Selfish Ambition:

- **James 3:14-16 (AKJV)** - "But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

The Mind Set on the Spirit:

- **Romans 8:5 (AKJV)** - "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."

Guarding the Heart for the Wellspring of Life:

- **Proverbs 4:23 (AKJV)** - "Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

The Renewal of the Inward Man:

- **2 Corinthians 4:16 (AKJV)** - "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

Conclusion:

The exploration of biblical teachings on taking our thoughts captive emphasizes the multifaceted nature and importance of this spiritual discipline. Grounded in these principles, we are guided to actively engage in our daily thought renewal, directing our minds toward God's truth and His will, guarding against destructive evil influences, and taking on the same mind as Jesus Christ. As we engage in the renewal of our minds, we experience transformation, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us into a renewed mind and a life that honors Christ in our every thought that aligns with the purposes and principles of God.

(153) Doers of God's Word, Not Just Hearers:

Be Doers of God's Word, Not Just Hearers

Scripture: James 1:22-25 (AKJV) "But be you doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like to a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. 25But whoever looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

The exhortation to be doers of God's Word, not just hearers, is a fundamental principle of our faith in Jesus Christ. It emphasizes the importance of applying the teachings of Scripture to our lives and living them out in practical obedience. As followers of Christ, we are called not only to hear God's Word but also to act upon it, allowing it to transform us from the inside out. Jesus is the living word of God so when we do what he instructs in his word we are fulfilling the will of God. Everyone one of us is called to love as Jesus loved us, and God's divine love is intended to be demonstrated in deed and truth.

James, in his epistle, warns against the deception of merely listening to the Word without putting it into practice. He compares such individuals to someone who looks at their reflection in a mirror but forgets what they look like as soon as they turn away. Just as a mirror reveals our physical appearance, the Word of God reveals the condition of our hearts and points us to the truth. However, if we fail to apply what we have heard, we deceive ourselves and miss out on the blessings that come from obedience.

True obedience to God's Word involves more than just outward conformity; it requires a genuine transformation of the heart and a commitment to live according to God's principles. Jesus emphasized the importance of obedience in Matthew 7:24-27, likening those who hear His words and put them into practice to a wise builder who constructs their house on a solid foundation. Such individuals withstand the storms of life, while those who hear but do not obey are like a house built on sand, vulnerable to

destruction. Furthermore, being doers of God's Word is evidence of a living faith. James 2:17 declares, "faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." Our obedience to God's commands is an expression of our love for Him and our desire to honor Him with our lives. As we obey His Word, we experience His blessings and walk in the abundant life that He has promised.

In conclusion, being doers of God's Word requires intentionality, humility, and perseverance. It involves aligning our thoughts, attitudes, and actions with the teachings of Scripture and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in us to produce fruit that glorifies God. May we not only hear the Word but also put it into practice, living as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ and bearing witness to His transforming power in our lives.

(154) Obedience And Free Will:

" Obedience is better than sacrifice " 1 Samuel 15:22

Another critical aspect in overcoming any specific sin or temptation is to maintain a willful obedience to God and His Word.

God desires that we choose to willfully obey His Word and direction for our lives, to set us free from the bondage of sin and the deceptions of ungodly temptations. Additionally, God desires our obedience to protect us from harm, allow us to receive His blessings, and help us grow in His divine love without any obstacles or distractions so that we can fully abide in Him, bearing good spiritual fruit, and fulfilling His calling and purpose.

Although God has the power to compel our obedience, He prefers that we willingly choose to follow His teachings and commandments. This choice is ultimately for our own benefit and reveals to God that we truly believe in and trust His guidance while loving Him wholeheartedly.

Jesus said, If you Love Me, You will keep (obey) My commandments." John 14:15

It is good for a Christian to aspire to have the right attitude of heart, by desiring fervently to obey God; Not reluctantly but because he wants to obey and please God with all of his being.

Obedience is the act of conforming to the will of God out of respect and reverence to God, who is worthy.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Exodus 19:5 (AKJV): "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people; for all the earth is mine."

John 14:15-18 (AKJV): "If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither

knows him: but you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

1 Peter 1:22 (AKJV): "Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit to unfeigned love of the brothers, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently."

Revelation 22:14 (AKJV): "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

How Do We Come To Know God?

1 John 2:3 (AKJV): "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."

Understanding God's commandments is indeed crucial for obedience. In 1 John 2:3, the verse underscores the connection between knowing God and keeping His commandments. This suggests that familiarity with God's instructions is essential for demonstrating our relationship with Him. Therefore, studying and learning God's commandments through His Word enables us to align our lives with His will and live in obedience to Him. This highlights the importance of ongoing learning and understanding of Scripture as we seek to follow God faithfully.

It should be obvious in order to obey God's commandments we need to learn what those commandments are first.

Obedience And Free Will: Continued …

Although God desires every person in the world to do His Will, To Love Him and to Love one another as Jesus Christ loved us; Still God will not force anyone to do all of what He desires.

God gives us the free will to follow and obey His ways, (Which brings spiritual Life through Jesus Christ) OR we can willfully choose to disobey and not follow God and His ways. (Which brings spiritual death)

Willful Obedience To God Out Of Our Love For Him And Others

Scripture: Joshua 1:8 (AKJV): "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success."

God calls us to a life of obedience, not out of obligation, but out of love and reverence for Him. Joshua 1:8 highlights the importance of keeping God's Word at the forefront of our minds and hearts. Through diligent meditation and study of His Word, we gain insight into His will and purpose for our lives.

Willful obedience requires more than just a surface-level understanding of God's Word; it involves a deep commitment to living in accordance with His commands. It means

aligning our thoughts, words, and actions with His truth and striving to do His will in every aspect of our lives.

As followers of Christ, we are called to walk in obedience to His Word, trusting that His ways are higher than our own (Isaiah 55:9). Though obedience may sometimes require sacrifice or self-denial, the rewards far outweigh any temporary discomfort. God promises prosperity and success to those who faithfully follow His commands.

Let us cultivate a heart of obedience, not out of fear or compulsion, but out of love for our Heavenly Father, Jesus and others. May we surrender our wills to His and trust in His wisdom and guidance for our lives. As we walk in obedience to His Word and will, may we experience the abundant life He has promised to those who love Him (John 10:10).

How is Love Perfected In Us? How Do We Know That We Are In God?

- By Willfully Obeying God's Word

As we believe and have faith in Jesus Christ and His Word, and obey it,, the Holy Spirit transforms us while we are under the grace of Jesus Christ.

1 John 2:5 (AKJV): "But whoever keeps His word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we know that we are in Him."

Matthew 7:24-25 (AKJV): "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock."

Obedience to God:

Obedience to God and our free will are integral part of our life as disciples of Christ. Obedience to God signifies submission to God, recognizing His divine Authority and following His commands as a fundamental tenet of faith. This obedience is often depicted as a means to align oneself with a divine plan or to fulfill a sacred purpose.

Simultaneously, our God given ability to haver our own " free will " asserts that individuals possess the ability to make independent choices and decisions, shaping our own destinies.

God does not want us to be forced to follow Him and obey Him, but rather that we would have the liberty to choose to fulfill His desires, for our own sakes and to give Him good pleasure. God will know if our love for Him and others is genuine, if we willing choose to obey Him, rather then Him forcing us.

True obedience to God involves the voluntary surrender of one's will to God's plan, will and purpose. This is because we appreciate His unmerited steadfast love and forgiveness towards each one of us, thereby harmonizing free will with the acceptance of divine authority.

God's Word offer insights into this complex relationship. Scriptural references highlights the importance of obedience, emphasizing the rewards and consequences tied to adherence or disobedience to divine commandments. At the same time, these texts often acknowledge the autonomy granted to us by God our Father and Jesus Christ,

underscoring the significance of personal choices and moral agency. The interpretation of these scriptures may vary among different Christian denominations , reflecting diverse perspectives on the interplay between obedience to God and the exercise of free will. Ultimately, the reconciliation of these biblical actions of obedience and free will by every Christian relating to God’s Word, Commandments, and Instructions can be summed up in this, Love as Jesus Christ Loved us.

Passages such as those found in the Old Testament, particularly in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, outline God's laws and the blessings that come with obedience.

The New Testament introduces the teachings of Jesus Christ, who emphasizes the spirit of the law and the necessity of obedience to God's will. In the Gospels, particularly in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Jesus' instructions and parables often underscore the significance of following God's commands willingly and with a sincere heart. The Apostle Paul's letters, such as those to the Romans and the Corinthians, further explore the balance between free will and obedience, highlighting the transformative power of faith in Christ.

Key Scriptures:

Exodus 19:5 (AKJV): "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people: for all the earth is mine."

John 14:15 (AKJV): "If you love me, keep my commandments."

1 John 5:3 (AKJV): "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 (AKJV): "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live: That you may love the LORD your God, and that you may obey his voice, and that you may hold to him: for he is your life, and the length of your days: that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

1 Samuel 15:22 (AKJV): "And Samuel said, Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams."

Matthew 7:21 (AKJV): "Not every one that said to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Luke 11:28 (AKJV): "But he said, Yes rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."

John 15:10 (AKJV): "If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

Colossians 3:23-24 (AKJV): "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men; Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ."

1 Peter 1:14-16 (AKJV): "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be you holy; for I am holy."

1 John 2:3-6 (AKJV): "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that said, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word, in him truly is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that said he stays in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

Free Will:

Introduction

Free will is a fundamental truth related to our in Christian faith and our walk with Jesus, often discussed in relation to God**'**s sovereignty, human responsibility, and salvation. The Bible presents a dynamic interaction between God's divine plan and human choices, showing that while God is sovereign, He allows humans the ability to make real decisions that have consequences. God does not force us to love and obey him, rather he gives us the free will to make choice of continuing in our ways which are spiritual death or freely choose Jesus as our Mediator and Savior and have eternal life with him in heaven.

1. The Origin of Free Will

God created humanity in His image (Genesis 1:26-27), which includes the capacity to choose between good and evil. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were given the ability to obey or disobey God**'**s command concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17). Their choice to eat from the tree (Genesis 3:6) led to sin and death entering the world (Romans 5:12), demonstrating the reality of free will and its consequences.

2. Free Will and God's Sovereignty

While God is sovereign and His will prevails (Proverbs 19:21), He allows humans to make choices. Scriptures such as **Deuteronomy 30:19** ("I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore, choose life...") highlight God**'**s invitation for people to make moral decisions. However, the Bible also teaches that God can guide and influence human hearts without violating free will (Proverbs 16:9, Philippians 2:13).

3. Free Will in Salvation

The New Testament emphasizes that humans must choose to respond to God**'**s grace. **John 3:16** teaches that "whoever believes" will have eternal life, implying a personal decision. However, free will does not mean salvation is earned; rather, it is an acceptance or rejection of God**'**s grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). At the same time, **Romans 9:16** reminds us that salvation is ultimately dependent on God**'**s mercy.

4. The Struggle Between Flesh and Spirit

Even after salvation, believers experience the struggle of free will. **Galatians 5:16-17** speaks of the battle between the desires of the flesh and the Spirit. Paul expresses this struggle in **Romans 7:15-20**, acknowledging the difficulty of consistently choosing righteousness despite knowing God**'**s will. This affirms that free will remains in effect even after salvation.

5. The Consequences of Free Will

Throughout Scripture, God warns of the consequences of human choices. **1 Samuel 8** describes Israel demanding a king despite God's warnings. He allowed them to have their way, leading to hardship, showing that free will includes responsibility. Similarly, **Romans 1:24-26** describes God "giving people over" to their sinful desires when they reject Him.

6. Free Will and Moral Responsibility

Believers are called to use their free will responsibly. **Joshua 24:15** challenges God**'**s people to "choose this day whom you will serve," demonstrating that our choices reflect our commitment to God. **James 1:22** urges Christians to be "doers of the word," emphasizing obedience as an active choice.

Conclusion

The Bible affirms that God has given all of us the ability to choose, while also holding us accountable for our decisions. God so loved the world that he provided the Way for any one of us to be reconciled with him. God wants the very best for each one of us. Free will does not operate independently of God**'**s sovereignty, but within it. God invites everyone to choose Him, offers grace when we fail, and ultimately allows our choices to shape our eternal destiny, and eternal life.

Key Scriptures :

Joshua 24:15 (AKJV): "And if it seem evil to you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Galatians 5:13 (AKJV): "For, brothers, you have been called to liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

Romans 6:16 (AKJV): "Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness?"

James 1:22 (AKJV): "But be you doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

Revelation 22:17 (AKJV): "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is thirsty come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

2 Corinthians 3:17 (AKJV): "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Galatians 5:1 (AKJV): "Stand fast therefore in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Philippians 2:13 (AKJV): "For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Romans 14:12 (AKJV): "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

1 Corinthians 10:23 (AKJV): "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not."

James 4:7-8 (AKJV): "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded."

Genesis 2:16-17 (AKJV): "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die."

These additional verses contribute to the understanding that obedience to God is not coerced but arises from a heart willingly surrendered to God, and free will is inherent in the choices individuals make regarding their relationship with Him.

Obedience is a result of genuine love for God, and yet, individuals are granted the freedom to make choices, with those choices carrying moral and spiritual significance, consequences or spiritual rewards and blessings.

DOING THE WILL OF GOD - Continued…

"And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." - Romans 12:2 (AKJV)

This verse presents a powerful exhortation for believers to resist conformity to the patterns and values of this world and instead pursue transformation through the renewal of their minds. Let's explore what it means to do the will of God and avoid conformity to the world, followed by a prayer for guidance and strength in living according to God's will.

To do the will of God means aligning our thoughts, attitudes, and actions with His perfect plan and purposes. It involves seeking His guidance and direction in every area of our lives and obeying His commands out of love and reverence for Him.

Conversely and against God’s will, conformity to the world entails adopting the mindset, values, and behaviors of the secular culture around us. It's about prioritizing worldly pursuits such as wealth, power, and pleasure over the things of God. Conformity to the world leads to spiritual compromise, moral compromise, and ultimately, spiritual death.

The apostle Paul urges believers to resist conformity to the world and instead pursue transformation through the renewing of their minds. This transformation is a work of God's Spirit within us, as we surrender our lives to Him and allow Him to change us from the inside out.

Renewing our minds involves filling our thoughts with the truth of God's Word, meditating on His promises, and allowing His Spirit to convict us of sin and guide us into righteousness. It's about cultivating a mindset that is focused on eternal realities rather than temporal pleasures.

As we are transformed by the renewing of our minds, we are able to discern and prove what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. We gain clarity and insight into God's will for our lives, enabling us to make decisions that honor Him and bring glory to His name.

Living according to God's will requires intentionality and discipline. It means making daily choices to prioritize His kingdom and His righteousness above all else. It means resisting the pressures and temptations of this world and remaining steadfast in our commitment to follow Christ.

Generally speaking, understanding, fulfilling and doing the Will of God, is experiencing and doing those things that are part of God's intended cooperate plan and purpose for every follower of Jesus Christ; There are also specific plans and purposes that are expected or given personally to every believer throughout their lives, at various times that can be considered the Will of God for a particular person; These situations could be a specific ministry calling, or a place God wants that individual to be, or a testimony to be given or helping and caring for someone in some way etc.

To do the will of God should always be the foremost heart compelled desire of every Christian. When we are determined to do the will of God, we will have God's favor and will be extremely blessed.

Before we were a Christian, we were self-willed, following our own imperfect desires and beliefs, and based our decisions only on our limited human knowledge. Being self-willed only at best provided a shallow existence without any eternal benefits, moreover being self-willed caused us to make many hurtful mistakes because of our ignorance and never truly fulfilled our lives with true joy.

To deliberately go against the will of God is outright rebellion. This kind of pride was the downfall of Satan and one third of the angels in heaven, as well as the fall of man when Adam and Eve rebelled against the will of God, and against what He told them to do.

Doing the will of God, as God instructs in His word is contrary to our own logic or selfish lustful desires. Yet when we deny our self and purpose to do the will of God, we receive blessings and goodness more than we could ever imagine.

It is important for us not to lean to our own understanding, but rather learn first What is the will of God and purpose to obey What God is teaching us; As we do the will of God, our lives and the lives around us are blessed, and we will inherit the promises of God. Those Christians that do the will of God are the people who are part a of God's family.

Mark 3:35 AKJV 35 For whoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

How do we discern and know the Will of God for each of us?

"Teach me to do your will, for you are my God" (**Psalm 143:10**).

1) First learn God**'**s Word and take to heart the things that Jesus and the Apostles taught us to do, and what things we are instructed not to do; All of which is God**'**s Will generally speaking, and is applicable for every believer and disciple of Christ to learn and follow. All of these are interrelated and are summed up in one commandment to Love God and others.

Matthew 22:37-40 AKJV 37 Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like to it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

2) Pray and ask God for discernment and Wisdom of what His Will is for you

THE WILL OF GOD - KEY SCRIPTURES

1 Thessalonians 5:14-18 AKJV 14 Now we exhort you, brothers, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. 15 See that none render evil for evil to any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. 16 Rejoice ever more. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In every thing give thanks: **for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.**

Matthew 7:21 AKJV 21 Not every one that said to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Jesus demonstrated the right attitude of heart that we should always have; even before He was about to die at the cross, He was praying to God the Father and seeking the will of God, and not just stubbornly looking after His own welfare.

Matthew 26:39 AKJV 39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as you will.

Matthew 26:42 AKJV 42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, your will be done.

John 5:30 AKJV 30 I can of my own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which has sent me.

1 John 2:15-17 AKJV 15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: **but he that does the will of God stays for ever.**

1 Thessalonians 4:3 AKJV 3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication:

John 4:34 AKJV 34 Jesus said to them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Romans 12:1-2 AKJV 1 I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Matthew 7:21-29 AKJV **21 Not every one that said to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven**. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess to them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity. 24 Therefore whoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, which built his house on a rock: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it fell not: for it was founded on a rock. 26 And every one that hears these sayings of mine, and does them not, shall be likened to a foolish man, which built his house on the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. 28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: 29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Matthew 12:50 AKJV 50 For whoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

John 6:40 AKJV 40 And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which sees the Son, and believes on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Ephesians 5:1-21 AKJV 1 **Be you therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling smell.** (Aroma) 3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becomes saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things comes the wrath of God on the children of disobedience. 7 Be not you therefore partakers with them. 8 For you were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light: 9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) 10 Proving what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. 13 But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatever does make manifest is light. 14 Why he said, Awake you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. 15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. **17 Why be you not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.** 18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; 19 Speaking

to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; 20 Giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; 21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Hebrews 10:36 -39 (AKJV) “For you have need of patience, that, after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise. 37For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39But we are not of them who draw back to perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

Related Aspects Concerning The Will Of God:

God’s Perfect Will is mentioned in Romans 12;2. It refers to God**’**s plan to save and reconcile humanity through Jesus Christ. As disciples of Jesus Christ we are encouraged and instructed to seek and align our lives with His will. This involves following Jesus and living out the his principles of love, grace, and righteousness that He exemplified.

God’s Permissive Will , which means that sometimes God allows things that are not part of His perfect plan. An example of this can be seen in the Israelites request, for a king as described in 1 Samuel 8. Although it was not God’s plan He allowed it. Understanding this aspect of God’s will reminds us that He sometimes permits our decisions, and even though it may have not been His perfect will, He can still work our choices for good and for His purpose.

God’s Moral Will; is revealed through His commandments and moral principles found in Scripture. It includes instructions like loving one another (John 13;34) living righteously (1 Peter 2;15) and avoiding behaviors (1 Thessalonians 4;3). Following God’s will is essential, for leading a life that honors Him.

God’s Reveled Will in the Word of God; Throughout the Bible God reveals His will through His Word providing guidance on personal conduct relationships and ethical principles, and through the Holy Spirit.

For instance Micah 6;8 guides us to act with justice show mercy and walk humbly alongside God. Understanding and following Gods revealed intentions, in the Scriptures is crucial for life.

God’s Specific Guidance; At times God provides instructions to individuals. We see examples of this in how God instructed Noah to build an ark (Genesis 6;14) or when He called Moses to lead the Israelites (Exodus 3;10). Discerning God’s specific guidance often involves prayer seeking counsel from others and listening to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

God’s Ultimate Authority & Will; God’s ultimate authority encompasses His control over all things. This is evident in passages like Ephesians 1;11 which speaks of how God works everything according to His will. Recognizing God’s sovereignty helps us trust Him during circumstances.

Seeking God’s Guidance and Will: The Bible encourages believers to seek God’s guidance through prayer just as Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26;39). It also emphasizes the importance of seeking wisdom and discernment (Proverbs 3;5 6) while aligning our desires with what pleases God.

Obeying God's Will; Obedience to God's will is a recurring theme, throughout the Bible. James 1;22 encourages believers not to listen to God's Word but to put it into action. It emphasizes that obedience is a part of living in alignment with God's desires.

Walking in His Spirit is His Will; In Galatians 5;16 25 the life example of "walking in the Spirit" is discussed. This refers to living according to God's will by displaying the fruits of the Spirit, such, as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Walking in the Spirit is a important part of embodying God's intentions in our lives.

Trusting God's timing is His Will; ihis is another aspect of understanding His will. Ecclesiastes 3;1 reminds us that there is a season and time for everything. Having patience and faith in Gods timing is essential as we navigate our walk with Him.

Surrendering ourselves to God's Will; Surrendering ourselves to God's will entails letting go of our desires and submitting ourselves to His divine plan. Jesus exemplified this surrender in the Garden of Gethsemane when He prayed, "Not my will but yours be done" (Luke 22;42). Surrendering to God requires trust and a deepening relationship with Him.

Praying is God's Will; Prayer serves as a tool for discerning God's will. It allows us to communicate with Him intimately and seek guidance, on understanding His desires for us.

The book of Philippians chapter 4 verse 6 encourages us as Christians to bring our requests before God through prayer and supplication. It emphasizes the importance of seeking God's guidance and wisdom in order to align our desires with His will, which helps us deepen our connection, with Him.

Following God's Will Is Life, Fruitful:

Psalm 1:1-3 illustrates that those who take joy in and reflect on God's teachings will flourish like trees planted by streams of water. This metaphor suggests that following God's will leads to growth, prosperity and blessings.

Psalm 1:1-3 (AKJV) "Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

2But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law does he meditate day and night.

3And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

Seeking And Embracing God's will during times of suffering and hardship is a crucial aspect of faith. In 1 Peter 4;19 we are encouraged to entrust ourselves to our Lord and Creator while continuing to do good. This verse highlights the significance of maintaining trust in God's plan when faced with adversity.

Trusting in God and not our understanding is God's will is essential for living a fulfilling life. Proverbs 3;5 6 advises us to wholeheartedly trust in the Lord more than relying on our own understanding. It emphasizes acknowledging Him in all aspects of life. This passage underscores the importance of surrendering ambitions and seeking alignment, with Gods purposes.

Our minds renewed is God's Will:

In Romans 12:2, we are instructed not to be conformed to worldliness or carnal ways but rather that our minds and behaviors be transformed through our relationship with Jesus Christ and the work of God's holy Spirit.. This change doesn't just adjust our behaviors but reshapes our entire outlook, helping us to understand and align with God's will. This transformation is more than just a biblical doctrine—it's a powerful process that deeply influences who we are and how we should think and see the world, from a Christlike perspective, love and concern in all holiness.

Obeying God's Will as an Expression of Love:

In 1 John 5:3, we learn that loving God means following His commandments. But here's the beauty: it's not about drudgery or obligation. Instead, it's about showing our love and devotion to God through our actions. Our obedience is a heartfelt response to His love—a way to honor and please Him in every aspect of our lives.

Trusting in God's Faithfulness as We Seek His Will:

When we're trying to understand what God wants for us, it's vital to rely on His unwavering faithfulness. 1 Thessalonians 5:24 reassures us that the One who calls us is always reliable. This trust in God's character is our anchor, reminding us that He keeps His promises and that we can depend on Him completely.

Our Spiritual Sustenance - Do The Will Of God:

Our spiritual sustenance is to do the will of God and finish His work and plan for our lives like Jesus Christ did: in John 4:34, tells us that fulfilling God's will was Jesus' desire and deep sense of purpose and contentment. Doing the will of God brings life and pleases God the Father. It's about doing what we were made for and feeling that it's exactly where we belong.

Seeking God's Guidance with a Humble Heart is God's will:

James 4:10 calls us to humble ourselves before the Lord, promising that He will lift us up. When we approach God's guidance with humility, recognizing our need for His wisdom, we open ourselves up to truly understanding His will. It's a reminder that seeking God's direction is as much about our posture of heart as it is about the answers we receive.

Embracing Patience in God's Timing:

Hebrews 10:36 encourages us to be patient and endure through times of waiting. Trusting in God's timing can be challenging, but it's essential. This passage promises that as we faithfully follow God's will, we will eventually receive what He has promised. Patience isn't just about waiting; it's about holding on to the assurance that God's timing is perfect and His promises are trustworthy.

Trusting in God's Good, Acceptable and Perfect Will; In Romans 12:2 we are encouraged not to conform to the ways of the world but to allow our minds to be renewed by God, and present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, dying to our old sinful nature.This transformation enables us to discern , know and wisely follow His perfect will.

Contentment within God's Purpose & Will; Philippians 4;11-13 showcases how the Apostle Paul found contentment in every situation through his faith in Christ, who provided him with strength. This demonstrates that it is possible for us to find peace and satisfaction amidst challenges and uncertainties when our lives are aligned with God's purpose.

Expressing Gratitude as a Response to God's Will; The passage from 1 Thessalonians 5;18 encourages us to express gratitude in all circumstances since this aligns with God's will for us, through Jesus Christ.

This emphasizes the significance of fostering a mindset of appreciation and thankfulness regardless of the circumstances as a way to respond to God's intentions. Recognizing God's desire, for holiness; 1 Thessalonians 4;3 highlights that God desires believers to be set and refrain from engaging in immorality. This underscores the importance of striving for purity and living in accordance with God's intentions.

Following God's Will and Plan for Fruitfulness:

In John 15:16, Jesus tells us that He has chosen us to bear fruit that lasts. This invitation is a call to live in alignment with God**'**s plan, aiming to make a lasting impact in the world. Embracing God**'**s will involves embodying qualities such as the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22.23) which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, humility, patience, trust, contentment, gratitude, and a commitment to holiness. It**'**s about guiding our decisions to foster unity among us as Christians and striving for growth that leads to a life rich with purpose,, and enduring significance. Our love and service of ministering to others should be done with the fruit of God's Holy Spirit.

Persevering Through Trials According to God's Will:

James 1:12 tells us that those who persevere under trial will receive the crown of life. This passage encourages us to remain steadfast through challenges, knowing that our perseverance aligns with God**'**s will and brings His support. The reward is not just a future promise but a testament to the strength we gain through enduring faith.

Delight in God- Aligning Our Desires with God's Will:

Psalm 37:4 teaches us to delight ourselves in the Lord, and He will give us the desires of our hearts. Aligning our desires with what God wants for us is about letting our hearts be shaped by our relationship with Him. It**'**s about finding joy in His presence and allowing His desires to become our own.

Finding Peace in Surrendering to God's Will:

Philippians 4:6-7 offers a profound promise: God**'**s peace will guard our hearts and minds when we present our requests to Him in prayer and trust in His will. Surrendering to God**'**s plan brings a peace that surpasses all understanding, even when life feels uncertain.

Trusting God for Guidance and Direction:

Proverbs 3:5-6 urges us to trust in the Lord and not lean on our own understanding. By acknowledging Him in all our ways, we invite His guidance and direction into our lives. This trust highlights the importance of relying on His wisdom and authority as we navigate this life with Jesus.

Understanding and Fulfilling God's Will: Making Disciples Of Jesus Christ

Comprehending **"**God**'**s Will" involves continuing in God's Word, growth, trust, surrender, and alignment with His divine plan. It encompasses experiencing His peace, joy, and transformative power while fostering love and unity among other Christians, and further demonstrating God's love with the world. Fulfilling God**'**s will means engaging with His broader plan for every follower of Jesus Christ and embracing the specific purposes He has for each of us throughout our lives, whether it**'**s a ministry calling, a place He wants us to be, or a testimony He wants us to share. God's will is to into all the world and proclaim the Good News of God's Salvation, to love God, to love Others as Jesus loved us, and to make disciples for Jesus Christ.

Fulfilling and doing the Will of God, in general is experiencing and doing those things that are part of God**'**s intended cooperate plan and purpose for every follower of Jesus Christ; There are also specific plans and purposes that are expected or given personally to every disciple of Christ Jesus throughout our lives, at various times that can be considered the Will of God for a particular person; These situations could be a specific ministry calling, or a place God wants that individual to be, or a testimony to be given or helping and caring for someone etc.

There are many morally right and good spiritual virtues, acts and aspects that are directly connected to God's Will - Here are just some…

Love – **John 13:34-35** (New Commandment, Love One Another)

Humility – **James 4:10** (Humble Yourself, God Will Lift You Up)

Reconciliation – **2 Corinthians 5:18-19** (Ministry of Reconciliation, Christ Restores)

Abiding – **John 15:4-5** (Abide in Me, Bear Much Fruit)

Believing Jesus – **John 3:16** (Whoever Believes, Eternal Life)

Following Jesus – **Luke 9:23** (Deny Yourself, Take Up Your Cross)

Disciple – **Matthew 28:19-20** (Go and Make Disciples, Teach All Nations)

Continue in God's Word – **John 8:31-32** (Abide, Truth, Discipleship)

Compassion – **Colossians 3:12** (Kindness, Humility, Patience)

Kindness – **Ephesians 4:32** (Tenderhearted, Forgiving)

Meekness – **Matthew 5:5** (Humility, Inheritance)

Edifying – **Ephesians 4:29** (Building Up, Graceful Speech)

Honesty – **Proverbs 12:22** (Truthful Lips, Delight of the Lord)

Sexually Pure – **1 Thessalonians 4:3-4** (Sanctification, Abstain from Immorality)

Moral – **Micah 6:8** (Justice, Mercy, Walking Humbly)

Gracious – **Colossians 4:6** (Seasoned with Salt, Wisdom in Speech)

Forgiving – **Matthew 6:14-15** (Forgive Others, God's Forgiveness)

Gentle – **Galatians 5:22-23** (Fruit of the Spirit, Self-Control)

Wisdom – **James 1:5** (Ask God, Gives Generously)

Merciful – **Luke 6:36** (Be Merciful, As Your Father is Merciful)

Repentance – **Acts 3:19** (Turn Back, Sins Blotted Out)

Steadfast – **1 Corinthians 15:58** (Immovable, Abounding in God's Work)

Enduring – **James 1:12** (Trials, Crown of Life)

Persevering – **Hebrews 10:36** (Endurance, Promise Fulfilled)

Hospitable – **1 Peter 4:9** (Show Hospitality, Without Grumbling)

Visiting (Caring for Others) – **James 1:27** (Orphans, Widows, Pure Religion)

Take Thoughts Captive – **2 Corinthians 10:5** (Obedience to Christ, Destroy Arguments)

Charitable – **2 Corinthians 9:7** (Cheerful Giver, Not Reluctant)

Self-Denial – **Luke 9:23** (Deny Yourself, Take Up Cross Daily)

Truth – **John 14:6** (Way, Truth, Life, Jesus)

Be Strong/Courageous – **Joshua 1:9** (Fear Not, God is With You)

Patient – **James 5:8** (Establish Your Hearts, The Lord is Coming)

Self-Control – **Galatians 5:22-23** (Fruit of the Spirit, Against Such There is No Law)

Evangelize – **Mark 16:15** (Go Into All the World, Preach the Gospel)

Be Light – **Matthew 5:14-16** (Light of the World, Shine Before Others)

Preach – **2 Timothy 4:2** (Preach the Word, Be Ready in Season and Out)

Teach – **Matthew 28:19-20** (Teach Them to Observe All I Have Commanded)

Witness – **Acts 1:8** (You Will Be My Witnesses, Power of the Holy Spirit)

Comfort – **2 Corinthians 1:3-4** (God of All Comfort, Comforts Us in Our Affliction)

Obey – **John 14:15** (If You Love Me, Keep My Commandments)

Correction – **Proverbs 3:11-12** (Do Not Despise the Lord**'**s Discipline, He Corrects Those He Loves)

Reproof – **2 Timothy 3:16** (All Scripture is Profitable for Teaching, Reproof, and Correction)

Rebuke – **Titus 1:13** (Rebuke Them Sharply, So They May Be Sound in Faith)

Beware – **Matthew 7:15** (Beware of False Prophets, Who Come in Sheep**'**s Clothing

J**ohn 13:34** (Love, Commandment, New Command)

1 Peter 2:15 (Righteous Living, Submit, Silence, Freedom, Cover)

1 Thessalonians 4:3 (Holiness, Sanctification, Sexual Purity, Abstain)

Genesis 6:14 (Specific Will, Specific Instructions, Ark)

Exodus 3:10 (Specific Calling, Divine Commission, Deliverance, Moses)

Matthew 26:39 (Surrender, Submission, Not My Will)

James 1:22 (Obedience, Action, Doers of the Word)

Galatians 5:16-25 (Fruits of the Spirit, Walk in the Spirit, Flesh vs. Spirit)

Ecclesiastes 3:1 (Seasons, Timing, Appointed Time)

Luke 22:42 (Surrender, Submission, Not My Will, Yours)

Philippians 4:6 (Prayer, Trust, Petition, Supplication, Thanksgiving)

Psalm 1:1-3 (Blessings, Prosperity, Delight, Blessed)

1 Peter 4:19 (Perseverance, Endurance, Suffering, Entrust to God)

Proverbs 3:5-6 (Trust, Guidance, Lean Not, Acknowledge Him, Paths)

Romans 12:2 (Transformation, Discernment, Renewing Mind, Not Conformed)

1 John 5:3 (Love, Obedience, Commandments, Not Burdensome)

Colossians 3:2 (Eternal Perspective, Mindset, Set Mind on Things Above)

John 4:34 (Fulfillment, Obedience, Finish the Work)

James 4:10 (Humility, Exaltation, Lift Up)

Hebrews 10:36 (Endurance, Perseverance, Patience, Promise, Reward)

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (Salvation, Knowledge, Desires All to Be Saved)

Ephesians 1:9-10 (Unity, Reconciliation, Mystery, Fulfillment, Administration)

Ephesians 1:11 (Sovereignty, Purpose, Divine Plan, Counsel)

Philippians 4:11-13 (Contentment, Faith, Strength in Christ, Circumstances)

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (Gratitude, Thanksgiving, In Everything Give Thanks)

John 15:16 (Fruitfulness, Appointment, Chosen)

1 Peter 2:2 (Spiritual Growth, Nourishment, Milk of the Word)

Proverbs 16:9 (Divine Guidance, Establishing Steps, Plans of the Heart)

James 1:12 (Perseverance, Endurance, Crown of Life, Trial)

Psalm 37:4 (Desires, Delight, Heart**'**s Desires)

Philippians 4:6-7 (Peace, Trust, Requests Made Known, Guard Hearts)

Ephesians 4:3 (Unity, Harmony, Bond of Peace, Endeavoring)

Matthew 6:33 (Seeking First, Kingdom, Provision, Righteousness)

3 John 1:4 (Joy, Spiritual Growth, Walking in Truth)

Doing the will of God is a key teaching of Christianity and a major part of what it means to follow Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. At its core, it involves aligning one's life, choices, and actions with the desires and commands of God. The Scriptures provide a rich treasure of teachings on the will of God, guiding us on how to live in obedience and fulfillment of His purpose. Doing the will of God, not only pleases God, but also blesses us and those around us.

One foundational aspect of doing the will of God is found in Jesus' own words in Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but

only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." Here, Jesus emphasizes the active aspect of obedience, indicating that mere verbal acknowledgment is insufficient.

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans, highlights the transformative nature of God's will. Romans 12:2 encourages believers to "not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." This verse underscores the renewal of the mind as a crucial element in discerning and following God's will.

Further insight is provided in Ephesians 5:15-17, where Paul urges believers to be wise and understand the Lord's will. This involves making the most of every opportunity, being filled with the Spirit, and submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. The will of God is not merely a set of rules but a dynamic relationship with the Spirit that influences our daily choices.

The prayer Jesus taught His disciples, commonly known as the Lord's Prayer, includes the petition "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10. This prayer reflects an acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and a desire to see His purposes fulfilled in the earthly realm.

James 1:22 provides a practical exhortation: "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." This emphasizes the importance of translating knowledge of God's will into concrete actions. The will of God is not an abstract concept but a lived reality.

One crucial aspect of understanding God's will is recognizing the relational component inherent in our connection with Him. In John 15:14, Jesus declares, "You are my friends if you do what I command." This relational bond between believers and God is strengthened through obedience. The will of God, in this context, is not a set of arbitrary rules but an invitation to intimacy and friendship.

The ethical dimension of doing God's will is emphasized in passages such as Micah 6:8: "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Here, the will of God is portrayed as a call to ethical living — to pursue justice, extend mercy, and maintain humility in our walk with Him.

Transformation lies at the heart of doing God's will, as highlighted in Romans 8:29 : "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters." The divine will involves the process of conforming believers to the likeness of Christ, a journey of spiritual growth and character development.

The Apostle Paul's letters further expound on the transformative nature of God's will. In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul describes the fruit of the Spirit — love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These virtues, produced by the Holy Spirit, reflect the inner transformation that occurs when one aligns with God's will.

In Ephesians 1:9, Paul unveils a broader perspective, stating that God "made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ."

This mystery of God's will encompasses the cosmic and redemptive plan unveiled through Christ, demonstrating that our individual obedience is intricately connected to the overarching narrative of salvation.

Furthermore, the concept of doing God's will involves discernment, as seen in Colossians 1:9 : "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives." Discerning God's will requires seeking wisdom and understanding from the Holy Spirit, emphasizing the need for a dynamic, Spirit-led engagement with His guidance.

In summary, doing the will of God involves an active and transformative engagement with His teachings. It requires a renewed mind, a submission to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and a commitment to living out the principles laid out in Scripture. By seeking to understand and follow God's will, we participate in His redemptive plan and experience the abundant life He desires for us.

Some Biblical Examples of Those Who Did the Will of God

- **Jesus Christ** - As mentioned, Jesus consistently emphasized that His primary mission was to do the will of His Father (John 6:38).
- **Abraham** - Displayed obedience in being willing to sacrifice his son Isaac in accordance with God's command (Genesis 22:1-18).
- **Moses** - Led the Israelites out of Egypt and followed God's guidance throughout their journey in the wilderness.
- **David** - Despite his flaws, David was described as a man after God's own heart, seeking to fulfill God's purposes (Acts 13:22).
- **Mary, Mother of Jesus** - Submitted willingly to God's plan for her life, accepting the role of being the mother of the Savior (Luke 1:38).
- **Paul** - After his conversion, Paul devoted his life to spreading the Gospel and planting churches, aligning with God's will (Acts 9:15-16).
- **John the Baptist** - Prepared the way for Jesus, fulfilling the prophetic role assigned to him (Matthew 3:1-3).
- **Job** - Despite immense suffering, maintained his integrity and trust in God, ultimately aligning with God's will (Job 1:21).
- **Esther** - Risked her life to save her people, responding to the divine call for such a time as that (Esther 4:14).
- **Daniel** - Maintained faithfulness to God's commands, even in the face of persecution and exile.
- **Ruth** - Displayed loyalty and obedience to God by embracing the God of Naomi and following His ways (Ruth 1:16).
- **Jeremiah** - Despite facing opposition and hardship, faithfully delivered God's messages to the people of Judah.
- **Jonah** - After initial resistance, fulfilled God's command by delivering a message of repentance to Nineveh (Jonah 3:1-5).

- **Isaiah** - Prophesied about the coming Messiah and faithfully conveyed God's messages to the people.
- **Peter and John** - Boldly proclaimed the Gospel despite opposition, fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).
- **Stephen** - Even in the face of martyrdom, remained steadfast in his commitment to God's truth (Acts 7:59-60).
- **Noah** - Built the ark according to God's specifications, saving his family and animals from the flood (Genesis 6:22).
- **Elijah** - Challenged the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, demonstrating unwavering commitment to the true God (1 Kings 18:36-39).
- **Deborah** - Led Israel with wisdom and courage in alignment with God's purposes (Judges 4:4-10).
- **Timothy** - Received guidance from Paul and faithfully served in spreading the Gospel (Philippians 2:19-22).
- **Joseph** - Maintained his integrity and followed God's plan, even in the face of betrayal and hardship (Genesis 39:9).
- **Samuel** - Faithfully served as a prophet and judge, anointing kings according to God's guidance (1 Samuel 3:19-21).
- **Barnabas** - Played a vital role in supporting Paul's ministry and spreading the Gospel (Acts 11:22-26).
- **Aquila and Priscilla** - Instructed and mentored Apollos in the ways of the Lord, contributing to the growth of the early Church (Acts 18:24-26).
- **Philip** - Obediently followed the Spirit's leading, leading to the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39).
- **Lydia** - Opened her heart to the Gospel, providing hospitality and support to Paul and his companions (Acts 16:14-15).
- **Ezra** - Devoted himself to the study and teaching of God's law, leading the people in returning to obedience (Ezra 7:10).
- **Silas** - Accompanied Paul on his missionary journeys, contributing to the establishment of churches (Acts 15:40-41).
- **Anna** - A prophetess who worshiped and fasted in the temple, recognizing and proclaiming the infant Jesus as the Messiah (Luke 2:36-38).
- **Phoebe** - A deaconess in the early Church, known for her service and support of fellow believers (Romans 16:1-2).
- **Gideon** - Responded to God's call to deliver Israel from the Midianites, trusting in God's guidance (Judges 6-7).
- **Hannah** - Dedicated her son Samuel to God's service, fulfilling her vow in gratitude (1 Samuel 1-2).

- **Josiah** - Instituted religious reforms in Judah, seeking to restore obedience to God's law (2 Kings 22-23).
- **Mordecai** - Influenced Esther to take courageous action for the preservation of the Jewish people (Esther 4:13-14).
- **Priscilla and Aquila** - Instructed and guided Apollos in the ways of the Lord, contributing to his effective ministry (Acts 18:24-26).
- **Miriam** - Played a crucial role in the Exodus story, aiding Moses in leading the Israelites (Exodus 15:20-21).
- **Titus** - Worked alongside Paul in various ministries, demonstrating a commitment to spreading the Gospel (2 Corinthians 8:16-24).
- **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego** - Refused to worship the golden image, risking their lives for their obedience to God (Daniel 3).
- **Jehoshaphat** - Sought the Lord in times of trouble, leading Judah in obedience and worship (2 Chronicles 20).
- **Simeon** - Righteous and devout, eagerly awaited the Messiah and recognized Jesus as the fulfilling.

(156) The Words Of Our Mouth:

CONTENTS

- Introduction
- Key Scriptures
- Guard our Mouth and our Words
- Key Scriptures:
- HOW and WHY should we be careful what we speak and to guard our mouth ?
- Key Scriptures
- How does God want our words to be ?
- Key Scriptures
- How does God want our words NOT to be ?
- Key Scriptures
- Good Speech and Words That Bring Life:
- How Should Our Words Be According To The Bible, God’s Word?:
- Good Speech

- Words From God
- Words To God
- Bad Speech And Words That Bring Death:

Introduction

Proverbs 18:21; (AKJV) “Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.”

The words of our mouth either bring life or death, to those who hear. Our speech, as Christians, should always be filled with words that are spoken in love, and along with goodness, and truth as the Holy Spirit would give utterance; Our words should be consistent with biblical principles, being kind when appropriate and sometimes even sounding stern at the proper times.

Words spoken in kindness, and gentleness are always more easily accepted by others, although strict words of truth only as God would lead are sometimes essential to be spoken, to warn, correct or to reproof others.

Our words should bring edification to all those around us. Not tear down people's lives or be rude in any way. We can be bold and straightforward in our words, and bring a correction, if needed without swearing or using the Lord's name in vain.

If we speak evil words, we ourselves will be adversely affected and spiritually hurt others;

However, if we choose to always speak good and inspired words of God, then our lives will reap the precious eternal treasures of God.

Obviously in every day life we need to communicate certain words that have no spiritual significance for carrying out our daily functions, however in the midst of many of daily tasks and encounters, we need to be aware in the Spirit when God wants us to share His words, and How and What, God wants us to say to others.

By discernment through the Holy Spirit and by continuing in God's word, we learn the distinction between godly speech, that we should definitely speak VS evil words of which we need to repent away from, so that each one of us can more readily be used by God, to boldly speak forth words of life and love, through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Out of our mouth should flow rivers of living waters, that will always bless others, and most of all glorify God in Love.

According to the Bible, our words and speech should embody the virtues of Jesus Christ, reflecting His love, truth, and holiness. Ephesians 4:15 emphasizes speaking the truth in love, showing that our words should be grounded in honesty and compassion. Philippians 2:11 and 1 John 4:2 underscore the importance of acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord and confessing His incarnation, essential aspects of our verbal expression of faith. Proclaiming Christ and His crucifixion (1 Corinthians 2:1-16) should be central to our speech, highlighting the ultimate message of the Gospel.

Our words should also reflect the holiness and purity that God desires and requires. Isaiah 6:3 and 1 Peter 1:16 call us to be holy in our speech, while Proverbs 30:5 and Psalm 12:6 describe the importance of pure words, which are like refined silver. We are instructed to use our speech wisely and with self-control (Proverbs 15:2; James 1:19), aiming to edify and encourage others (Ephesians 4:29; 1 Thessalonians 5:11). Graciousness and kindness (Proverbs 16:24; Ephesians 4:32) should season our words, making them a source of comfort and strength.

Additionally, our speech should be characterized by truth, wisdom, and understanding. Proverbs 18:4 speaks of the deep well of wisdom in our words, while Colossians 4:6 advises that our speech should be seasoned with salt, reflecting both grace and discernment. We are also called to speak boldly yet wisely (Proverbs 15:7; 2 Corinthians 3:12), ensuring that our words build up rather than tear down. This alignment with biblical virtues ensures that our speech honors God and effectively ministers to others.

Furthermore, the Bible instructs us to ensure our words are motivated by love and humility. Ephesians 4:2 calls for speaking with humility and gentleness, reflecting Jesus' example of meekness and compassion. Proverbs 27:6 highlights that faithful are the wounds of a friend, which means that even when we must correct or rebuke someone, it should be done with love and care, aiming for their growth rather than simply pointing out faults.

In terms of speaking in a manner that honors God and maintains integrity, Colossians 3:8 and James 3:10 remind us to avoid obscene talk and profanity. Our speech should not only be free from harmful language but also be a source of blessing and encouragement (James 3:9-10). This aligns with Proverbs 15:26, which describes pleasant and wholesome words that uplift and bring peace.

Another crucial aspect is to ensure our speech reflects faith and trust in God's Word. Hebrews 4:12 describes the Word of God as living and powerful, underscoring the importance of speaking in alignment with Scripture. Proverbs 15:28 emphasizes the need for thoughtful and wise responses, indicating that our speech should be carefully considered and rooted in biblical understanding. Similarly, Proverbs 24:26 highlights the value of a right answer, suggesting that our responses should be truthful and just.

Our speech should also embody characteristics of patience and forgiveness, essential aspects of Christian virtue. James 5:7-8 and Proverbs 14:29 highlight the importance of patience in our interactions, emphasizing that our words should reflect a patient and understanding spirit. This is particularly crucial when facing disagreements or challenges, as our responses can either escalate tensions or foster reconciliation.

Forgiveness is another vital aspect of Christian communication. Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 3:13 call us to forgive others just as Christ forgave us, which involves extending grace and letting go of grievances. This principle is echoed in Matthew 6:14-15 and Mark 11:25, where Jesus underscores the necessity of forgiveness for maintaining our relationship with God and others. When we speak with a forgiving heart, our words become instruments of healing rather than division.

Furthermore, our speech should be marked by encouragement and support. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 and Hebrews 10:24-25 emphasize the role of our words in building up and encouraging one another. Encouragement can come through affirming others'

strengths, offering comfort during trials, and spurring one another toward love and good deeds. This is particularly important in a community setting where our words can either uplift or discourage those around us.

In addition to encouragement, the Bible encourages us to practice self-control and restraint in our speech. Proverbs 17:27 and 17:28 speak to the wisdom of restraining our words, highlighting that a person who controls their tongue is considered wise and understanding. James 1:19 further advises us to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, ensuring that our words are measured and thoughtful.

Our speech should also reflect a commitment to peace and reconciliation. Matthew 5:9 calls us to be peacemakers, and Colossians 3:15 instructs us to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. When we engage in conversations, especially in contentious situations, our goal should be to seek understanding and resolve conflicts in a way that promotes harmony and unity.

Moreover, the Bible underscores the importance of speaking with integrity and truthfulness. Ephesians 4:25 urges us to put away falsehood and speak the truth with our neighbors, while Proverbs 30:5 describes every word of God as pure, emphasizing that our speech should align with His standards of truth. Our words should reflect our commitment to honesty and transparency, ensuring that we are trustworthy and reliable in our interactions.

Lastly, our speech should always be an expression of our commitment to Christ and His teachings. Matthew 10:32-33 and Luke 12:8 remind us of the importance of confessing Jesus openly, reflecting our relationship with Him. As we proclaim the Good News (Isaiah 52:7), our words should consistently point back to the Gospel and the transformative power of Christ's love and sacrifice. This holistic approach ensures that our communication is not only effective in building up others but also in glorifying God and advancing His Kingdom.

In summary, the Bible presents a comprehensive vision for how our speech should reflect the virtues of Jesus Christ. By embodying love, truth, patience, forgiveness, encouragement, and peace, our words can become a powerful tool for glorifying God, building up others, and advancing the message of the Gospel. Through careful consideration and alignment with biblical principles, we can ensure that our communication honors God and reflects His transformative power in our lives.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Colossians 4:6 (AKJV) Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man.

Matthew 12: 35-37(AKJV) A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. 36But I say to you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.

James 3:2-6 (AKJV) For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. 3Behold, we put bits in the horses ’mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 4Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, wherever the governor wants. 5Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasts great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindles! 6And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

Proverbs 16:23,24 (AKJV) The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips. 24Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

Proverbs 15:23 (AKJV) A man has joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!

Proverbs 12:14 (AKJV) - A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompense of a man’s hands shall be rendered to him.

Proverbs 12:19 (AKJV) The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.

Psalm 19:14 (AKJV) Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

Proverbs 18:4-21 (AKJV)

4The words of a man’s mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook.

5It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

6A fool’s lips enter into contention, and his mouth calls for strokes.

7A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.

8The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

9He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

10The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runs into it, and is safe.

11The rich man’s wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.

12Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor is humility.

13He that answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him.

14The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?

15The heart of the prudent gets knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

16A man’s gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men.

17He that is first in his own cause seems just; but his neighbor comes and searches him.

18The lot causes contentions to cease, and parts between the mighty.

19A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.

20A man’s belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.

Proverbs 18:21- (AKJV) “Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.”

The Word of God in the Bible places immense importance on the moral content the effect , good or bad and power of our words, illustrating that our speech profoundly influences our lives and the lives of others. Proverbs 18:21 emphasizes this truth by stating, **“**Death and life are in the power of the tongue,” highlighting that our words can either uplift or harm. This spiritual truth is not just abstract; it is evident, and our words should be chosen wisely, not spoken hastily. Colossians 4:6 advises that our speech should always be **“**with grace, seasoned with salt,” suggesting that our words should be both kind and insightful, beneficially affecting our interactions and reflecting a Christlike character. Our words, therefore, should not be ungraceful, malicious, condemning, or spiteful.

Matthew 12:35-37 underscores the gravity of our speech by reminding us that our words reflect the state of our hearts. Good words come from a good heart, and every idle word will be accounted for in judgment. This points to the profound responsibility we carry in our everyday conversations, urging us to speak with good intention, in so many concise ways as Jesus and the Apostles taught and with integrity.

James 3:2-6 vividly illustrates how small the tongue is compared to its impact, comparing it to a bit in a horse**’**s mouth or a rudder on a ship. This metaphor helps us understand how even the smallest words can set off great consequences, making it clear that controlling our tongue is crucial for personal growth, maintaining harmony and loving others as Jesus loved us.

Proverbs 16:23-24 and Proverbs 15:23 further enrich this understanding by emphasizing the value of wisdom and timely words. Pleasant words are likened to honeycomb, providing nourishment and joy. Proverbs 12:14 also reinforces that the fruits of our speech bring encouragement, strengthening and reward, while Proverbs 12:19 contrasts the enduring nature of truth with the fleeting existence of lies.

Finally, Psalm 19:14 serves as a prayerful reflection, asking that our words and thoughts be pleasing to God. It**’**s a reminder of the spiritual dimension of our speech, reinforcing that our communication should align with our values and faith. This is part of our spiritual worship of God and fulling the will and calling of God for our lives.

In essence, these scriptures collectively urge us to consider the weight and impact of our words, guiding us to speak thoughtfully, wisely, and with a heart that seeks to build others up in Christ Jesus, to love God and others and to honor God through our words as well as our actions..

Guard our Mouth and our Words

Guarding our words and the manner in which we speak is a critical aspect of living a righteous and fulfilling life. The wisdom embedded in Scripture repeatedly underscores the profound impact our speech can have on our lives and relationships. Proverbs 13:2-3 poignantly illustrates this, revealing that the fruit of our mouth can bring us good or lead to destruction. The message is clear: those who guard their words maintain their well-being, while those who speak recklessly open themselves to harm. This is not merely a caution against speaking ill but a broader encouragement to use our words wisely and intentionally.

In James 1:26, the Bible further emphasizes that controlling our tongue is a mark of genuine faith. It asserts that if one claims to be religious but cannot manage their speech, their religion is essentially futile. This reflects a deeper truth: our words are a reflection of our inner state. They are not just expressions of thoughts but also indicators of our character and spiritual health. To claim to be religious while allowing our tongues to run unchecked is to live in contradiction, undermining the integrity of our faith.

Psalm 141:3-4 provides a heartfelt plea for divine assistance in controlling our speech, indicating that this is a struggle beyond our own capacity. The psalmist asks the Lord to set a watch before their mouth and to protect their lips. This request highlights the understanding that human effort alone may be insufficient to guard against the temptations of speaking carelessly or engaging in wickedness. It underscores a need for divine intervention and guidance in maintaining purity of speech and resisting evil influences.

Proverbs 4:23-27 expands the discussion to include the heart and eyes in the conversation about speech. It instructs us to diligently guard our hearts because they are the source of life and guides us to avoid perverse speech. By setting our eyes straight and keeping our feet from evil, we create a comprehensive approach to living righteously. The relationship between our thoughts, actions, and words is thus illustrated as integral to a moral and disciplined life.

James 3:1-12 offers a vivid metaphor for the power of the tongue, comparing it to a small bit that controls a horse or a tiny helm that steers a ship. Despite its size, the tongue has the capacity to influence our entire lives and those around us. It can either bless or curse, and its dual nature—capable of both kindness and harm—reveals its inherent danger. The passage underscores the challenge of taming the tongue, acknowledging that while we may master many things, controlling our speech is particularly difficult yet crucial.

Finally, Proverbs 21:23 reinforces the theme that keeping our mouth and tongue in check is essential for avoiding trouble. This concise statement encapsulates the broader message of the biblical passages discussed: careful speech is not just a matter of social decorum but a safeguard for our well-being and spiritual health. By being mindful of our words, we can protect ourselves from unnecessary conflicts and maintain a peaceful and righteous path.

In sum, guarding our words is a central biblical principle that reflects the intersection of our worship and submission to God’s desire and authority, along with our character, and spiritual integrity. Through vigilant self-control and seeking divine help, we align our

speech with the values of righteousness and wisdom, fostering a life marked by grace, faithfulness and loving others as God intended.

Key Scriptures:

Proverbs 13:2,3;-(AKJV) A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.3He that keeps (guards) his mouth keeps his life: but he that opens wide his lips shall have destruction.

James 1:26 (AKJV) - If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man**'**s religion is vain.

Psalm 141:3,4 -(AKJV) Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. 4Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.

James 1:26,27 (AKJV): "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man**'**s religion is vain. 27Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.."

Psalm 141:3,4 (AKJV): "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties."

Proverbs 4:23-27 (AKJV): "23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. 24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. 25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. 26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. 27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil."

James 3:1-12 (AKJV): My brothers, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. 2For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. 3Behold, we put bits in the horses **'**mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 4Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, wherever the governor wants. 5Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasts great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindles! 6And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. 7For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed of mankind: 8But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. 10Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not so to be. 11Does a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? 12Can the fig tree, my brothers, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

Proverbs 21:23 - (AKJV) Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps his soul from troubles.

HOW and WHY should we be careful what we speak and to guard our mouth ?

The Bible places significant emphasis on the importance of carefully guarding our words, illustrating the profound impact that speech can have on our lives, relationships, and spiritual well-being. This caution is rooted in both the immediate and eternal consequences of our spoken words, highlighting the need for mindfulness and restraint in our communication.

Matthew 12:36-37 underscores the weight of our words in the context of divine judgment. It warns that every idle or careless word will be accounted for on the day of judgment, revealing the gravity of our verbal expressions. This passage reminds us that our speech is not merely a casual activity but a serious aspect of our moral and spiritual life. Words have the power to either justify or condemn us, which implies that our speech is a reflection of our inner character and values. Therefore, being deliberate and thoughtful in our communication is essential, as our words bear witness to our true selves and have lasting implications.

Proverbs 15:4 further reinforces the concept that our words can either nurture or damage. A "wholesome tongue" is compared to a "tree of life," symbolizing the way kind and uplifting speech contributes to the health and vitality of our relationships and communities. Conversely, "perverseness" in speech is described as a "breach in the spirit," indicating that harmful or deceitful words can cause emotional and spiritual wounds. This metaphor emphasizes that our speech has the power to build up or tear down, underscoring the importance of maintaining integrity and kindness in our communication.

Ephesians 4:29-31 provides practical guidance on how to manage our speech in a way that aligns with Christian values. It instructs us to avoid "corrupt communication" and instead focus on words that are "good for edifying," meaning that they should uplift and benefit others. This directive highlights that our speech should be purposeful and gracious, aimed at encouraging and supporting those who hear us. The passage also warns against allowing negative emotions such as bitterness, wrath, and anger to influence our words, as these can grieve the Holy Spirit and undermine our spiritual health. The call to kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness mirrors the behavior Christ modeled and teaches us to reflect His love and grace in our interactions.

Proverbs 12:18-19 contrasts the destructive power of careless speech with the enduring value of truthful communication. Words that "pierce like a sword" can inflict harm and create conflict, while the "tongue of the wise" promotes healing and well-being. This contrast illustrates the difference between speech that causes damage and that which fosters health and harmony. Furthermore, the passage notes that while falsehood may offer temporary advantages, the "lip of truth" is permanent and reliable, suggesting that honesty and integrity in speech have enduring value and contribute to lasting trust and respect.

In summary, the Bible's teachings on speech highlight that our words carry profound significance, affecting both our personal spiritual journey and our relationships with others. By being mindful of our language, choosing to speak in ways that edify and uplift, and avoiding harmful or deceitful speech, we align ourselves with divine principles and

contribute to a more compassionate and harmonious world. This careful stewardship of our words reflects our commitment to living out our faith and honoring the moral and spiritual standards set forth in Scripture

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 12:36,37 - (AKJV) But I say to you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.

Proverbs 15:4; (AKJV) -A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

Ephesians 4:29-31;(AKJV) Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers. 30And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed to the day of redemption. 31Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32And be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ**'**s sake has forgiven you.

Proverbs 12:18:19; (AKJV) There is that speaks like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health19The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.

How does God want our words to be ?

The Bible speaks profoundly about the impact of our words and the essence of our speech. In Psalm 19:14, the psalmist prays that both the words of his mouth and the meditation of his heart be acceptable to the Lord. This prayer highlights the importance of aligning our verbal expressions with our innermost thoughts and intentions. It suggests that true reverence for God involves not only speaking truthfully but also ensuring that our thoughts and meditations are pure and in harmony with divine standards.

Matthew 12:33-37 emphasizes that the nature of our speech reflects the state of our hearts. Jesus uses the metaphor of a tree and its fruit to illustrate that good speech comes from a good heart, while corrupt speech reveals a corrupt heart. This passage warns of the accountability we have for every word spoken, underscoring that our words have eternal significance—they can either justify or condemn us. Therefore, our speech must be a reflection of the goodness within us, shaped by a heart transformed by righteousness.

Proverbs provides further wisdom on the impact of our words. Proverbs 15:23 and 15:26-28 teach that a well-timed word can bring joy and that pure words are pleasing to God. In contrast, the thoughts of the wicked are detestable to Him. Proverbs 15:2 and 15:4 reinforce the idea that wise speech uses knowledge correctly, while a wholesome tongue can be a source of life. These verses collectively point to the importance of cultivating a heart that treasures wisdom and goodness, as our words are an overflow of what is within.

Additionally, Proverbs 12:14-22 and 15:1-4 explore the consequences of our speech. They warn against the harm of deceitful and unkind words, contrasting them with the benefits of truthful and gentle speech. A wise person is characterized by their ability to speak truth and offer healing through their words. These passages also stress the importance of speaking with integrity and the impact of our words on our own lives and the lives of others.

The teachings in Joshua 1:8-9 call us to continually meditate on God's word, suggesting that this practice will lead to prosperity and success. By keeping God's commands at the forefront of our speech and thoughts, we align ourselves with His will and receive His guidance. Proverbs 31:26 and 31:8-9 further emphasize that wisdom and kindness should mark our speech, especially when advocating for justice and compassion.

In essence, the Bible calls us to be mindful of our words, ensuring they are a reflection of a heart aligned with God's will. Our speech has the power to build up or tear down, to heal or harm. By nurturing a heart filled with wisdom and goodness, we allow our words to become instruments of blessing and truth, honoring God and positively influencing those around us.

In addition to the earlier passages, Proverbs 15:30 and 15:31-32 offer further insight into how our speech should be influenced by our attitudes and responses to wisdom and correction. Proverbs 15:30 highlights that a positive and good report, or uplifting words, bring joy and well-being, akin to nourishment for the soul. This aligns with the broader biblical principle that our speech should be life-giving and encouraging, reflecting a heart that appreciates and spreads positivity.

Proverbs 15:31-32 emphasizes the value of heeding reproof and instruction. It suggests that those who are open to correction and wise counsel grow in understanding and maintain their place among the wise. Conversely, rejecting instruction is seen as despising one's own soul. This reinforces the idea that our attitude towards learning and growth will be reflected in the way we speak and interact with others. A receptive heart leads to wise and constructive speech, while a stubborn heart may yield words that are harsh or unhelpful.

Proverbs 12:25 and 31:8-9 further underscore the transformative power of words. Proverbs 12:25 acknowledges that a good word can uplift a person who is feeling heavy-hearted, showing that our words have the power to alleviate suffering and bring comfort. Meanwhile, Proverbs 31:8-9 calls for using our speech to advocate for justice and support those in need, demonstrating that our words should also be instruments of righteousness and compassion.

Ultimately, the collective wisdom of these passages underscores that our words are not mere expressions but reflections of our inner selves. Proverbs 31:26 encapsulates the ideal: a person whose speech is marked by wisdom and kindness, using their words to impart grace and guidance. This ideal is not merely about speaking well but about embodying the principles of justice, compassion, and truth in our daily interactions.

In light of these teachings, it becomes evident that our words should be deliberate and reflective of a heart attuned to divine wisdom. By continuously aligning our speech with the values of truth, kindness, and justice, we honor God and positively influence the world

around us. Our speech, shaped by the abundance of our heart, becomes a powerful testament to our character and our commitment to living a life pleasing to God.

Key Scriptures:

Psalm 19:14-(AKJV) Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

Matthew 12:33-37;-(AKJV) Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. 34O generation of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. 36But I say to you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.

Proverbs 15:23 -(AKJV) A man has joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!

Proverbs 15:26-28 - (AKJV) The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.27He that is greedy of gain troubles his own house; but he that hates gifts shall live.28The heart of the righteous studies to answer: but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.

Proverbs 15:2 (AKJV) The tongue of the wise uses knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools pours out foolishness.

Proverbs 15:4 (AKJV)- A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

Proverbs 15:31,32 -(AKJV) The ear that hears the reproof of life stays among the wise.32He that refuses instruction despises his own soul: but he that hears reproof gets understanding.

Proverbs 15:30- (AKJV) The light of the eyes rejoices the heart: and a good report makes the bones fat.

Joshua 1:8,9- (AKJV) This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success. 9Have not I commanded you? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be you dismayed: for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

Proverbs 12:14-22;-(AKJV) A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompense of a man**'**s hands shall be rendered to him.15The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that listens to counsel is wise.16A fool**'**s wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covers shame.17He that speaks truth shows forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.18There is that speaks like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.19The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.20Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy.21There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.22Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.

Proverbs 15:1-4;- (AKJV)A soft answer turns away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.2The tongue of the wise uses knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools pours out foolishness.3The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.4A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

Proverbs 15:28- (AKJV)The heart of the righteous studies to answer: but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.

Luke 6:45 -(AKJV) A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Proverbs 31:26 -(AKJV) (Virtuous woman / wife) - She opens her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

Proverbs 31:8,9- (AKJV)Open your mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. 9Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy..

Proverbs 12:25;- Heaviness in the heart of man makes it stoop (causes depression): but a good word makes it glad.

How does God want our words NOT to be ?

The Bible provides clear guidance on how God wants our words to be, and equally important, how He does not want them to be. Through various scriptures, it is evident that God desires our speech to be pure, uplifting, and aligned with His righteousness, and He warns against speech that defiles, harms, reflects evil or does not depict the divine love of Jesus Christ.

Speech Reflecting the Heart's Evil

According to Matthew 15:18-20, the things that come out of our mouths reflect what is in our hearts. Jesus points out that evil thoughts—such as murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, and slander—defile a person. These behaviors, originating from a corrupt heart, manifest in our speech and thus taint our character. Words that embody such negative attributes are contrary to what God desires and are considered defiling rather than edifying. So our words reflect whether our heart has evil intent or good.

Deceit and Sinful Speech:

In 1 Peter 2:21-22, we are reminded of Christ**'**s example, who committed no sin and had no deceit in His mouth. Deceit and falsehood in speech are against the model set by Jesus. This means that our words should be truthful and transparent, reflecting integrity rather than duplicity.

Wicked and Perversive Speech:

Proverbs 15:28 and 15:4 illustrate that the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things, while a soothing tongue is a source of life. A perverse or deceitful tongue crushes the spirit,

indicating that speech that is harsh, deceitful, or malicious is contrary to God’s desire for wholesome and encouraging communication.

Transgression and Unclean Lips:

Psalm 17:3 and Isaiah 6:5-7 highlight the seriousness of having unclean lips. Isaiah’s recognition of his unclean lips symbolizes the broader issue of how our speech can reflect and perpetuate moral and spiritual impurity. God’s desire is for our speech to be purged of such impurities, as shown by the seraphim touching Isaiah’s lips with a burning coal, signifying purification and forgiveness.

Unwholesome Talk and Malice:

Ephesians 4:29-31 instructs believers to avoid unwholesome talk and instead speak in ways that build others up. Speech characterized by bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, and malice is specifically condemned. These forms of communication are harmful, divisive, and contrary to the kindness and compassion God calls us to exhibit. Such negative speech grieves the Holy Spirit and is inconsistent with the Christian call to love and forgiveness.

Lying:

The Bible consistently condemns lying as a serious moral failing. In Proverbs 12:19, it is stated, "The lip of truth shall be established forever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment." This verse underscores the fleeting nature of falsehood compared to the enduring value of truth. Lying is not only a moral wrong but also undermines trust and integrity. In John 8:44, Jesus describes the devil as the "father of lies," indicating that deceit is fundamentally opposed to the character of God, who is truth (John 14:6). The commandment “You shall not bear false witness” (Exodus 20:16) also highlights the importance of honesty, indicating that lying is a violation of divine law.

Slander:

Slander involves making false statements about someone with the intent to damage their reputation. Proverbs 10:18 says, “He who conceals hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool.” This verse links slander to foolishness and deceit, highlighting its destructive nature. Slander not only harms the individual being spoken about but also disrupts community harmony and integrity.

Matthew 15:19-20 identifies slander, alongside other forms of evil speech like false testimony and theft, as defiling a person. Such speech reflects a corrupted heart and is contrary to the purity and righteousness God desires. It contaminates relationships and societal trust, illustrating the gravity of harmful speech.

Proverbs 15:4 and 15:28 emphasize the value of a wholesome tongue and righteous speech. A truthful and thoughtful response, as opposed to one marked by falsehood and slander, is considered a sign of wisdom and righteousness. The integrity of our speech reflects our inner character and aligns with God’s expectations for how we should communicate.

Worshipping other things, idols, people or other gods:

The Bible is clear that worship should be directed solely toward the one true God. The First Commandment states, “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3).

This command underscores the exclusive nature of worship that God demands. Worshiping other gods with our words, such as praising or invoking deities other than the Lord, directly violates this command and demonstrates a divided loyalty.

Throughout the Old Testament, idolatry—both in practice and speech—is condemned. For instance, in Jeremiah 2:27, God describes how His people have turned to false gods, saying, **"**They say to a block of wood, **'**You are my father, **'**and to a stone, **'**You gave me birth.'" This imagery illustrates how idolatry distorts true worship and places value on objects or beings that cannot deliver or sustain. Speaking in reverence or invoking these false gods reflects a heart that is not fully devoted to God and leads to spiritual ruin.

Our words are a reflection of our inner devotion. In Isaiah 42:8, God says, **"**I am the Lord; that is My name! I will not yield My glory to another or My praise to idols." God**'**s refusal to share His glory with any other deity underscores that even our spoken praise and acknowledgment should be directed solely to Him. Speaking in ways that honor other gods or affirming their power is considered an affront to God**'**s sovereignty.

James 4:4 warns against double-mindedness, stating, **"**You adulterous people, don**'**t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God." This passage highlights that attempting to worship both God and other deities is akin to spiritual adultery. It**'**s a betrayal of the exclusive relationship God desires with His followers.

1 Corinthians 10:14 advises, **"**Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry." This instruction underscores the need to avoid even the appearance of idolatry, which includes avoiding speech that may suggest the legitimacy or reverence of other gods. Worship must be pure and undivided, with our words and actions reflecting a single-hearted devotion to God alone.

In the New Testament, Paul admonishes believers to avoid corrupting their worship. In 1 John 5:21, he writes, **"**Dear children, keep yourselves from idols." This instruction is not limited to physical idols but includes any form of idolatry, including verbal expressions of reverence towards false gods. Paul**'**s letters also emphasize that the focus of worship should be on Christ alone (Colossians 3:16).

Our words should reflect our reverence for the Lord, rather than seeking to flatter or exalt others above Him. In Proverbs 29:5, it is written, "A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet." This verse warns us against using flattery as a means to manipulate or gain favor, reminding us that our praise and adoration are rightly directed towards God alone. We should be mindful to ensure that our speech honors God first, rather than elevating others in a way that shifts our focus away from Him.

Taking the Lord's Name In Vain:

The commandment against taking the Lord**'**s name in vain is found in Exodus 20:7: **"**You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name." This commandment emphasizes that God's name is sacred and should be treated with the utmost respect. Misusing His name includes using it casually, disrespectfully, or deceitfully, and it reflects a lack of reverence for God**'**s holiness.

In Leviticus 24:15-16, the gravity of misusing God**'**s name is further underscored. **"**Say to the Israelites: **'**Anyone who curses their God will be held responsible. Anyone who

blasphemes the name of the Lord is to be put to death.'" This passage demonstrates the seriousness of blasphemy and the consequences associated with it in the context of Old Testament law.

Swearing / Taking Oaths:

In the New Testament, Jesus addresses the issue of swearing and making oaths in Matthew 5:34-37. He instructs, **"**But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God**'**s throne; or by the earth, for it is His footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. All you need to say is simply **'**Yes **'**or **'**No**'**; anything beyond this comes from the evil one." Jesus **'**teaching emphasizes that our words should be simple and truthful, without the need for oaths to validate our honesty. He calls for integrity in speech where our 'yes' means 'yes' and our 'no' means 'no.'

James 5:12 echoes this sentiment, stating, **"**Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple **'**Yes **'**or **'**No, **'**otherwise you will be condemned." This reinforces the idea that unnecessary swearing or oaths can lead to temptation and condemnation, and that our speech should be characterized by honesty and straightforwardness.

The Impact of Misusing God's Name:

Taking the Lord**'**s name in vain or using it inappropriately can diminish the reverence and respect due to God. It reflects a lack of understanding of His holiness and majesty. Proverbs 30:9 highlights this concern: **"**Otherwise, I may have too much and disown You and say, **'**Who is the Lord? **'**Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God." This verse links the misuse of God**'**s name with a failure to acknowledge and honor His authority.

Integrity in Speech:

Swearing and misuse of God**'**s name undermine the integrity of our words. Ephesians 4:29 advises, **"**Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." Unwholesome talk includes not only coarse language but also any speech that fails to reflect the purity and respect expected in our communication, including the use of God's name.

Hypocrisy: In Matthew 23:27-28, Jesus criticizes the Pharisees for their outward displays of piety while neglecting the inner righteousness. This suggests that merely adhering to prescribed words or rituals without genuine inner change is insufficient. The focus should be on the heart's intent rather than external conformity.

A Call to Reverence:

In summary, swearing and taking the Lord**'**s name in vain are serious offenses in Scripture, reflecting a lack of respect for God**'**s holiness and a failure to adhere to the integrity of speech. The Bible calls for simplicity and honesty in our words, emphasizing that our speech should always honor God and reflect our commitment to truth and reverence.

Worshiping other gods with our words is a serious violation of God's command for exclusive devotion. The Bible consistently instructs believers to direct their worship and praise solely to the one true God, avoiding any speech or actions that could be interpreted as honoring false deities. True worship involves a complete and undivided heart, reflected both in our spoken words and our actions.

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 15:18-20 (AKJV) " But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defiles not a man."

1 Peter 2:21-23 (AKJV) "For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps: 22Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judges righteously."

Proverbs 15:28 -(AKJV) - The heart of the righteous studies to answer: but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.

Proverbs 15:4 - (AKJV) "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit."

Psalm 17:3-(AKJV) You have proved my heart; you have visited me in the night; you have tried me, and shall find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.

Isaiah 6:5-7 (AKJV) "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the middle of a people of unclean lips: for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. 6Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7And he laid it on my mouth, and said, See, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.

Matthew 15:18-20;(AKJV) But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defiles not a man.

Ephesians 4:29-32 (AKJV) Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers. 30And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed to the day of redemption. 31Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32And be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

How Should Our Words Be According To The Bible, God's Word?:

With Love - Ephesians 4:15

Truth - Ephesians 4:15, 25;

Acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord - Philippians 2:11;

Confess Jesus has come in the flesh - 1 John 4:2
Proclaim Jesus Christ and Him crucified - 1 Corinthians 2:1-16
Holy - Isaiah 6:3; 1 Peter 1:16
Pure - Proverbs 30:5; Psalm 12:6
Faith - Hebrews 11:1; Romans 10:17
Good words - Proverbs 12:25
Word of God - Hebrews 4:12
Wisdom of God - Proverbs 18:4
Wise Lips - Proverbs 15:7
Wise Tongue - Proverbs 15:2
Slow to speak - James 1:19
Truth - Ephesians 4:25
Gracious words - Proverbs 16:24
Seasoned with salt - Colossians 4:6
Bridled speech - James 3:2
Edifying - Ephesians 4:29; Romans 14:19
Reproof - 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Timothy 5:20
Rebuke demons - Matthew 17:18
Rebuke - 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 2:15
Word of Revelation - 1 Corinthians 14:6
Word of Knowledge - 1 Corinthians 14:6
Word of Prophecy - 1 Corinthians 14:6
Word of Instruction - 1 Corinthians 14:6
Intelligible words - 1 Corinthians 14:19 Correction - 2 Timothy 3:16
Wounds of a friend - Proverbs 27:6
Instruct - Romans 15:14
Instruction in the Word - Galatians 6:6
Edify - Ephesians 4:29; 1 Thessalonians 5:11
Counsel - Proverbs 12:15; 15:22
Bind on earth, loose on earth - Matthew 18:18
Preach the Word - 2 Timothy 4:2; Mark 16:15
Confess Jesus - Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 12:8
Confess our sins - 1 John 1:9; James 5:16
Confession of our faith - Hebrews 10:23;

Repent - Acts 3:19, Matthew 4:17

In Humility - Ephesians 4:2

River of Life - John 7:38

With Prudence - Proverbs 8:12

Blessings - 1 Peter 3:9

Soft answer - Proverbs 15:1

Ponders answer - Proverbs 15:28

Do Not Condemn - Luke 6:37-38

Restrains his words - Proverbs 17:27

Silent - Proverbs 17:28

Yes be Yes - James 4:12

Does not stumble in speech - James 3:2

Right answer - Proverbs 24:26

Forgiveness - Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13; Matthew 6:14-15; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:37; 2 Corinthians 2:10; Matthew 18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4

Patience - James 5:7-8; Proverbs 14:29; Ecclesiastes 7:8; Romans 15:5; 1 Corinthians 13:4; Colossians 3:12; Ephesians 4:2; 2 Timothy 4:2; Galatians 5:22-23; Romans 2:4

Kindness - Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:12; Proverbs 19:22; Luke 6:35-36; Romans 12:10; Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Samuel 9:1-13

Goodness - Romans 12:9; Galatians 6:10; Psalm 145:9; Exodus 34:6; Nahum 1:7; James 1:17; 2 Peter 1:5-7

Gentleness - Philippians 4:5; Colossians 3:12; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Matthew 11:29; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Peter 3:15; Ephesians 4:2

Self-Control - Galatians 5:22-23; Proverbs 25:28; 1 Corinthians 9:25-27; 2 Peter 1:5-7; Titus 2:11-14

Mercy - Matthew 5:7; Luke 6:36; James 2:13; Psalm 103:8-10; Micah 6:8; Hosea 6:6; Matthew 9:13; Romans 9:15-16; Ephesians 2:4-5

Compassion - Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 3:8; Zechariah 7:9; Ephesians 4:32; Psalm 103:13; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Matthew 9:36; Isaiah 49:15

Humble - James 4:6; Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Peter 5:5-6; Matthew 23:12; Proverbs 11:2; Proverbs 22:4; Micah 6:8

Understanding - Proverbs 2:6; Proverbs 3:5-6; James 1:5; Colossians 3:16; Psalm 119:99; 1 Corinthians 2:12-14; Proverbs 16:22

Generosity - Acts 20:35; 2 Corinthians 9:7; Proverbs 11:25; Proverbs 22:9; Luke 6:38; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Romans 12:8

Gratitude - Colossians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Philippians 4:6-7; Psalm 136:1-3; Psalm 100:4; 1 Chronicles 16:34; Ephesians 5:20

Encouragement - 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13; Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 15:32; Acts 20:2; Acts 27:35; Romans 15:5-6

Joy - Psalm 16:11; Psalm 30:5; John 15:11; Romans 14:17; James 1:2-3; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Peter 1:8-9

Peace - John 14:27; Philippians 4:6-7; Romans 15:13; Isaiah 26:3; Colossians 3:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:16; Matthew 5:9

Faithfulness - 1 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Psalm 36:5; Psalm 119:90; Lamentations 3:22-23; 2 Timothy 2:13; Hebrews 10:23

Love - 1 Corinthians 13:4-8; 1 John 4:7-8; Romans 13:10; John 15:12; Colossians 3:14; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Peter 4:8

Wholesome, Adding Value - Proverbs 17:9

Supplications - Proverbs 18:23

Lips of Knowledge - Proverbs 15:21

Lips of the Righteous - Proverbs 10:21

Blessings - James 3:9-10

Kindly - Genesis 50:21

Kindness - Jeremiah 52:32

Encourage - 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Proclaim - Matthew 4:23; Deuteronomy 32:3; 1 John 1:3-4

Declare - Titus 2:15

Feed the Sheep - John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2

Warn - Matthew 24:6-7; Mark 13:14-20

Rebuke - 2 Timothy 3:16

Correct - 2 Timothy 3:16

Exhort - Luke 3:18; Acts 13:15; 1 Timothy 5:1; Hebrews 13:22

Teach - 2 Timothy 3:16; Matthew 4:23; Matthew 28:20

Testify - Acts 4:23; 1 John 4:14

Word of Our Testimony - Revelation 12:11

Gentle - Proverbs 15:1

Seasoned - Colossians 4:6

Authority - Titus 2:15

Speak Boldly - 2 Corinthians 3:12

Be of Good Courage - Joshua 1:9; Psalm 27:14

Healing - Luke 17:19

Speak the Oracles of God - 1 Peter 4:11

Pleasant - Proverbs 15:26

Persuasiveness - Proverbs 16:23
Without Profanity, No Obscene Talk - Colossians 3:8
Restrain Words - Proverbs 17:27
Prophesy - Joel 2:28-32
Peacemakers - Matthew 5:9
Righteous Lips - Proverbs 16:13, 17:27, 25:11
Timely Word - Proverbs 15:23
Soothing Tongue - Tree of Life - Proverbs 15:4
Fruit of the Mouth / Satisfied - Proverbs 18:20, 21
Sweetness of Speech, Persuasiveness - Proverbs 16:21, 23
Good News - Isaiah 52:7

GOOD SPEECH

Encourage (1 Thessalonians 5:11):
Proclaim:

- Matthew 4:23
- Deuteronomy 32:3
- 1 John 1:3-4

Declare (Titus 2:15):
Feed the Sheep (John 21:17):
Warn:

- Matthew 24:6-7
- Mark 13:14-20

Reprove:
2 Timothy 3:16
1 Timothy 5:20
Correct (2 Timothy 3:16):
Exhort:

- Luke 3:18
- Acts 13:15
- 1 Timothy 5:1
- Hebrews 13:22

Teach:

- 2 Timothy 3:16
- Matthew 4:23
- Matthew 28:20

Testify:

- Acts 4:23
- 1 John 4:14

Word of Our Testimony (Revelation 12:11):

Gentle (Proverbs 15:1):

Seasoned (Colossians 4:6):

Authority (Titus 2:15):

Speak Boldly (2 Corinthians 3:12):

Be of Good Courage:

- Joshua 1:9
- Psalm 27:14

Healing (Luke 17:19):

Speak the Oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11):

Pleasant (Proverbs 15:26):

Persuasiveness (Proverbs 16:23):

Without Profanity, No Obscene Talk (Colossians 3:8):

Restrain Words (Proverbs 17:27):

Prophesy (Joel 2:28-32):

Peacemakers (Matthew 5:9):

Righteous Lips:

- Proverbs 16:13
- Proverbs 17:27
- Proverbs 25:11

Timely Word (Proverbs 15:23):

Soothing Tongue - Tree of Life (Proverbs 15:4):

Fruit of the Mouth/Satisfied:

- Proverbs 18:20
- Proverbs 18:21

Sweetness of Speech, Persuasiveness:

- Proverbs 16:21
- Proverbs 16:23

Good News (Isaiah 52:7):
Good Speech (Proverbs 15:2):
Joyful Speech (Proverbs 15:23):
Wise Counsel:
- Proverbs 12:15
- Proverbs 15:22

Binding and Loosing (Matthew 18:18):
Preaching the Word:
- 2 Timothy 4:2
- Mark 16:15

Confessing Jesus:
- Matthew 10:32-33
- Luke 12:8

Confession of Sins:
- 1 John 1:9
- James 5:16

Confession of Faith (Hebrews 10:23):
Repentance:
- Acts 3:19
- Matthew 4:17

Humility (Ephesians 4:2):
River of Life (John 7:38):
Prudence (Proverbs 8:12):
Blessings (1 Peter 3:9):
Soft Answer (Proverbs 15:1):
Pondered Answer (Proverbs 15:28):
Not Condemning (Luke 6:37-38):
Restraining Words (Proverbs 17:27):
Silence (Proverbs 17:28):
Let Your Yes Be Yes (James 4:12):
No Stumbling in Speech (James 3:2):
Right Answer (Proverbs 24:26):
Honesty (Ephesians 4:25):
Graceful Words (Proverbs 16:24):

Gratitude (Colossians 4:6):

Edification:

- Ephesians 4:29
- Romans 14:19

Reproof and Rebuke:

- 2 Timothy 3:16
- 2 Timothy 4:2
- Titus 2:15

Correction and Instruction (2 Timothy 3:16):

Friendship (Proverbs 27:6):

Instructive Words (Romans 15:14):

Guidance and Counsel:

- Proverbs 12:15
- Proverbs 15:22

Binding and Loosing (Matthew 18:18):

Preaching the Word:

- 2 Timothy 4:2
- Mark 16:15

Confessing Jesus:

- Matthew 10:32-33
- Luke 12:8

Confession of Sins:

- 1 John 1:9
- James 5:16
- Confession of Faith (Hebrews 10:23):
- Repentance:
- Acts 3:19
- Matthew 4:17

Humility (Ephesians 4:2):

River of Life (John 7:38):

Prudence (Proverbs 8:12):

Blessings (1 Peter 3:9):

Soft Answer (Proverbs 15:1):

Pondered Answer (Proverbs 15:28):

Not Condemning (Luke 6:37-38):
Restraining Words (Proverbs 17:27):
Silence (Proverbs 17:28):
Let Your Yes Be Yes (James 4:12):
No Stumbling in Speech (James 3:2):
Right Answer (Proverbs 24:26):

WORDS FROM GOD

- Love: 1 John 4:16
- Jesus The Word became Flesh - John 1:14, John 1:1
- Living, Active, Sharp - Hebrews 4:12 -
- Forgiveness: Ephesians 4:32
- Mercy: Titus 3:5 -
- Compassion: Psalm 103:13
- Kindness: Ephesians 4:32
- Gentleness: Galatians 5:22-23
- Bold: Proverbs 28:1
- Strong: Philippians 4:13
- Prophesy: Joel 2:28 -
- Wisdom: Proverbs 2:6
- Understanding: Proverbs 3:5-6
- Discernment: 1 Corinthians 2:14 -
- Truth: John 17:17
- Authority: Matthew 28:18
- Commandments: Exodus 20:1-17
- Instruction: Psalm 32:8
- River of Life: Revelation 22:1
- Tongues: Acts 2:4
- Word of Knowledge: 1 Corinthians 12:8
- Word of Discernment: 1 Corinthians 12:10
- Enlighten: Psalm 119:130 -
- Chastens: Proverbs 3:11-12
- Correction - 2 Timothy 3:16
- Reproofs - 2 Timothy 3:16

- Rebukes: Revelation 3:19
- Warns: Colossians 1:28 -
- Training in righteousness - 2 Timothy 3:16
-

WORDS TO GOD

- Love - Psalm 18: 1-3
- Bless / Praise the Lord - Psalm 103:19-22
- Worship - Luke 4:8
- Praise - James 5:13
- Sing - Psalm 33:1-5
- Thanksgiving - Psalm 111:1-10; 106:1-2
- Pleasing/Acceptable - Psalm 14:19
- Magnify - Psalm 34:3
- Glorify - Psalm 63:3
- Rejoice - Psalm 63:11
- Acknowledge - Proverbs 3:5,6
- Call Upon the Lord - Romans 10:13; Psalm 145:18
- Prayer - Matthew 6:9-13
- Spiritual Prayer - Romans 8:26; Ephesians 6:18
- Repent - Acts 3:19
- Intercessions - 1 Timothy 2:1
- Supplications - 1 Timothy 2:1
- Adoration - Isaiah 6:3; 1 Chronicles 16:29
- Blessings
- Confess Our Sins - 1 John 1:9
- Shout for Joy - Psalm 66:1
- Boast - Psalm 44:8
- Petitions/Supplications - Ephesians 6:18

BAD SPEECH AND WORDS THAT BRINGS DEATH

Lie - Romans 1:25, Colossians 3:9, Titus 1:2, 1 John 1:6

Deceit, Deceiving - Romans 1:29, Romans 3:13, Titus 1:10-11, Proverbs 4:24

Careless words - Matthew 12:35-37

Godless Chatter - 2 Timothy 2:16

Gossip - 1 Timothy 5:13

Busy Body - 1 Timothy 5:13

Talebearer - Proverbs 11:13

Back Biting - 2 Corinthians 12:20, Romans 1:30, Proverbs 25:23

Spreading strife - Proverbs 16:27-29

Speak a word against the Son of Man, Jesus - Matthew 12:32

Speak against Holy Spirit - Matthew 12:31-33

Mock - Luke 18:32, 22:63

Mocks the poor - Proverbs 17:5

Belittle - Proverbs 11:12

Falsely accuse - Matthew 5:11

Bear false witness - Exodus 20:16

Insult - Luke 18:32, 1 Peter 3:8

Murmur - Jude 16, Philippians 2:14, 1 Corinthians 10:10

Slander - Mark 7:22, James 4:11, 1 Peter 2:1, Titus 3:2, Matthew 15:19, 1 Peter 3:16, Colossians 3:8; Ephesians 4:31

Lascivious speech - 2 Peter 2:18

Judge Not - Matthew 7:1-5, Luke 6:37, James 4:11,12; Judgments - Romans 14:10-12, Romans 2:1-3

Do Not Judge by appearance - John 7:24

Falsely accuse - Matthew 5:11-12

Outbursts of wrath - Galatians 5:20

Preaching a gospel contrary to the truth - Galatians 1:8-9

Anxious saying - Matthew 6:31

Unwholesome / evil talk - Ephesians 4:29-31

Unclean speech - Ephesians 5:4-7, Colossians 4:6

Denying Jesus Christ - Jude 4, Titus 1:16, 2 Timothy 3:5, 2 Peter 2:1, 1 John 2:23

Heresy - Galatians 5:20, 2 Peter 2:1

Mockery - Luke 18:32, 22:63

Scoffing - 2 Peter 3:3

Empty phrases - Matthew 6:7

Vain repetitions - Matthew 6:7

Praying amiss - James 4:3

Long hypocritical prayers - Matthew 23:15

Contentions - Proverbs 18:6, Proverbs 22:10

Quarrel - Proverbs 17:14
Hypocrisy - 1 Timothy 4:2, 1 Peter 2:1
Grumble - 1 Peter 4:9, 1 Corinthians 10:10; James 5:9, John 6:41
Complain - Jude 16, Numbers 11:1
Boastful - 2 Peter 2:18
Babbling - Acts 17:18
Enticing Words of Man's Wisdom - 1 Corinthians 2:4, Colossians 2:4
Bitterness - Romans 3:13,14
Divination - Deuteronomy 18:10, 2 Kings 21:6
Interprets Omens - Deuteronomy 18:10
Sorcery - Deuteronomy 18:10
Words of mediums / spiritualists - 2 Chronicles 33:6
Arguments and lofty opinions raised against the knowledge of God - 2 Corinthians 10:5
Prophesied false dreams - Jeremiah 23:32
Heresy - Galatians 5:20; 2 Peter 2:1
Gossips - Romans 1:20
Grumbling - Philippians 2:14
Foolish controversies - Titus 3:9-10
Foolish genealogies - Titus 3:9-10
Disputes of the Law - Titus 3:9-10
Corrupt talk - Ephesians 4:29
Improper speech by women in churches - 1 Corinthians 14:34-35
Kisses of an enemy are deceitful - Proverbs 27:6
Speak / Bless with a Loud voice - Proverbs 27:14
Teaching human tradition - Colossians 2:8
Old wives fables - 1 Timothy 4:7
Deceptive words by covetousness - 2 Peter 2:3
Enticing words of man's wisdom - 1 Corinthians 2:4; Colossians 2:4
Sounding a trumpet before you as hypocrites do when giving - Matthew 6:2
Blaspheming the Holy Spirit - Mark 3:29
Scoffers - 2 Peter 3:3; Proverbs 22:10
Guile - John 1:47; Psalm 34:13
Double Tongued - 1 Timothy 3:8
Flattery - Daniel 11:32, Romans 16:18; Proverbs 26:28

Flattery - Jude 1:16

Smooth talk - Romans 16:18

Charming - Proverbs 31:30

Crude joking - Ephesians 5:4

Witchcraft - 2 Kings 21:6

Soothsaying - Leviticus 19:26

False teachings - 2 Timothy 4:3,4

Sows discord among brethren - Proverbs 6:19;

Contradictions - 1 Timothy 6:20

Talk of troublemaking - Proverbs 24:2

Speak evil of dignitaries - 2 Peter 2:10

Abusive speech - Colossians 3:8

Empty Chatter - 2 Timothy 2:14,16

Double tongued - 1 Timothy 3:8

Deny Christ - 1 John 2:22; 2 Timothy 2:12

Hypocritical - Psalm 26:4-5

Filthiness talking - Ephesians 5:4

Loud Mouth Boasting - Jude 1:12-16

Great welling words of vanity - 2 Peter 2:18

Philosophy - Colossians 2:8

False words - 2 Peter 2:3

Not confessing that Jesus Christ came in the flesh - 2 John 1:7

Hastily in words - Proverbs 29:20

Evil Speaking - James 4:11; Ephesians 4:31-32; 1 Peter 2:1; Titus 3:2; 2 Peter 2:12; Proverbs 15:28

False oath - Leviticus 19:12

False witness - Deuteronomy 5:20; Proverbs 6:16-19

False prophesy - Matthew 7:15

False apostles teaching - Revelation 2:2

Words of death - Proverbs 18:21

God's Name in vain - Exodus 20:7

All evil speaking - 1 Peter 2:1

Profane - Matthew 12:5; Acts 24:6

Cursing - James 3:9-10; Acts 24:6

Curse mother or father - Proverbs 20:20

Cursing - James 3:10; Romans 12:14
Filthy Language - Colossians 3:8
Strife - Proverbs 16:28, 17:14
Presumptuous Speech - Proverbs 18:13, 17
Rage / Anger - Colossians 3:18
Scornful - Proverbs 3:34
Quarrels - 2 Timothy 2:23-24; Isaiah 45:9
Whisperers - 2 Corinthians 12:20; Romans 1:29; Proverbs 16:28
Disputes - Luke 22:24; Acts 23:7; Acts 25:19
False Witness - Matthew 15:19; Matthew 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Mark 14:57
Coarse jesting - Ephesians 5:4
Idle Chatter - Proverbs 14:23
Unclean - Matthew 15:11, 18
Fault finders - Jude 1:16
Deceptive words of covetousness - 2 Peter 2:3
Speaking other doctrines - 1 Timothy 1:3
Swear Oaths - Matthew 23:16-22
Busybodies - 1 Timothy 5:13
Talebearers - Leviticus 19:16
Multiply words - Ecclesiastes 10:14; Proverbs 10:19
Speak Wrongly - John 18:22-23
Love in word only - 1 John 3:18
Bear any Grudge - Leviticus 19:18
Every Careless Word - Matthew 12:36
Foolish / Silly talking - Ephesians 5:4
Speaking loud boasts of folly - 2 Peter 2:18

Bad Speech And Words That Are Evil, Wrong, and Unloving

Devour (Psalm 52:4):
Heckle (Luke 23:35-39):
Condemn (Romans 8:1):
Derision (Psalm 119:51):
Jeer (Matthew 27:39):

Coerce (Ezekiel 22:27):
Malice (1 Corinthians 5:8):
Unsubmissiveness (Romans 8:7):
Jealousy (James 3:14-16):
Worship false gods (Exodus 34:14):
Preach falsely (Jeremiah 23:16):
Swear (Matthew 5:34-37):
Obscene (Ephesians 5:4):
Coarse (Colossians 3:8):
Vulgar (Ephesians 4:29):
Unrefined (Proverbs 10:32):
Taunt (Psalm 42:3):
Defamation (Ephesians 4:31):
Slur (Proverbs 22:10):
Wickedness (Psalm 94:23):
Aspersion (Psalm 31:13):
Innuendo (Psalm 64:2-4):
Degrade (Proverbs 18:19):
Debase (Proverbs 14:21):
Discredit (Matthew 5:11):
Malign (Psalm 109:2-3):
Guile (1 Peter 2:1):
Reproach (Psalm 119:22):
Rail at (1 Corinthians 4:12):
Defame (Psalm 101:5):
Chant (Isaiah 3:16):
Sow Discord (Proverbs 6:19):
Multiply one's words (Ecclesiastes 5:3):
Unkind (Ephesians 4:32):
Uncompassionate (Colossians 3:12):
Unmerciful (Romans 1:31):
Unforgiving (Matthew 6:14-15):
Ungracious (Colossians 4:6):
Mislead (Proverbs 14:12):

Unfaithful (Proverbs 25:19):
Unbelieving (Mark 9:24):
Ashamed of Jesus (Mark 8:38):
Non-testifying of Jesus (Matthew 10:32-33):
Insults (Proverbs 14:21):
Exaggerate (Proverbs 25:14):
Ramble (Ecclesiastes 5:2):
Rave (Jeremiah 29:26):
Rant (Proverbs 29:9):
Babble (Ecclesiastes 5:3):
Silly Talk (Ephesians 5:4):
Obnoxious (Proverbs 27:15):
Prideful (Proverbs 16:18):
Snide Remark (Proverbs 14:21):
Ridicule (Proverbs 14:21):
Bicker (Proverbs 20:3):
Blasphemy (Matthew 12:31-32):
Lying Lips (Proverbs 12:22):
Flattery (Proverbs 26:28):
Foolish Talking (Ephesians 5:4):
Filthy Language (Colossians 3:8):
Hypocrisy (Matthew 23:27-28):
Boasting (James 4:16):
Idle Words (Matthew 12:36-37):
Gossip (Proverbs 20:19):
Slander (Proverbs 10:18):
Quarreling (Proverbs 20:3):
Complaining (Philippians 2:14):
Mockery (Proverbs 14:9):
Judging Hypocritically (Matthew 7:1-5):
Cursing (James 3:9-10):
Angry Words (Proverbs 15:1):
Stirring up Strife (Proverbs 15:18):
Rebellion (1 Samuel 15:23):

Dishonoring Parents (Exodus 20:12):
Disobedience (Romans 1:30):
Ingratitude (2 Timothy 3:2):
Rebellion against God's Word (Jeremiah 6:10):
Blaming God (Numbers 14:2-4):
Resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51):
Deceitful Speech (Psalm 34:13):
Foul Language (Colossians 3:8):
Evil Thoughts and Speech (Mark 7:20-23):
Blaspheming the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31-32):
Speaking Against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31-32):
Foolish Controversies (Titus 3:9):
Foolish Genealogies (Titus 3:9):
Disputes of the Law (Titus 3:9):
Corrupt Talk (Ephesians 4:29):
Improper Speech by Women in Churches (1 Corinthians 14:34-35):
Kisses of an Enemy Are Deceitful (Proverbs 27:6):
Blessing with a Loud Voice (Proverbs 27:14):
Teaching Human Tradition (Colossians 2:8):
Old Wives' Fables (1 Timothy 4:7):
Deceptive Words by Covetousness (2 Peter 2:3):
Enticing Words of Man's Wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:4; Colossians 2:4):
Sounding a Trumpet Before You as Hypocrites Do When Giving (Matthew 6:2):
Blaspheming the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:29):
Scoffers (2 Peter 3:3; Proverbs 22:10):
Guile (John 1:47; Psalm 34:13):
Double-Tongued (1 Timothy 3:8):
Flattery (Daniel 11:32; Romans 16:18; Proverbs 26:28):
Smooth Talk (Romans 16:18):
Charming (Proverbs 31:30):
Crude Joking (Ephesians 5:4):
Witchcraft (2 Kings 21:6):
Soothsaying (Leviticus 19:26):
False Teachings (2 Timothy 4:3-4):

Sowing Discord Among Brethren (Proverbs 6:19):

Contradictions (1 Timothy 6:20):

Talk of Troublemaking (Proverbs 24:2):

Speaking Evil of Dignitaries (2 Peter 2:10):

Abusive Speech (Colossians 3:8):

Empty Chatter (2 Timothy 2:14, 16):

Deny Christ (1 John 2:22; 2 Timothy 2:12):

Hypocritical (Psalm 26:4-5):

Filthiness Talking (Ephesians 5:4):

Loud Mouth Boasting (Jude 1:12-16):

Great Swelling Words of Vanity (2 Peter 2:18):

Philosophy (Colossians 2:8):

False Words (2 Peter 2:3):

Not Confessing That Jesus Christ Came in the Flesh (2 John 1:7):

Hastily in Words (Proverbs 29:20):

Evil Speaking: -James 4:11, Ephesians 4:31-32, 1 Peter 2:1,Titus 3:2, 2 Peter 2:12, Proverbs 15:28

False Oath (Leviticus 19:12):

False Witness: (Deuteronomy 5:20, Proverbs 6:16-19)

False Prophecy (Matthew 7:15):

False Apostles Teaching (Revelation 2:2):

Words of Death (Proverbs 18:21):

God's Name in Vain (Exodus 20:7):

All Evil Speaking (1 Peter 2:1):

Profane: Matthew 12:5, Acts 24:6

Cursing: James 3:9-10, Acts 24:6

Curse Mother or Father (Proverbs 20:20):

Filthy Language: James 3:10, Romans 12:14

Strife: Proverbs 16:28, Proverbs 17:14

Presumptuous Speech (Proverbs 18:13, 17):

Rage/Anger (Colossians 3:18):

Scornful (Proverbs 3:34):

Quarrels: 2 Timothy 2:23-24, Isaiah 45:9

Whisperers: 2 Corinthians 12:20, Romans 1:29, Proverbs 16:28

Disputes: Luke 22:24, Acts 23:7, Acts 25:19

False Witness: Matthew 15:19, Matthew 19:18, Mark 10:19, Luke 18:20, Mark 14:57

Coarse Jesting (Ephesians 5:4):

Idle Chatter (Proverbs 14:23):

Unclean (Matthew 15:11, 18):

Faultfinders (Jude 1:16):

Deceptive Words of Covetousness (2 Peter 2:3):

Speaking Other Doctrines (1 Timothy 1:3):

Swear Oaths (Matthew 23:16-22):

Busybodies (1 Timothy 5:13):

Talebearers (Leviticus 19:16):

Multiply Words: Ecclesiastes 10:14, Proverbs 10:19

Speak Wrongly (John 18:22-23):

Love in Word Only (1 John 3:18):

Bear Any Grudge (Leviticus 19:18):

Every Careless Word (Matthew 12:36):

Foolish/Silly Talking (Ephesians 5:4):

Speaking Loud Boasts of Folly (2 Peter 2:18):

(157) Taming the Tongue:

Speaking Life

As Christians, taming the tongue is one of the most challenging yet vital aspects of living a godly life. Our words carry incredible power—to build up or tear down, to bless or to curse. *James 3:5-6* says, *"Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity..."* James goes on to say that no human being can fully tame the tongue, which shows us just how much we need the help of the Holy Spirit. Left unchecked, our words can cause damage to relationships, stir up division, and even grieve the heart of God.

As followers of Christ, we are called to speak with wisdom, love, and truth. *Proverbs 18:21* tells us, *"Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."* This means our words don't just affect others—they also shape our own lives. To tame our tongues, we must be intentional—slowing down before we speak, filling our hearts with God's Word, and allowing His Spirit to guide our conversations. Whether we're encouraging a friend, correcting a loved one, or responding to conflict, our speech should reflect the character of Christ. When we surrender our words to God, our mouths become instruments of grace, healing, and truth in a world that desperately needs them.

Scripture: James 3:1-10 (AKJV) My brothers, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. 2For in many things we offend all. **If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.** 3Behold, we put bits in the horses **'**mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 4Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, wherever the governor wants. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasts great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindles! 6And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. 7For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed of mankind: 8But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. 10Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not so to be. 11Does a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? 12Can the fig tree, my brothers, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh."13Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.."

The tongue, though small in size, holds immense power. It has the ability to build up or tear down, to speak life or spread destruction. In the book of James, we're reminded of the importance of taming our tongues and using our words wisely.

Our tongues have the potential to cause great harm, likened to a fire that can quickly spread and consume everything in its path. With a careless word, we can hurt others, damage relationships, and even alter the course of our own lives. Yet, James also points out the irony that with the same tongue, we praise God and curse our fellow human beings.

As followers of Christ, we are called to use our words to build up rather than tear down, to speak life rather than death. We are reminded that every person is made in the image of God and deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. Our words should reflect the love and grace that we have received from God.

Taming the tongue is not easy; it requires constant vigilance and reliance on the Holy Spirit to help us control our speech. It means pausing before speaking, considering the impact of our words, and choosing to speak with kindness and wisdom. It also means being quick to listen and slow to speak, as James advises earlier in his letter.

Let us strive to honor God with our words, using them to encourage, uplift, and edify those around us. May our tongues be instruments of righteousness, bringing glory to God and blessing to others.

(158) Bridling the Tongue: Harnessing Our Words, to be more Christlike

"If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless." - **James 1:26** (AKJV)

Bridling the tongue involves exercising control over our speech and using our words in a manner that honors God and reflects His character. It's about being mindful of the power of our words to build up or tear down, to encourage or discourage, to bless or to curse, to bring life or death.

Our words have the power to reveal the condition of our hearts. James warns that if a person claims to be religious but fails to bridle their tongue, they are deceiving themselves. True religion is not just about outward appearances or religious rituals; it's about a transformed heart that is evident in our words and actions.

As followers of Christ, we are called to be imitators of Him in all areas of our lives, including our speech. Jesus Himself emphasized the importance of guarding our words, teaching that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). Our words reveal the condition of our hearts and our relationship with God.

Bridling the tongue requires humility, self-control, and dependence on the Holy Spirit. It involves resisting the temptation to gossip, slander, or speak unkindly towards others, and instead choosing words that edify, encourage, and build up. It means speaking the truth in love and using our words to bring glory to God.

Controlling our speech is not always easy, especially in the heat of the moment or when we are faced with difficult situations. It requires ongoing effort and vigilance to guard our tongues and to allow the Holy Spirit to guide and direct our words.

When we bridle our tongues and use our words to reflect the character of Christ, we bear witness to the transforming power of the gospel at work in our lives. Our speech becomes a testimony to the love, grace, and truth of God, and it has the potential to impact those around us for His kingdom.

(159) Let Your "Yes" Be Yes and Your "No" Be No:

Introduction

The principle of honesty and integrity in speech is a central theme in Scripture. In Matthew 5:37, Jesus instructs His followers to let their "yes" be "yes" and their "no" be "no," emphasizing the importance of truthfulness and straightforwardness in our words. This teaching is not just a call for clear communication but a deeper call to live with integrity, where our words reflect the sincerity and authenticity of our hearts. In a world filled with half-truths, manipulations, and false promises, Christians are called to stand out by embodying truth and honesty in every aspect of life.

This commentary will explore the meaning of Jesus ’words in Matthew 5:37, the biblical principles behind honest speech, and practical applications of this teaching in our relationships with others.

1. The Biblical Foundation of "Yes" and "No"

1.1 The Context of Matthew 5:37

- **Matthew 5:33-37** (AKJV)– *"Again, you have heard that it has been said by them of old time, You shall not forswear yourself, but shall perform to the Lord your oaths: 34But I say to you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: 35Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. 36Neither shall you swear by your head, because you can not make one hair white or black. 37But let your communication be, Yes, yes; No, no: for whatever is more than these comes of evil."*

In this passage from Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount*, Jesus addresses the practice of oaths, which was common in His time. Religious leaders and the people often swore oaths—promises or vows made in God's name—to give weight to their words, but sometimes they would do so insincerely or attempt to bypass their responsibilities through manipulation of the oath. Jesus takes a radical approach: He tells His followers not to take oaths at all. Instead, He calls for a more radical form of integrity: let their "yes" be "yes" and their "no" be "no."

1.2 The Heart of the Matter: Integrity and Truthfulness

At the heart of Jesus' teaching is a call to integrity. He is not merely forbidding the use of oaths or vows but addressing the deeper issue of honesty in our speech. In Jesus' view, a person who is characterized by truthfulness does not need to swear oaths to prove their sincerity—simply saying "yes" or "no" is sufficient. Our words should be trustworthy, and our character should be so aligned with truth that others can rely on us without the need for additional guarantees.

- **Proverbs 12:22** (AKJV)– *"Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight."*
    - God delights in those who speak the truth and act with integrity. The emphasis is not just on avoiding falsehood but on cultivating a heart of faithfulness in speech and action. Truth is something that is deeply valued by God, and those who belong to Him are called to reflect that truth in their words and deeds.

1.3 The Warning Against Deception

- **James 5:12** (AKJV)– *"But above all things, my brothers, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yes be yes; and your no, no; lest you fall into condemnation."*
    - James reiterates Jesus' teaching, warning against swearing oaths in any form. The point is that Christians should not need to swear by anything to prove the truthfulness of their words. The credibility of a believer's word should be rooted in their character. Any attempt to embellish or manipulate the truth, through the use of oaths or other forms of deceit, invites condemnation.

2. The Importance of Honesty in Scripture

Honesty is not just a moral value in the Bible; it is an essential characteristic of God's people. God is described as a God of truth, and His followers are called to reflect His nature in their lives.

2.1 God is Truthful

- **Numbers 23:19** (AKJV)– *"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: has he said, and shall he not do it? or has he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"*
    - God is a God of truth who cannot lie. His promises are sure and His word is reliable. Because God is truth, His people are called to reflect this same integrity in their words. To lie or deceive is to misrepresent the character of God, who is the ultimate standard of truth.

2.2 Integrity Reflects Our Relationship with God

- **Psalm 15:1-2** (AKJV)– *"Lord, who shall abide in your tabernacle? who shall dwell in your holy hill? 2He that walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart. "*
    - In the Old Testament, those who sought to dwell in God's presence were required to speak truth in their hearts. Honesty is deeply connected to spiritual integrity. A person who speaks truth is not only trustworthy in the eyes of others but also aligned with God's own character. Christians are called to live with the same purity and honesty that reflects their relationship with God.

2.3 The Danger of Deception and Falsehood

- **Proverbs 6:16-19** (AKJV)– *"These six things does the LORD hate: yes, seven are an abomination to him: 17A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18An heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19A false witness that speaks lies, and he that sows discord among brothers.."*
    - Lying is one of the things that God hates, alongside other acts of wickedness. Falsehood and deceit destroy relationships, break trust, and harm the unity of the community. God detests lying because it misrepresents the truth and works against His will for peace, justice, and reconciliation.

3. Practical Applications: Let Your "Yes" Be Yes and Your "No" Be No

3.1 Speak with Integrity

To let your "yes" be "yes" and your "no" be "no" means to speak with integrity and authenticity in every circumstance. This requires honesty in everyday conversations, business dealings, and personal commitments. When you say "yes," you should follow through on your commitments, and when you say "no," you should be firm and honest in your refusal, without resorting to excuses or evasions.

- **Example:** If you agree to help a friend with a project, your "yes" should reflect a commitment to follow through. If circumstances change and you cannot fulfill your

promise, you should honestly communicate the reasons why, rather than offering vague excuses.

3.2 Avoid Manipulation and Half-Truths

Jesus warns that anything beyond a simple "yes" or "no" comes from evil (Matthew 5:37). This teaches us to avoid manipulating our words or leaving room for misinterpretation. Sometimes, people use words to manipulate others or hide their true intentions. As followers of Christ, we are called to be clear, straightforward, and honest, without attempting to deceive or twist the truth.

- **Example:** If someone asks for a favor you’re not comfortable doing, don’t give a false promise or an insincere commitment. Simply say "no" with kindness and respect, rather than leading the person to believe you’ll do something you won’t.

3.3 Be Reliable and Trustworthy

When Christians live with integrity and honesty, they become people others can trust. This reliability is a testimony to the character of God. Our words should be dependable, and we should aim to fulfill our promises, as Jesus does. Being reliable strengthens relationships and creates a trustworthy reputation that reflects God’s nature.

- **Example:** If you commit to attending a meeting, be there. If you say you'll pray for someone, follow through on that promise by actually praying. Your words should carry weight because your actions confirm them.

3.4 Living in Freedom from Empty Promises

A life of integrity frees us from the pressure of managing complicated lies and half-truths. When we say what we mean and mean what we say, we do not need to worry about keeping track of multiple stories or promises. Simple honesty brings peace of mind and promotes emotional and relational health.

- **Example:** If you are honest about your limitations or circumstances, you won’t have to remember a false narrative. You can live freely, without the burden of deception.

4. Conclusion: Living Out Truth

Jesus ’command to let our "yes" be "yes" and our "no" be "no" challenges us to embrace a life of truth, integrity, and straightforwardness. In a world that often distorts the truth, Christians are called to stand out by living honestly and transparently in all things. Our words should be a reflection of our hearts, and our integrity in speech should mirror the character of God Himself. As we live with integrity in our speech, we demonstrate the power of the gospel and the beauty of a life transformed by Christ.

Let your "yes" be yes, and your "no" be no—may our words bring glory to God and foster relationships that are built on trust, sincerity, and truth.Unworthiness / Worthy Through Jesus Christ

(160) Unworthiness / Worthy Through Jesus Christ:

Many individuals and even Christians have a feeling of unworthiness either keeping them from accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior or hindering them from growing in Christ. God does not want any person to wait to become righteous and worthy first before becoming a Christian because the only way a person can become righteous and worthy is to accept Jesus in their life and follow him.

Furthermore any time we feel unworthy of God's Love and goodness, as a Christian, we need to remember that God desires us to accept His forgiveness for all our sins past, present, and future, and to trust and believe that God has made us worthy of His Love and goodness through Jesus Christ.

God's gift of eternal life is not earned by our own merit, therefore, although we are not worthy because of our sinful nature, God still lovingly chooses to offer each one of us His gift of eternal life.

Without Jesus Christ abiding in us we are unworthy and remain unworthy and unholy however God loves us, and if we believe in Jesus Christ, repent and follow him, we are made worthy by the grace and holiness of Jesus Christ.

God’s word gives us a biblical understanding of unworthiness and that we are made worthy through Jesus Christ, Genesis 1:26-27 lays the foundation, proclaiming that we are made in the very image of God. This declaration establishes our inherent worth, a worth bestowed upon us by the Creator Himself. Psalm 139:13-16 reinforces this truth, describing us as fearfully and wonderfully made, with the intricacies of our existence known to God even before our birth. Ephesians 1:4 echoes the predestined nature of our identity, emphasizing that God chose us before the foundations of the earth.

The language used in these passages emphasizes actions done for us or to us by God. We "are made," "are fearfully and wonderfully made," and "were chosen." These phrases underline a worth that is not self-derived; rather, it is a worth given to us by God. Ephesians 1:3 emphasizes that we are recipients of "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," highlighting the divine nature of our worth. Our value is not rooted in our own accomplishments, but in the immeasurable sacrifice God made—the death of His Son on the cross.

Ephesians 2:10 emphasizes the creative and intentional work of God in believers: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Understanding oneself as God's masterpiece highlights inherent worth and purpose.

Matthew 10:29-31 emphasizes God's care for even the smallest details of His creation: "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." Believers find their true value in the attentive and caring love of God.

Addressing our fallen state, Romans 5:8 reminds us that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners, emphasizing that our worth is not contingent on our deserving nature. Ephesians 2:1 further underscores our unworthiness, stating that we were dead

in trespasses and sins. Despite this, God imputed His righteousness to us, not because we were worthy, but precisely because we were unworthy and incapable of making ourselves worthy.

The miracle unfolds in God's love for us in our brokenness, as highlighted in John 3:16. Our worth is not earned but bestowed upon us through His unfathomable love. John 1:12 signifies our acceptance into God's family as His children, a status granted to those who receive and believe in Christ. First John 1:9 offers the assurance of forgiveness and cleansing when we confess our sins, reinforcing the idea that our worth is intricately tied to God's redemptive work.

In a world where external opinions often shape our self-worth, the ultimate authority on our value is Jesus Christ. The pinnacle expression of our worth is seen in His sacrificial act on the cross, where He gave His own life for us. Recognizing ourselves through the lens of God's love and redemption enables us to grasp the immeasurable value we hold as children of the Most High. Our self-worth is not subject to human judgment but is anchored in the profound truth of God's love and the priceless cost of our redemption.

Continuing in the vein of understanding our worth in the biblical context, we uncover further layers of insight within the Scriptures. Genesis 1:26-27 eloquently states that we are crafted in the very image of God, a profound declaration affirming our intrinsic worth. Psalm 139:13-16 deepens this understanding by portraying us as fearfully and wonderfully made, with God's knowledge of our existence predating our birth. Ephesians 1:4 reinforces the nature of God’s divine sovereign will and choice, emphasizing that God selected us before the foundations of the earth.

In the midst of this acknowledgment of unworthiness, the biblical understanding pivots to the compelling truth of redemption and grace, a recurrent message. prominently throughout the New Testament. Ephesians 2:8-9 sheds light about the transformative nature of God's grace, declaring salvation as a gift bestowed through faith rather than earned through merit. This transformation centers around the sacrificial work of Christ, articulated in 2 Corinthians 5:21, where Jesus becomes sin for humanity, facilitating a profound change whereby believers become the righteousness of God.

Central to this unfolding understanding is the precept of our identity in Jesus Christ, which is a pivotal element in the biblical exploration of our worth in God’s eyes, because we abide in Jesus. The metaphor of adoption emerges, signifying a profound change in status and identity. Galatians 4:4-7 describes us as believers as adopted sons and daughters of God, receiving the Spirit of His Son and the privilege of calling God "Abba! Father!" This transformative act elevates individuals from a state of unworthiness to being heirs through God.

As we follow Jesus, the exploration of self-worth extends beyond adoption; believers are acknowledged as God's chosen for good pleasure and to His glory, carefully crafted and designed for a purpose. Ephesians 2:10 paints a vivid picture of God's intentional work, emphasizing that believers are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works. Understanding oneself as God's unique creation introduces a profound sense of worth and purpose.

In our walk with God, this understanding of self-discovery and worth deepens within the context of God's unconditional love. Romans 5:8 unveils the depth of divine love, expressing that God's love isn't contingent on human worthiness. Instead, it extends to sinners in need of redemption, highlighting an unmerited favor that forms the bedrock of self-worth for believers.

In our walk with God, the ongoing work of sanctification becomes a crucial aspect in the exploration of self-worth. Romans 12:2 urges believers to undergo a transformative process by renewing their minds. The assurance in Philippians 1:6, that God, who initiated a good work in believers, will bring it to completion, instills confidence in the ongoing process of sanctification.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Romans 5:8 -9 (AKJV) But God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

Satanic powers often try to tell us that we are unworthy; However, we are worthy, regardless of our past, present or future sins, because Jesus Christ redeem us who believe in Christ, and He paid the ultimate price for our sins, and failures, by His death at the cross. God's steadfast Love, Authority and Grace, makes us worthy. Therefore regardless of what spiritual state we feel or even if we fall away we should return to Jesus and repent and accept His forgiveness.

Luke 7:6-7:(AKJV) The centurion sends friends to Jesus, saying, "Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying to him, Lord, trouble not yourself: for I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof: 7Why neither thought I myself worthy to come to you: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.," expressing a profound sense of unworthiness before Jesus.

Yet Jesus recognized his faith even though he thought he was unworthy - Luke 7:9 “ When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned him about, and said to the people that followed him, I say to you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. “

Matthew 3:11:(AKJV) John the Baptist acknowledges his own unworthiness compared to Jesus, saying, "I indeed baptize you with water to repentance. but he that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:" emphasizing the humility and recognition of Jesus' superiority.

Luke 15:19: In the parable of the prodigal son, the son expresses repentance, saying, "I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants," conveying a sense of unworthiness and humility after squandering his inheritance. However his father joyfully welcomes him back. Likewise God also recognizes us worthy through our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Matthew 8:8-9: The centurion tells Jesus, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed," revealing a deep sense of unworthiness coupled with faith in Jesus' authority.

Matthew 15:26: A Canaanite woman acknowledges her unworthiness, saying, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs," recognizing her Gentile status in comparison to the Jewish context.

Luke 15:21: The prodigal son, returning to his father, says, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son," expressing a repentant and humble heart.

Matthew 10:37-38 (AKJV): Jesus states, "He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that takes not his cross, and follows after me, is not worthy of me," emphasizing the prioritization of allegiance to Jesus over familial ties and personal comfort.

Luke 18:13-14 (AKJV): In the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, the tax collector beats his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted," illustrating a recognition of unworthiness and a plea for mercy.

Matthew 10:11-13 (AKJV): Jesus instructs His disciples on entering a town, saying, "Nor money for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. 11And into whatever city or town you shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till you go there. 12And when you come into an house, salute it. 13And if the house be worthy, let your peace come on it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14And whoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when you depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. 15Truly I say to you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city." **Indicating a context of worthiness related to hospitality and receptivity. These verses also indicating a discernment of worthiness in receiving the good news of repentance, forgiveness and salvation through Jesus Christ.**

Matthew 22:8-10 (AKJV): In the parable of the wedding feast, the king instructs, "Go you therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, bid to the marriage. 10So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests" illustrating God's invitation to all, irrespective of their perceived worthiness.

Matthew 5:3 (AKJV): "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This verse highlights the blessedness of recognizing one's spiritual poverty or unworthiness before God.

Matthew 10:29-31 (AKJV): "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." Jesus reassures His disciples of the intrinsic value and worth assigned by God to each individual.

Matthew 8:12 (AKJV): "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Jesus speaks about the sons of the kingdom being thrown into outer darkness, suggesting that mere heritage or affiliation does not guarantee worthiness but requires genuine faith.

Matthew 15:27 (AKJV): "And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." The Canaanite woman displays humility and recognizes a place for unworthy Gentiles in God's plan.

Luke 7:37-38 (AKJV): "And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment." Jesus acknowledges her actions, saying, in Luke 7:47-48 "Why I say to you, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little. 48And he said to her, Your sins are forgiven.." This illustrates the depth of gratitude and love stemming from recognizing one's unworthiness and receiving forgiveness.

Matthew 9:12-13 (AKJV): "But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Jesus emphasizes the purpose of His ministry in reaching out to the spiritually needy and acknowledging their unworthiness.

Luke 5:31-32 (AKJV): "And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Jesus highlights His mission to those who recognize their spiritual need and unworthiness.

Matthew 18:12-14:(AKJV) How think you? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, does he not leave the ninety and nine, and goes into the mountains, and seeks that which is gone astray? 13And if so be that he find it, truly I say to you, he rejoices more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. 14Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." Jesus tells the parable of the lost sheep, expressing the shepherd's joy in finding the one lost sheep, emphasizing God's pursuit of the repentant and the worthiness of every individual in His eyes.

Luke 18:18-23: A rich ruler asks Jesus about inheriting eternal life. Jesus responds, saying, "Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me," revealing the challenge of relinquishing earthly wealth and the worthiness of prioritizing eternal treasures.

Matthew 9:10-13: Jesus dines with tax collectors and sinners, prompting criticism from the Pharisees. Jesus responds, saying, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners," emphasizing the worthiness of those who recognize their need for deliverance, being reconciled to God and receiving salvation.

Luke 7:47-48: Jesus commends the sinful woman, saying, "Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little," highlighting the connection between forgiveness, love, and the acknowledgment of one's unworthiness.

Matthew 3:11: John the Baptist acknowledges his own unworthiness compared to Jesus, saying, "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry," emphasizing the humility and recognition of Jesus' superiority.

Matthew 8:8-9: The centurion tells Jesus, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed," revealing a deep sense of unworthiness coupled with faith in Jesus' authority.

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Matthew 10:37-38: Jesus states, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me," emphasizing the prioritization of allegiance to Jesus over familial ties and personal comfort.

Matthew 7:21-23: Jesus warns about false disciples, saying, "On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness,'" highlighting the importance of genuine relationship and obedience in true worthiness.

Conclusion:

The biblical perspective on unworthiness and self-worth is grounded in the redemptive work of Christ and the transformative power of God's love. While acknowledging human unworthiness due to sin, the Gospel proclaims a message of restoration, adoption, and identity in Christ. As Christians we find our worth not in our own merit but in the unmerited love of God, who considers us holy and worthy through Jesus Christ. The journey of sanctification and mind renewal further reinforces the understanding of true value in Christ. The biblical narrative of unworthiness ultimately points to a story of redemption, renewal, and the profound worth bestowed upon us, who believe, through our relationship with the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings, Our Redeemer and Messiah, Jesus Christ..

(161) Facing Problems, Trials, and Sufferings:

A Biblical Perspective on Our Response

Introduction

Life as a believer and disiple of Yeshua, Jesus Christ is marked by spiritual victories and joys, but it is also accompanied by trials, challenges, and periods of suffering. The reality of hardship is clear in Scripture—Jesus Himself warned, **“**In the world you will have tribulation” (John 16:33), and the Apostle Paul wrote, **“**All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). While trials and

suffering are inevitable, they are not meaningless. In fact, the Bible provides us with both a perspective and a purpose for these difficult times, encouraging believers to respond in faith, hope, and perseverance.

This commentary will explore what the Bible teaches about how we should respond when we personally encounter problems, trials, and sufferings. It will emphasize how we can face these challenges in a way that honors God, grows our faith, and becomes an opportunity for spiritual transformation.

1. The Biblical Reality of Trials and Sufferings

Before we examine how to respond to suffering, it is important to understand that hardship is a part of the Christian life. It is not a sign of failure or abandonment by God, but a means by which God shapes His people. The New Testament consistently portrays suffering as a tool in God's hands for our sanctification and a way for us to share in the sufferings of Christ.

1.1 Suffering is Inevitable

Jesus made it clear that suffering would be a reality for His followers: **"**In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Suffering can take many forms—physical illness, emotional pain, financial loss, relational struggles, persecution, and more. But Jesus assures us that He has overcome these things, and that we can find peace in Him even in the midst of trials.

Paul also wrote to the Romans, **"**We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope" (Romans 5:3-4). This progression highlights how suffering is a necessary part of the believer**'**s growth and maturing process.

1.2 Suffering is Purposeful

While suffering is inevitable, it is never pointless. God uses trials to purify and strengthen us. In 1 Peter 1:6-7, Peter writes, **"**In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Suffering refines our faith, like gold refined by fire, and prepares us for eternal glory.

2. Our Response to Trials: Biblical Guidelines for Reaction

How we react when we personally encounter problems, trials, and sufferings is crucial. The Bible gives us clear instructions on how to face hardship in a way that honors God and strengthens our faith.

2.1 Rejoice in the Midst of Trials

This command might seem counterintuitive, yet it is central to the biblical approach to suffering. James 1:2-4 encourages us, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness." Rejoicing does not mean denying the pain or pretending to be happy in the midst of suffering, but rather choosing to respond with faith that God is using this situation for our good and His glory. It is a recognition that God is sovereign, and that every trial is an opportunity for spiritual growth.

2.2 Lean on God's Strength, Not Our Own

In the face of trials, it is tempting to rely on our own strength, or worse, to despair. But the Bible instructs us to rely on God's power. In 2 Corinthians 12:9, Paul shares God's words to him in his own struggles: **“**But he said to me, **‘**My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. **’**Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” When we are weak, God**’**s strength is made perfect. We are called to surrender our self-sufficiency and trust in God's grace.

Isaiah 40:29-31 further reminds us, "He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." Trials provide an opportunity to depend fully on God's strength and provision.

2.3 Pray and Seek God in the Midst of Suffering

One of the primary ways believers respond to trials is through prayer. Prayer allows us to lay our burdens before God and seek His help. Philippians 4:6-7 encourages us to "be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." In doing so, we experience His peace, which surpasses all understanding.

When facing suffering, prayer becomes a lifeline. Jesus Himself modeled this during His time in Gethsemane, where He poured out His heart to the Father, asking, **“**If possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as You will” (Matthew 26:39). Our prayers can be raw and honest, but we are called to align ourselves with God**’**s will, trusting in His ultimate wisdom.

2.4 Trust in God's Sovereignty and Goodness

One of the hardest aspects of facing trials is the question of why. Why does God allow suffering? The Bible encourages us to trust in God's sovereignty and goodness, even when we do not understand the reason behind our pain. Proverbs 3:5-6 teaches us to "trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Romans 8:28 reassures us that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Even in suffering, we can trust that God is working all things together for our ultimate good—sometimes that good is a deeper, more intimate relationship with Him, other times it is a greater opportunity for us to reflect Christ to the world.

2.5 Endure with Hope

Endurance in suffering is not passive resignation, but an active, confident hope that God will sustain us through the trial. Hebrews 12:1-2 encourages us to **"**run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith." Our endurance is fueled by the hope we have in Christ and the ultimate victory He promises.

James 5:7-8 also tells us, **"**Be patient therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." Our hope is not in our immediate circumstances but in the promise that Christ will return and make all things right. This future hope sustains us through present difficulties.

3. Supporting One Another Through Suffering

While personal faith is key to enduring trials, the Christian community plays a crucial role in helping each other through suffering. We are called not to isolate ourselves, but to bear one another**'**s burdens (Galatians 6:2) and encourage each other in the faith.

3.1 Comfort One Another

In 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Paul speaks of the comfort God gives us in our suffering: **"**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." When we suffer, we often gain a deeper understanding of God**'**s compassion. Through that, we are uniquely equipped to comfort others who are going through similar struggles.

3.2 Exhort One Another to Endure

Just as we are called to exhort one another in times of spiritual complacency, we are also called to encourage one another to persevere through suffering. Hebrews 10:24-25 says, **"**Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another." Encouragement can be a lifeline during dark times, reminding each other of God's promises and the hope we have in Christ.

Conclusion: Our Ultimate Hope in Suffering

When we face trials, problems, and suffering, the biblical response is to remember that God is sovereign, He is with us, and He is using our struggles to refine us. The Bible teaches us to rejoice, trust, pray, endure, and encourage one another in the midst of suffering. These actions, grounded in faith, hope, and love, allow us to endure with the strength and comfort that comes from God alone.

Ultimately, the goal of facing suffering is not just to survive but to emerge from it more Christlike, more dependent on God, and more ready to share His love and grace with others. As we go through our own trials, we can be confident that God is at work, and that in the end, our suffering will give way to the glory of eternal life with Him.

Problems,Trials, Sufferings,Tribulations, Persecutions

Luke 9:23 (AKJV) “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24For whoever will save his life shall lose it: but whoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? “

1 Peter 4:4-19 (AKJV) Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you: 13But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you; for the spirit of glory and of God rests on you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. 15But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. 16Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. 17For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? 18And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 19Why let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as to a faithful Creator.

Throughout our lives, we encounter a multitude of trials, sufferings, and problems. As Christians, we face not only social challenges but also numerous spiritual trials and tribulations. However God loves and as we love Him he works our trials and sufferings for good, to benefit us, and to bless others. The Holy Spirit helps, guides and strengthens us to overcome

We should not lose heart in the midst of suffering various daily trials, but rather endure and persevere through hardships, trusting God that He will eventually turn everything for good,

Our spiritual character is being refined and matured by God, and He will bring victory in unique ways, for His Glory, for all who trust in Him.

Romans 5:3-6 (AKJV)“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works patience; 4And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5And hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy

Ghost which is given to us. 6For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

Just like any athlete who needs physical endurance to win, so does every Christian need spiritual, emotional and physical endurance to lead a life for Jesus Christ and to share His truth and love with the world. . Any good athlete trains many hours each day and disciplines his body to achieve higher results. This athlete will suffer much as he diligently goes through various exercises and specific training obstacles, yet this builds stronger endurance so that the athlete is able to withstand the race, with the purpose of winning.

In retrospect, God uses all the suffering and trials that we go through to build spiritual endurance into each person's character, so that we are able to withstand evil and continue through any spiritual opposition, till we attain the promises of God and receive the crown of eternal life. God also makes everything work for good for those that love God.

Now, suffering for Jesus Christ and fulfilling God's call for us to share the good news of salvation, is never meant to be a purposeful self inflicted act, to make one's self look like some sort of martyr, which would be in vain, but rather the suffering that we sometimes encounter as a Christian may occur as we do the will of God but those trials and sufferings should not be intentional imposed on one's self as a display of false religious piety.

Before we were Christians, suffering caused by satanic powers would bring oppression, discouragement and defeat; However God helps to turn all of our suffering and trials to still work for the better in our personal lives and to bring his love and salvation to the world; Therefore the next time you encounter a trial as a Christian realize that God will cause it to produce spiritual endurance into your life, and with spiritual endurance you will be able to Glorify God, minister to others the love and blessings of good, and while not the main focus and motive, we will also obtain God's blessings and eternal rewards,

Problems,Trials, Sufferings,Tribulations, Persecutions

KEY SCRIPTURES

Matthew 5:10-12 (AKJV)" Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness **'** sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Matthew 10:22-24 (AKJV) - "And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endures to the end shall be saved. 23But when they persecute you in this city, flee you into another: for truly I say to you, You shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. 24The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. "

1 Peter 4:1,2 (AKJV) For as much then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased

from sin; 2That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God

Romans 8:17 (AKJV) - And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us..

2 Timothy 3:11-13 (AKJV) - But you have fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, 11Persecutions, afflictions, which came to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12Yes, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 13But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

John 15:20- 27 (AKJV) Remember the word that I said to you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. 21But all these things will they do to you for my name**'**s sake, because they know not him that sent me. 22If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. 23He that hates me hates my Father also. 24If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. 25But this comes to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. 26But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me: 27And you also shall bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

James 1:12 (AKJV) Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him.

1 Peter 5:9-11 (AKJV) Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brothers that are in the world. 10But the God of all grace, who has called us to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. 11To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

2 Corinthians 4:8-18 (AKJV) We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; 10Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. 11For we which live are always delivered to death for Jesus **'**sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. 12So then death works in us, but life in you. 13We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; 14Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. 15For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. 16For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18While we look not at the things which

are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

1 Peter 2:21 -23 (AKJV) “For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps: 22Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judges righteously:

1 Peter 4:12-19 (AKJV). Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you: 13But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you; for the spirit of glory and of God rests on you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. 15But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. 16Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. 17For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? 18And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 19Why let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as to a faithful Creator.

John 16:32-33- (AKJV) “Behold, the hour comes, yes, is now come, that you shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. 33These things I have spoken to you, that in me you might have peace. **In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.**

Romans 5:1-5 (AKJV) Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works patience; 4And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5And hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us.

1 Peter 2: 19-20 (AKJV) For this is thank worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 20For what glory is it, if, when you be buffeted for your faults, you shall take it patiently? **but if, when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.**

In our walk of faith with and in Jesus Christ, trials and sufferings are inevitable, but they offer us a unique opportunity to deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ and to reflect His light in a world often shrouded in darkness. As Christians, facing trials for Jesus Christ is not just a test of endurance but a chance to discover profound strength and hope through the lens of Scripture. The Bible provides us with rich insights on how to navigate these challenges with grace and unwavering faith, drawing us closer to God and fortifying our spirits.

One of the most powerful ways to find strength in trials is through meditating on God's promises. Joshua 1:8 encourages us to immerse ourselves in the Word of God day and

night. By dwelling on His promises, we anchor our hearts in the unchanging truths of Scripture, which becomes a source of encouragement and fortitude in difficult times. When the waves of adversity crash around us, it is these promises that provide a steady foundation, helping us to remain resolute and hopeful.

Drawing near to God through prayer is another vital practice. Philippians 4:6-7 teaches us to present our requests to God with thanksgiving, finding peace that surpasses all understanding. In moments of trial, persistent prayer becomes our lifeline, allowing us to draw closer to God and experience His peace amidst the chaos. This practice of prayer helps us maintain a posture of dependence on Him, ensuring that we do not face our challenges alone but with divine support.

Embracing the Fellowship of Christ’s Sufferings

The Apostle Paul expressed a profound desire to "know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings" (Philippians 3:10). Embracing the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings means recognizing that our trials connect us more intimately with Jesus, who endured the ultimate suffering for our sake. This principle encourages us to view our own suffering as a way to participate in Christ's redemptive work, leading to a deeper relationship with Him. By sharing in His sufferings, we align our struggles with His purpose, finding meaning and solidarity in our pain.

Counting Persecution as a Sign of God’s Kingdom

In 2 Thessalonians 1:5, Paul acknowledges that suffering for the kingdom of God is a sign of God’s righteous judgment. Viewing our persecution as an indication of being part of God's kingdom can transform our perspective. It reminds us that our struggles are not meaningless but are part of a divine plan that reflects God's justice and sovereignty. This perspective helps us endure with a sense of purpose, knowing that our suffering has eternal significance.

Rejoicing in Suffering for Christ’s Sake

Acts 5:41 records the apostles rejoicing because they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus ’name. This rejoicing, despite dishonor and suffering, highlights a counter-cultural attitude that sees suffering as a privilege. By embracing this mindset, we align our hearts with the early church’s example, finding joy in the opportunity to suffer for Christ. This rejoicing does not ignore the pain but acknowledges that our suffering is a testament to our commitment to Jesus.

Blessing Those Who Persecute:

Romans 12:14 urges us to bless those who persecute us. Blessing those who persecute becomes an expression of our commitment to a Christlike response, rooted in love and forgiveness. This biblical principle encourages us to break the cycle of hostility with acts of kindness and blessing.

Relying on the Holy Spirit:

Luke 12:11-12 assures us that the Holy Spirit will teach us in that very hour what we ought to say. Facing persecution may bring moments of challenge and opposition, and this biblical principle encourages us to rely on the guidance and wisdom of the Holy Spirit in our responses.

Trusting God's Sovereignty:

1 Peter 4:19 reminds us to entrust our souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. Trusting God's sovereignty becomes a foundational principle when facing persecution, guiding us to remain steadfast in our faith, knowing that God is in control.

Remaining Steadfast in Prayer

Ephesians 6:18 instructs us to "pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication." In times of persecution, remaining steadfast in prayer becomes crucial. Prayer is not only a means of seeking God's help but also a way to stay connected to His guidance and strength. It enables us to persevere, seek divine intervention, and maintain a heart aligned with God's will amidst trials.

Casting our anxieties on God, as Philippians 4:6-7 directs, allows us to experience a peace that transcends our understanding. Trials often bring worry, but surrendering our burdens to God through prayer helps to alleviate our fears and allows us to rest in His peace.

Trusting in God’s faithfulness is essential, especially when trials bring us to the brink of doubt. 1 Corinthians 10:13 assures us that God is faithful and will provide a way out of temptation. This promise encourages us to rely on His steadfastness, knowing that He will not leave us to face our struggles alone but will provide a way through every challenge.

Remembering God’s past deliverance, as Psalm 34:17 recounts, provides hope and encouragement. Reflecting on how God has rescued us in the past strengthens our faith and reassures us of His continued faithfulness.

As believers, and disciples of Jesus Christ, these biblical principles offer us profound ways to face trials with courage, hope, and unwavering faith. By believing and having faith in Jesus, as well as God’s promises, drawing near to Him in prayer, guarding our hearts with His Word, and resting in His love, we can navigate life’s challenges with a steadfast spirit, knowing that our trials are an opportunity to grow closer to God and to reflect His love to the world.

Persecution has been an enduring aspect of the Christian life throughout history. In the midst of challenges and hostility, the Bible provides profound insights and principles to guide believers in standing firm in their faith. As we explore the Scriptures, we uncover timeless wisdom that encourages believers to endure faithfully, respond with love, and find strength in the promises of God in the face of persecution.

As disciples of Jesus we can expect some persecution in this life, although not always to severe physical harm. 2 Timothy 3:12 plainly states that all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Understanding the inevitability of persecution prepares us for the challenges that may arise as we live out our faith. This biblical principle encourages us to stand firm, knowing that we are not alone in facing opposition.

Matthew 5:44 instructs us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. In the face of hostility, responding with love becomes a powerful witness to the transformative power of Christ. This biblical principle guides us to counteract persecution with genuine love and forgiveness.

As we go through various trials we can find strength in God’s presence and hope as we trust in God’s word and faithfulness to eventually bring about His perfect will in all situations. Psalm 23:4 assures us that even in the valley of the shadow of death, we need not fear, for God is with us. Persecution may create fear, but this biblical principle encourages us to find strength and courage in the unwavering presence of God.

God has a perfect and wondrous plan, to bring salvation and eternal life and blessings to the multitudes therefore let us rejoice in our sufferings knowing that He is working everything for good. James 1:2-4 calls us to count it all joy when we face trials of various kinds. Persecution is considered a trial, and this biblical principle encourages us to find joy in the refining work that God can accomplish through times of suffering.

Without question we need to pray for endurance from God, as we encounter problems and obstacles from Satan as he tries to hinder us. Colossians 1:11 encourages us to pray for strength, endurance, and patience. In the midst of persecution, this biblical principle guides us to seek God's empowering grace to endure with patience and steadfastness.

Matthew 5:11-12 declares a special blessing for those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, with the promise of a great reward in heaven. Clinging to the promise of reward becomes a source of hope and encouragement for us facing persecution. This biblical principle reinforces the eternal perspective that sustains us through difficulties.

We should not become discouraged nor dismayed knowing that Jesus is with us. We can overcome the evil that so easily besets us. Romans 12:21 exhorts us to overcome evil with good. In the face of persecution, responding with acts of kindness, love, and righteousness becomes a powerful testimony. This biblical principle guides us to counter hostility with Christlike virtues.

Embracing the Fellowship of Christ's Sufferings:

Philippians 3:10 reveals Paul's desire to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, sharing in His sufferings. Embracing the fellowship of Christ's sufferings becomes a profound biblical principle for us facing persecution. This perspective encourages us to align our sufferings with Christ's redemptive work and find a deeper connection with Him.

Entrusting One’s Soul to a Faithful Creator

1 Peter 4:19 urges us to entrust our souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. This principle invites us to place our trust entirely in God's faithful character, even when faced with suffering. By entrusting our souls to God, we surrender control and find assurance in His unwavering faithfulness. This act of trust allows us to continue doing good, confident that God is overseeing our lives and protecting us.

Recognizing the Eternal Weight of Glory

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 speaks of our momentary afflictions preparing us for an eternal weight of glory. Recognizing that our current sufferings are light and temporary compared to the eternal joy awaiting us changes our perspective on trials. This eternal view encourages us to endure with hope, knowing that our suffering is working towards a future glory that far outweighs our present troubles.

Staying Anchored in the Word

Colossians 3:16 urges us to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. Staying anchored in Scripture provides a solid foundation during trials. The truths of God's Word offer guidance, encouragement, and resilience, helping us to remain steadfast and hopeful.

Resting in the Assurance of God's Love

Romans 8:35-39 reassures us that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. This assurance of God's unchanging love provides profound comfort during trials. It reminds us that, despite our suffering, we remain secure in His love, which is a constant source of strength and peace.

Conclusion:

As we endure various trials and persecution, these additional biblical principles offer profound insights into sharing in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, counting persecution as an indication of our spiritual battle with evil principalities, relying on our victory over all darkness through Jesus, rejoicing in suffering for Christ's sake, remaining steadfast in prayer, entrusting one's soul to our faithful Lord and Creator, recognizing the eternal weight of glory, humbling oneself under God's mighty hand, embracing God's provision in the wilderness, in limited resources trusting in God, communing with Christ's sufferings, responding with kindness to persecutors, remaining faithful to the end, maintaining a clear conscience, seeking refuge in the shelter of God's wings, walking in the Spirit's power, discerning the times and seasons, guarding the heart against bitterness, staying anchored in the Word, and resting in the assurance of God's love. May these principles help instruct us in standing firm in our faith, responding with grace and love, and finding strength in the promises of a faithful and loving God, even in the midst of persecution, trials and sufferings. As we go through all kinds of trials and sufferings while abiding in Jesus, we are refined by God's Holy Spirit, if we die to our self nature with Christ, will we also reign with Him in the Kingdom of God forever.

(161) Hope:

Romans 15:13:(AKJV) "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Holy Spirit.")

As we walk through the difficulties of this life, we all need hope for a better future, in God we can find the kind of hope that never disappoint. Now, while God is the giver of hope, we still need to do certain actions and responses to put on and receive God's hope, and that is turning to Jesus in the midst of our daily trials and circumstances, prayer and further relying on God's word.

Hope can be understood as both a virtue and a characteristic, though its classification may vary based on context.

As a **virtue**, hope is often seen in moral biblical context as a fundamental God inspired and given quality that supports a person's ability to endure hardship and aspire for the good. As disciples and followers of Jesus Christ we find new hope in Jesus and hope in Go's promises. In this sense, it aligns with other virtues such as faith and love, fostering resilience and encouraging positive actions toward oneself and others.

As a **characteristic**, hope reflects an individual's disposition or mindset. It describes how someone approaches challenges and uncertainty, often marked by optimism and a belief in positive outcomes. This characteristic can influence behavior, decision-making, and interactions with others.

Overall, hope encompasses both a virtuous quality that enriches and strengthens our lives as Christians and a characteristic that shapes how individuals engage with life**'**s challenges. Its dual nature highlights its importance in personal growth and our walk with Jesus being His witness and servant to minister to others in the world by encouraging them to put the hope likewise in Jesus.

Hope in the biblical sense is a profound and is not merely a wish or a fleeting desire but a confident expectation rooted in the character and promises of God. This biblical hope emerges prominently in the Old Testament, where figures like Abraham demonstrate unwavering trust in God's promises, believing that even in seemingly impossible circumstances, God**'**s faithfulness prevails. For instance, God**'**s covenant with Abraham—promising him descendants as numerous as the stars—illustrates hope as a conviction that transcends present reality.

In the New Testament, our hope rests in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, yet also including all the promises of God and God's Holy Spirit. We have hope, trust and assurance in the truth of God's Word and in Jesus Christ throughout our daily walk with Him. The Apostle Paul articulates this in Romans 5:3-5, where he describes how suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character, and character hope. This progression emphasizes that hope is often forged in the crucible of hardship, allowing us to find meaning and strength in our struggles. Paul further asserts that this hope does not put us to shame because God**'**s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Here, hope becomes a powerful assurance that, despite life's challenges, God**'**s love and grace are ever-present.

Moreover, hope in the Bible is deeply communal. In Hebrews 10:23-25, we are encouraged to hold unswervingly to the hope that we profess and to spur one another on toward love and good deeds. This highlights that biblical hope is not just an individual endeavor but a collective journey, where the community of faith supports and uplifts one another. The church is portrayed as a source of encouragement, where believers can share in the hope of the Gospel and the promise of eternal life. This shared hope fosters resilience and unity, creating a space where faith can thrive amid adversity.

Ultimately, biblical hope points toward the promise by God of a new creation, where God will wipe away every tear and restore all things (Revelation 21:4). This future hope provides a lens through which believers can view their present circumstances, instilling a sense of purpose and direction. It encourages a life lived in expectation of God**'**s ultimate redemption and restoration, motivating believers to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly. Thus, hope in the biblical sense is an enduring and dynamic force, shaping our lives as we navigate the complexities of life with confidence in God's unwavering promises.

Scripture References:

- **Hebrews 6:19**:(AKJV) "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil; 20Where the forerunner

is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.."

- **Jeremiah 29:11-14**:(AKJV) "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. 12Then shall you call on me, and you shall go and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13And you shall seek me, and find me, when you shall search for me with all your heart. 14And I will be found of you, said the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place from where I caused you to be carried away captive.."
- **Psalm 42:11**: (AKJV) “Why are you cast down, O my soul? and why are you disquieted within me?(Put your) hope you in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God. "
- **1 Peter 1:3-5**: (AKJV) “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5Who are kept by the power of God through faith to salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Reflection:

Hope in Jesus Christ sustains us through life**’**s challenges. It is not merely wishful thinking but a deep-rooted assurance in God**’**s promises and His goodness. As we navigate our daily lives, it**’**s easy to become overwhelmed by circumstances, doubts, and fears. Yet, God’s Word reminds us that our hope is anchored in something unshakeable—God Himself.

The Source of Hope: Romans 15:13 declares that our God, is the God of hope who fills us with joy and peace. This hope is not based on our situation but on our relationship with God. When we trust Him, we receive renewed hope from God’s Holy Spirit, and we become vessels of His hope, able to share it with others.

Hope: An Anchor for the Soul: Hebrews 6:19 describes hope as an anchor for our souls. In storms of life, when everything feels uncertain, hope keeps us secure. Consider the anchors in your life—what truths about God keep you steady? Spend time meditating on those truths, allowing them to strengthen you during turbulent times.

A Future Filled with Hope: In Jeremiah 29:11, God reassures us of His plans for our lives. He desires to give us hope and a future, even when we can't see the path ahead. Hold onto this promise during periods of waiting or uncertainty. Trust that God**’**s plans are good, and seek to align your thoughts with His.

Speaking to Our Souls: Psalm 42:11 is a powerful reminder to speak truth to our souls. In moments of despair, we are called to put our hope in God. Take a moment today to declare your hope in Him, even when you feel downcast. Praise Him for His faithfulness and remind yourself of His goodness.

Living Hope: 1 Peter 1:3 celebrates the living hope we have through Jesus ’resurrection. This hope is alive and active, transforming our lives. As we remember the hope we have in Christ, let it inspire us to live differently. How can you share this living hope with someone in your life today?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for being the source of my hope. Help me to trust in Your plans for my life, even when I cannot see the way forward. Fill me with Your joy and peace, and may Your hope overflow in my heart. Teach me to speak hope into my own life and to share it with those around me. In Jesus ’name, I pray. Amen.

Trusting in God’s faithfulness is essential, especially when trials bring us to the brink of doubt. 1 Corinthians 10:13 assures us that God is faithful and will provide a way out of temptation. This promise encourages us to rely on His steadfastness, knowing that He will not leave us to face our struggles alone but will provide a way through every challenge.

(162) Don’t Take Revenge – Trusting God with Justice:

Romans 12:17-21 (AKJV): *"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men. 19Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord. 20Therefore if your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head. 21Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."*

Introduction: Trusting God with Justice

In this passage, the Apostle Paul addresses one of the most challenging aspects of Christian living—how to respond to wrongdoers and enemies. The natural human inclination is to seek vengeance when wronged, but Paul encourages believers to leave justice in God's hands. This message runs contrary to the instincts of the flesh but aligns with the teachings of Jesus Christ. The call to "overcome evil with good" encapsulates the transformative power of the gospel to reshape our responses to hostility. This commentary will explore the biblical foundation for trusting God with justice, the command to overcome evil with good, and the powerful witness that results from such obedience.

1. The Christian Call to Non-Retaliation

1.1 The Temptation to Seek Revenge Human nature is often driven by a desire for self-protection and justice, especially when wronged. Whether it is personal insult, betrayal, or injustice, the impulse to retaliate can be overwhelming. The Old Testament, under the Law of Moses, allowed for a principle of justice through “an eye for an eye” (Exodus

21:24). However, Jesus redefined justice in the New Testament, commanding His followers to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them (Matthew 5:44). The essence of this teaching is that vengeance is not ours to take, but God's to administer in His perfect timing and righteousness.

1.2 The Old Testament Principle of Justice In the Old Testament, the concept of retribution was meant to curb the endless cycle of revenge that could escalate endlessly. It served as a form of equitable justice that prevented individuals from exacting disproportionate punishment. However, this principle was not intended to be a license for personal vengeance, but rather to ensure that justice was proportionate and administered by the authorities, not by individuals. The Bible often teaches that justice belongs to God alone (Deuteronomy 32:35).

Romans 12:19 echoes this truth with the reminder, **"***Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord."* Here, Paul reinforces that God has a sovereign right to execute judgment and retribution, and believers are called to trust in His perfect justice rather than seek it for themselves.

2. Trusting God with Justice

2.1 God's Sovereign Justice God is both loving and just, and His justice is perfect in a way that human justice can never fully reflect. Throughout the Bible, we see that God promises to vindicate the righteous and punish the wicked in His due time. In Psalm 94:1, the psalmist calls on God, **"***O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongs; O God, to whom vengeance belongs, show yourself."* In this prayer, there is a recognition that ultimate justice is in God**'**s hands, and He alone is capable of carrying out justice with perfect righteousness.

When we choose to trust God with justice, we acknowledge that His understanding of justice far exceeds ours. Unlike humans, whose responses can be biased or impulsive, God**'**s judgments are tempered with wisdom, mercy, and long-suffering. He sees the whole picture—past, present, and future—and will bring about His justice at the appointed time.

2.2 Leaving Room for Wrath Paul**'**s exhortation in verse 19, **"***Give place unto wrath"*, invites believers to step aside and allow God**'**s wrath to have its place, in his timing and ways. In practical terms, this means resisting the urge to take matters into our own hands and trusting that God will right the wrongs done to us. This is not a passive acceptance of injustice but an active trust in God's ability to deal with evil in ways that honor His holiness and bring ultimate restoration.

3. Overcoming Evil with Good

3.1 The Radical Nature of Christian Love Paul**'**s command in Romans 12:20 is both revolutionary and difficult to live out: **"***If your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink."* This is not just an exhortation to show kindness when it is easy but a call to love those who wish us harm. Jesus exemplified this radical love when He prayed for

those who crucified Him, asking the Father to forgive them (Luke 23:34). Christians are called to embody this same selfless love, which is an expression of God's grace working in and through us.

The act of blessing our enemies—through acts of kindness such as feeding or giving drink—is a powerful witness to the love of Christ and an embodiment of the gospel itself. It is a stark contrast to the world's way of dealing with conflict, which typically involves retaliation, resentment, and division. Overcoming evil with good demonstrates the transformative power of the gospel, which can soften even the hardest of hearts and break cycles of hatred.

3.2 Heaping Coals of Fire The metaphor of heaping **"***coals of fire"* on an enemy's head (Romans 12:20) is perplexing at first glance. However, this phrase can be understood as a way of bringing conviction to the wrongdoer. In ancient times, it was believed that if someone was seen publicly carrying a pan of burning coals, it signified shame and repentance. By showing kindness in the face of evil, the believer may evoke guilt and lead the offender to reflect on their actions. The purpose, however, is not to humiliate or harm, but to lead the enemy toward repentance and reconciliation with God.

4. The Victory of Overcoming Evil with Good

4.1 The Power of Christian Witness By choosing to respond to evil with good, believers bear witness to the gospel in a way that words alone cannot. Our actions reflect the love, grace, and power of Christ, which are capable of transforming lives and situations. This is the heart of Christian discipleship—to respond not in kind but with Christlike love, thus reflecting His image in a broken world.

4.2 Spiritual Warfare through Obedience Romans 12:21 challenges believers to **"***not be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."* This phrase teaches that the way to true spiritual victory is not through force or aggression but through humble, sacrificial love. This is the opposite of the world's understanding of power. In God's economy, true strength is found in surrender, and true victory is achieved by loving and serving others, even when it's difficult. As we obey this command, we participate in God's redemptive work in the world, allowing His kingdom to come and His will to be done.

Conclusion: Trusting God For Justice

The call to trust God with justice and overcome evil with good is foundational to the Christian life. It is a call to relinquish the desire for personal vengeance and place our trust in God's perfect judgment. It is also a call to love our enemies, not as a mere act of goodwill, but as a reflection of God's radical grace toward us. In doing so, we participate in the divine reconciliation that God desires for all people.

May we, empowered by the Holy Spirit, live lives marked by grace, forgiveness, and love, trusting in God's justice while overcoming evil with good. Through such actions, we not only honor God but also demonstrate to the world the transformative power of the gospel, which calls us to love, forgive, and trust in the ultimate justice of our Heavenly Father.

Don’t Take Revenge - Trusting God with Justice, - Continued…

Romans 12:19 AKJV -“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord.’

The desire for revenge is a natural human response to being wronged or hurt. However, as followers of Christ, we are called to a higher standard. Romans 12:19 instructs us, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord." This verse reminds us that ultimate justice belongs to God, and we are called to trust Him with the outcome.

Taking revenge not only perpetuates a cycle of hurt and harm but also undermines our witness as ambassadors of Christ's love and grace. Instead of seeking retaliation, we are called to forgive and entrust justice to God, who sees and knows all things.

Jesus exemplified this principle in His own life. When He was unjustly accused, mocked, and crucified, He did not retaliate but entrusted Himself to the Father, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). In doing so, Jesus demonstrated the power of forgiveness and the willingness to surrender His right to vengeance.

Choosing not to take revenge requires humility, trust, and faith in God's sovereignty. It requires us to acknowledge that we are not the ultimate arbiters of justice and that God's ways are higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:9). It also requires us to release our desire for retaliation and to extend grace and mercy to those who have wronged us.

In Matthew 5:38-39, (AKJV) Jesus teaches, “You have heard that it has been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say to you, That you resist not evil: but whoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.” This radical teaching challenges us to respond to evil with love and forgiveness, trusting that God will ultimately bring about justice in His perfect timing.

Let us follow the example of Jesus and choose not to take revenge when we are wronged. Instead, let us entrust ourselves to the God who sees and knows all things, confident that He will bring about justice according to His will.

(163) Judging Others:

As Christians, we are to discern and, in some respects, judge the actions of others and respond to them as God’s Word and the Holy Spirit direct. However, we are not to judge others with condemnation or unforgiveness, nor in vengeance. Moreover, before any of us should judge or discern the actions of others and bring any correction, reproof, or rebuke, we need to remove the same from our own lives through sincere repentance.

Primarily we are to discern the actions of those within the body of Christ, the Church and those claiming to be Christians. When necessary, we should bring correction with love and according to the word of God. We are not to be busybodies, nor meddlers, nor acting self righteous.

As Christians, we must remember that we are all at different stages of spiritual growth. We should extend grace to those who are immature or unaware of the ways of Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, those who have already been taught what is right and true, yet deliberately choose to continue in a sin, should be judged and reproofed more sternly or seriously in hopes that they will turn from their sin.

Without question, we are to judge and rebuke false teachers and false prophets who enter the Church with evil intentions and purposely deceive others. But don't be overly judgmental or harsh to a Christian teacher (Or fellow Christians) who may have said something with ignorance or by mistake, for we all are still learning and being led into all truth by the Holy Spirit, if we remain humble and teachable.

We should always continue to judge our own words and actions in light of God's word, and repent of anything that the Holy Spirit convicts our hearts of, before we try to advise someone or judge the character of anyone.

God will judge everything that we say and do in His time, we don't need to lord over others. Jesus is the King of Kings, and the Lord of lords, for the most part, let God be the judge, because He knows the intentions of a person's heart.

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 7:1-5 (AKJV) **Judge not, that you be not judged. 2For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again**. 3And why behold you the mote that is in your brother**'**s eye, but consider not the beam that is in your own eye? 4Or how will you say to your brother, Let me pull out the mote out of your eye; and, behold, a beam is in your own eye? 5You hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of your own eye; and then shall you see clearly to cast out the mote out of your brother**'**s eye.

John 7:24 (AKJV) Judge not according to the appearance, but judge (correctly) righteous judgment.

2 Timothy 3:10-17 (AKJV) But you have fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, 11Persecutions, afflictions, which came to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12Yes, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 13But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. 14But continue you in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them; 15And that from a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 **All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works.**

1 Corinthians 5:6-13 (AKJV) Your glorying is not good. Know you not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice

and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 9I wrote to you in an letter not to company with fornicators: 10Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortionists, or with idolaters; for then must you needs go out of the world. 11But now I have written to you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortionist; with such an one no not to eat. 12For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not you judge them that are within? 13But them that are without God judges. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

2 Timothy 3 : 1- 17 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. **2** People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, **4** treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— **5** having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

6 They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, **7** always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. **8** Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers oppose the truth. They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. **9** But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.

As disciples of Jesus we should learn and demonstrate correctly when and how we should judge others, and when and how we should not judge others. We are called to exercise wisdom, discernment, and love in accordance with the principles found in God's Word. Turning away from unnecessary disputes, understanding the context of someone’s spiritual immaturity and non-deliberate sin, promoting reconciliation, bearing one another's burdens, guarding against a critical spirit, exhorting and encouraging, promoting accountability, and focusing on heart transformation, believers can approach judgment with a Christlike spirit. By avoiding a critical spirit, using spiritual discernment, seeking wise counsel, responding to repentance, being mindful of personal weaknesses, examining fruits, considering intent and context, practicing accountability, responding to personal conviction, valuing unity in diversity in the body of Christ, practicing God’s Greatest Commandment of love, focusing on edification, cultivating a teachable spirit, and practicing love in correction, believers can approach the matter of judging others with the grace and truth modeled by Jesus Christ. May these biblical principles guide us in building the body of Christ, the Church, marked by understanding, humility, and a commitment to building each other up in the faith.

Using Spiritual Discernment

In 1 Corinthians 2:14-15, we learn that the spiritual person judges all things. As followers of Christ filled with the Holy Spirit, we are equipped for spiritual discernment. This discerning judgment allows us to navigate complexities with divine insight, enabling us to distinguish between worldly and godly perspectives.

Seeking Wise Counsel

Proverbs 12:15 advises us that the way of a fool seems right in his own eyes, but a wise person listens to advice. Judging others wisely involves seeking counsel from godly sources, recognizing the limitations of our personal perspectives, and valuing the wisdom of others in forming righteous judgments.

Responding to Repentance

Luke 17:3-4 outlines the process of addressing a brother's sin and highlights the importance of forgiving when there is sincere repentance. As Christians, we are called to respond to repentance with a spirit of forgiveness rather than harsh judgment, reflecting the redemptive nature of Christ's love.

Being Mindful of Personal Weaknesses

1 Corinthians 10:12 warns us that those who think they stand should be careful not to fall. When we judge others, we are reminded of our own vulnerabilities and encouraged to approach others with humility and an awareness of our personal weaknesses.

Examining Spiritual Fruits of Others

Matthew 7:15-20 encourages us to discern false prophets by their fruits. Judging others involves examining the fruits of their actions and teachings. This biblical principle guides us to assess the impact and character of individuals through the lens of God's Word.

Considering Intent and Context

Proverbs 18:13 reminds us that answering before listening is both folly and shame. Wise judgment requires us to consider the intent and context of a situation, avoiding snap judgments that may lead to misunderstanding or unfair assessments.

Considering a Person’s Motive, Biblical Ignorance, or Naivety When Judging

Considering a Person’s Motive

1 Samuel 16:7 teaches that **“***Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”* When assessing others, it is important to recognize that actions alone may not reveal the full picture. A person**’**s motives—whether sincere, misguided, or deceptive—must be carefully weighed before forming a judgment.

Considering Biblical Ignorance

Hosea 4:6 states, **“***My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”* Some individuals may act in error simply because they have not been properly taught biblical truth. In such cases, correction should be given with patience and grace rather than condemnation (**2 Timothy 2:24-25**), helping them grow in understanding rather than discouraging them.

Considering Naivety

Proverbs 14:15 says, **“***The simple believe anything, but the prudent give thought to their steps.”* Some people may act out of naivety, lacking discernment rather than having malicious intent. Instead of harsh judgment, they need guidance and wisdom to help them navigate their faith with greater maturity (**Ephesians 4:14-15**).

Conclusion

Judging rightly requires looking beyond surface-level actions to understand a person**’**s motives, level of biblical knowledge, and potential naivety. John 7:24 instructs us to judge

with righteous judgment, ensuring that our assessments are fair, compassionate, and rooted in truth. By considering intent and context, we reflect Christ's wisdom and love in our dealings with others.

Practicing Accountability

James 5:16 encourages us to confess our sins to one another and pray for each other. This principle emphasizes the importance of mutual accountability within the Christian community, fostering an environment where we can support one another in our journeys of faith.

Responding to Personal Conviction

Romans 14:22 advises that whatever we do must be done in faith and love. We should not judge others based on incidental personal convictions and choices but should instead focus on the essential work of God regarding more crucial moral aspects. This biblical principle guides us to refrain from imposing certain incidental personal convictions on others and emphasizes what we should truly be concerned about.

Valuing Unity in Diversity

Colossians 3:11 highlights that in Christ, there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, or free. Our judgments should not be based on worldly distinctions, as we are called to value the unity found in our shared identity in Jesus Christ.

Practicing the Greatest Commandment

Matthew 7:12 encapsulates God's Greatest Commandment, encouraging us to treat others as we would like to be treated. This principle of reciprocity guides us to approach judgment with empathy, kindness, and a desire to extend the same grace we ourselves receive.

Focusing on Edification

1 Corinthians 14:26 encourages us to let everything be done for building up. When we judge others, our focus should be on edification and building up rather than tearing down. This biblical principle guides us to use our words and actions to encourage and uplift others.

Cultivating a Teachable Spirit

Proverbs 9:9 advises us that the wise learn from instruction and those who are understanding gain guidance. Judging others wisely involves cultivating a teachable spirit, being open to correction, and recognizing the potential for personal growth through the insights of others.

Practicing Love in Correction

1 Corinthians 16:14 exhorts us to let all we do be done in love. When correction is necessary, we are guided to approach the process with love. This principle ensures that our motives behind judgment are rooted in genuine concern for the well-being and growth of others.

Cultivating a Spirit of Forgiveness

Matthew 6:14-15 underscores the importance of forgiving others if we expect to be forgiven by God. Our judgments should be accompanied by a spirit of forgiveness, recognizing the grace and mercy extended to each of us and, in turn, extending that same grace to others.

Exercising Patience and Longsuffering

Proverbs 14:29 highlights the wisdom in being slow to anger, while James 5:7-8 encourages us to be patient like a farmer waiting for the harvest. Judging others requires patience and longsuffering, allowing God's timing and providence to unfold without hasty or impulsive reactions.

Practicing Empathy and Compassion

Colossians 3:12 encourages us to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Our judgments should be rooted in empathy and compassion, understanding the struggles and challenges faced by others and responding with Christlike love.

Recognizing the Plank in Our Own Eye

Luke 6:41-42 expands on Jesus' teaching about the speck and log, emphasizing the need for us to address our personal faults before focusing on others. Judging wisely involves self-reflection and acknowledging our own areas of growth, fostering humility in the judgment process.

Creating Opportunities for Redemption

John 8:7 recounts Jesus' response to the woman caught in adultery, challenging those without sin to cast the first stone. Judging others offers us an opportunity to extend grace, promoting redemption rather than condemnation. This biblical principle encourages us to create environments conducive to repentance and restoration.

Avoiding Legalism and Pharisaical Attitudes

Matthew 23 exposes Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees for their legalistic and hypocritical judgments. We are cautioned against adopting a Pharisaical attitude in our judgments, recognizing the danger of self-righteousness and legalism.

Turning Away from Unnecessary Disputes

Titus 3:9 advises us to avoid foolish controversies and quarrels about the law. In our judgments, we are guided to turn away from unnecessary disputes and focus on matters that contribute to godly edification. This principle promotes a spirit of unity and constructive engagement.

Understanding the Context of Sin

James 4:17 reminds us that whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin. Judging others requires understanding the broader context of sin, recognizing that both commission and omission can fall under the scrutiny of righteous judgment.

Promoting Reconciliation and Unity

Matthew 5:23-24 instructs us to reconcile with others before offering our gifts at the altar. In our judgments, the emphasis is on promoting reconciliation and unity. This biblical

principle encourages us to prioritize relationships and seek restoration whenever possible.

Bearing One Another's Burdens

Galatians 6:2 encourages us to bear one another's burdens. Judging others involves a compassionate response, understanding the weight of the burdens individuals may carry. This principle promotes a culture of mutual support and care within our Christian community.

Guarding Against a Critical Spirit

Proverbs 15:4 highlights the impact of a gentle tongue, contrasting it with a harsh word that stirs up anger. Our judgments should be characterized by a gentle and constructive spirit, guarding against a critical attitude that can sow discord and hinder the growth of others.

Exhorting and Encouraging Fellow Believers

Hebrews 3:13 encourages us to exhort one another daily, lest we be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Judging others involves exhortation and encouragement, guiding our fellow believers toward a path of righteousness and away from the deceitfulness of sin.

Promoting Accountability within the Body

1 Corinthians 5:12-13 discusses our responsibility to judge those within the church. This principle underscores the importance of promoting accountability within our community while maintaining a spirit of love and restoration.

Focusing on Heart Transformation

Ezekiel 36:26 speaks of God giving us a new heart and putting a new spirit within us. In our judgments, the focus should be on the potential for heart transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit. This perspective encourages us to approach judgment with hope for spiritual renewal.

Conclusion:

As disciples of Jesus we should learn and demonstrate correctly when and how we should judge others, and when and how we should not judge others. We are called to exercise wisdom, discernment, and love in accordance with the principles found in God's Word. Turning away from unnecessary disputes, understanding the context of someone’s spiritual immaturity and non-deliberate sin, promoting reconciliation, bearing one another's burdens, guarding against a critical spirit, exhorting and encouraging, promoting accountability, and focusing on heart transformation, believers can approach judgment with a Christlike spirit. By avoiding a critical spirit, using spiritual discernment, seeking wise counsel, responding to repentance, being mindful of personal weaknesses, examining fruits, considering intent and context, practicing accountability, responding to personal conviction, valuing unity in diversity, practicing God’s Greatest Commandment of love, focusing on edification, cultivating a teachable spirit, and practicing love in correction, believers can approach the matter of judging others with the grace and truth modeled by Jesus Christ. May these biblical principles guide us in building the body of Christ, the Church, marked by understanding, humility, and a commitment to building each other up in the faith.

(164) Discernment and the Discerning of Spirits:

Introduction: The Need for Discernment in the Christian Life

Discernment is an essential spiritual gift for all Christians, enabling us to perceive truth from error, right from wrong, and the will of God from the distractions of the world. In the New Testament, the **“**discerning of spirits” is specifically highlighted as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, yet discernment in a broader sense is a skill every Christian is encouraged to cultivate. The world is filled with deception, confusion, and spiritual forces at work—both good and evil—and without discernment from God, any one of us can easily be led astray or miss God's leading.

This commentary explores the biblical foundations of discernment, particularly the *discerning of spirits*, its role in the life of the believer, and practical ways to develop this spiritual sensitivity to align with God's truth.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Discernment

1.1 Defining Discernment In its simplest form, discernment refers to the ability to distinguish between two or more things in order to understand or interpret them correctly. Biblically, discernment involves the ability to distinguish between what is of God and what is not, especially in spiritual matters. It is closely related to wisdom, but while wisdom often pertains to applying knowledge in practical situations, discernment focuses on perceiving and understanding spiritual truths and realities, especially in a world filled with counterfeits.

Hebrews 5:14 (AKJV): *"But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."*

This verse highlights the idea that discernment is not an automatic ability but is developed over time through the practice of spiritual maturity. As believers grow in their faith and knowledge of God's Word, they become better equipped to discern good from evil and to detect the subtle influences of the enemy.

2. The Gift of the Discerning of Spirits

2.1 The Spiritual Gift of Discerning of Spirits The "discerning of spirits" is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:10 as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is a supernatural ability to recognize the source of a spiritual influence, whether from God, a human, or demonic forces. This gift is vital for protecting the church and individuals from deception and is closely related to the gifts of prophecy and wisdom.

1 Corinthians 12:10 (AKJV): *"To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the*

interpretation of tongues." The *discerning of spirits* allows the believer to perceive the true nature of spiritual influences or entities, whether they be godly, human, or demonic. This can help in situations where false doctrines, spiritual deception, or manipulative spirits are at work.

2.2 The Role of the Holy Spirit in Discerning Spirits The Holy Spirit is the ultimate source of discernment. Through His indwelling, He empowers believers to discern truth from error. The Spirit's guidance is often subtle but clear, as He draws attention to things that are inconsistent with God's Word or unaligned with His character.

In Acts 16:16-18, the apostle Paul exercised the discerning of spirits when a young slave girl, who had a spirit of divination, followed him and his companions, proclaiming their truthfulness. Although what she said was correct, Paul discerned that the spirit behind her proclamations was not of God and cast it out (Acts 16:18). This example demonstrates that not every spiritual phenomenon or proclamation is from God, even if it appears true on the surface.

3. How to Cultivate Discernment

3.1 The Word of God as the Standard for Discernment The Bible is the ultimate standard by which all things must be tested. The more we are familiar with Scripture, the sharper our discernment becomes. A person grounded in the Word of God is more capable of recognizing teachings, behaviors, and spiritual manifestations that deviate from biblical truth.

Hebrews 4:12 (AKJV): *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* The Word of God, as the sword of the Spirit, helps believers distinguish truth from lies, righteousness from sin, and God's voice from the enemy's whispers. The sharper our understanding of God's Word, the better we will be at discerning spiritual matters.

3.2 Prayer and Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit Discernment is deeply connected to prayer. As we spend time in prayer and seek God's will, the Holy Spirit sharpens our spiritual senses and gives us insight into situations and people. It is crucial to be sensitive to the Spirit's promptings, which may come in the form of a check in the spirit, a word of knowledge, or a sense of peace or unease.

James 1:5 (AKJV): *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him."* God promises to give wisdom generously when we ask for it. Discernment, as a form of wisdom, is also something we can actively seek from the Lord. By cultivating a lifestyle of prayer and openness to God's voice, believers are better able to discern spiritual matters clearly.

3.3 Testing the Spirits The Bible instructs believers to test the spirits to see if they are from God. This involves evaluating teachings, prophecies, and spiritual experiences by the standard of Scripture.

1 John 4:1 (AKJV): *"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."* Not every spiritual manifestation or teaching is from God. John urges believers to test the spirits by the Word of God and the fruit they produce. A true spirit from God will always lead to a deeper commitment to the truth of the gospel, a greater love for God and others, and a life of holiness.

4. The Dangers of Lack of Discernment

4.1 Deception and False Doctrine A lack of discernment opens the door to deception. Throughout Scripture, there are warnings about false teachers and prophets who distort the truth. Without spiritual discernment, believers can fall prey to dangerous doctrines, practices, and false teachings that lead them away from God.

Matthew 24:24 (AKJV): *"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. "* Jesus warned that false teachers would arise, even performing signs and wonders to deceive people. Discernment is essential in protecting the church from such deception.

4.2 Spiritual Warfare and Demonic Influence Another danger of lacking discernment is being vulnerable to spiritual oppression and demonic influence. Spirits of deception, seduction, and manipulation can infiltrate the church, leading people astray. Without discernment, believers may unknowingly partner with these dark forces, believing they are acting in accordance with God**'**s will.

Ephesians 6:12 reminds us that our battle is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Discernment helps us identify these forces and stand firm in the truth of God**'**s Word.

5. The Fruit of Discernment

5.1 Protection from Deception and Harm One of the primary benefits of discernment is protection. Through discernment, believers can avoid harmful situations, deceptive teachings, and spiritual traps set by the enemy. Discernment serves as a shield that protects us from spiritual dangers, allowing us to walk in the light of truth.

5.2 Spiritual Growth and Maturity As believers grow in discernment, they mature spiritually. A discerning believer becomes more attuned to God**'**s voice, more sensitive to the Holy Spirit, and better able to discern His will in all areas of life. The fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc.—becomes more evident as discernment increases.

Philippians 1:9-10 (AKJV): *"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10That you may approve things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ. "*Paul**'**s prayer is that believers would grow in knowledge and discernment, allowing them to choose what is excellent and live pure lives.

Conclusion: The Importance of Discernment

Discernment is a vital gift for navigating the spiritual landscape of our lives. Whether it is discerning the will of God, distinguishing between good and evil, or recognizing the source of spiritual influences, the believer's ability to discern is crucial in remaining faithful to God. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the wisdom found in Scripture, Christians are equipped to avoid deception, live holy lives, and be a light to the world.

May we seek to grow in discernment, trusting the Holy Spirit to sharpen our spiritual senses and lead us in the truth, protecting us from error and guiding us closer to Christ.

DISCERNMENT and DISCERNING OF SPIRITS - Continued…

Discernment and Discerning of Spirits

Introduction Discernment and the discerning of spirits are essential gifts in the life of a believer. They enable us to distinguish between truth and deception, good and evil, and the work of God versus the influence of the enemy. While discernment is a general ability to judge rightly in spiritual matters, the discerning of spirits is a specific gift of the Holy Spirit that helps in recognizing the source of spiritual influences—whether from God, the human spirit, or demonic forces.

1. Discernment: The Ability to Judge Rightly

Discernment is the ability to perceive and judge correctly, especially in matters of faith and practice. Proverbs 3:21 advises, *"My son, do not let wisdom and understanding out of your sight, preserve sound judgment and discretion."* A believer with discernment can make wise decisions, avoid deception, and follow God's will more accurately.

Biblical Examplea:

A. Solomon's Wise Judgment (1 Kings 3:9-12, 16-28)

When Solomon became king, he asked God for wisdom to discern between right and wrong so he could govern Israel justly. God granted him unparalleled wisdom, demonstrating that discernment is vital for leadership and righteous decision-making. This wisdom was powerfully demonstrated when two women claimed to be the mother of the same baby. Solomon discerned the true mother by suggesting the child be divided, knowing the real mother would rather give up her child than see him harmed.

B. Jesus and the Pharisees (Matthew 22:15-22)

The Pharisees tried to trap Jesus by asking whether it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar. Jesus discerned their hypocrisy and responded wisely, saying, *"Give back to Caesar what*

is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." His discernment exposed their deceitful intentions and turned their trap into a teaching moment.

C. Nathan Confronts David (2 Samuel 12:1-7)

The prophet Nathan used discernment when confronting King David about his sin with Bathsheba. By telling David a parable about a rich man stealing a poor man's lamb, Nathan led David to recognize his own wrongdoing. This example shows how discernment helps in addressing sin and guiding people back to God.

2. Discerning of Spirits: A Spiritual Gift

The discerning of spirits is listed as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in **1 Corinthians 12:10**: *"to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits..."* This gift allows believers to perceive whether a spiritual influence is from God, the flesh, or demonic forces.

Biblical Examples:

Biblical Examples of the Discerning of Spirits

A. Jesus Discerns the Spirit Behind Peter's Words (Matthew 16:21-23)

When Jesus told His disciples about His coming suffering and death, Peter rebuked Him, saying, *"This shall never happen to you!"* Jesus immediately recognized that Peter's words were influenced by Satan and said, *"Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me."* This shows that even well-intentioned people can be influenced by the wrong spirit.

B. Paul Discerns a Spirit of Divination (Acts 16:16-18)

While in Philippi, Paul and Silas encountered a slave girl with a spirit of divination. Though she proclaimed, *"These men are servants of the Most High God,"* Paul discerned that the spirit behind her was not from God. He commanded the spirit to leave, and she was set free. This demonstrates how the gift of discerning spirits can expose deception.

C. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10)

When Ananias and Sapphira lied about their offering, Peter discerned that they were lying not just to him but to the Holy Spirit. He confronted them, and they both fell dead. This event demonstrates how the Holy Spirit can reveal hidden deception through the gift of discerning spirits.

D. False Prophets and Spirits (1 Kings 22:19-23)

King Ahab sought counsel from false prophets who assured him of victory. However, the prophet Micaiah discerned that a lying spirit had deceived them. He revealed that God

had allowed this spirit to lead Ahab to destruction. This story warns believers to discern between true and false prophecies.

3. Why Discernment is Crucial Today

In an age of false teachings, spiritual deception, and moral confusion, discernment is more necessary than ever. **1 John 4:1** warns, *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world."* This means believers must be vigilant, testing teachings, prophecies, and supernatural occurrences to ensure they align with God**'**s Word.

Practical Ways to Grow in Discernment:

1. **Study God's Word** – The Bible is the foundation for discernment (**Psalm 119:105**).
2. **Pray for Wisdom and Discernment** – **James 1:5** encourages believers to ask God for wisdom.
3. **Be Filled with the Holy Spirit** – The Spirit helps us discern truth from error (**John 16:13**).
4. **Test the Spirits** – Compare teachings and supernatural experiences with Scripture (**1 John 4:1**).
5. **Seek Godly Counsel** – Wise believers can help in discerning right from wrong (**Proverbs 11:14**)

Conclusion

Discernment and the gift of discerning spirits are vital for us to navigate our spiritual walk of faith with wisdom and clarity. Whether making daily choices, identifying false teachings, or distinguishing between God**'**s work and the enemy**'**s deception, these abilities keep us aligned with God**'**s truth. As we seek God through prayer, study of His Word, and reliance on the Holy Spirit, He will sharpen our spiritual perception, enabling us to walk in wisdom and truth.

Discernment, the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, truth and error, is a crucial aspect of the Christian walk. It involves a deep understanding of God's Word, coupled with a sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Bible consistently emphasizes the importance of discernment in various aspects of life.

In the Old Testament, **Solomon's request for wisdom and discernment** is noteworthy. When offered anything by God, Solomon asks for a discerning heart to govern God's people (1 Kings 3:9). This discernment enables him to judge wisely, distinguishing between good and evil.

The Apostle **Paul often underscores the need for discernment** in his letters. In Philippians 1:9-10, he prays that the believers' love may abound in knowledge and discernment, emphasizing that discernment leads to righteous living. In 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22, Paul instructs believers to test everything and hold fast to what is good, avoiding every form of evil. Discernment, in Paul's teachings, is integral to spiritual maturity.

The writer of Hebrews connects discernment with spiritual growth. In Hebrews 5:14, it is stated that "solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil." Discernment, therefore, is a skill that develops over time through a consistent engagement with God's Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The discerning of spirits, a spiritual gift mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:10, is a specific aspect of discernment. It involves perceiving the spiritual realm and recognizing the influence of different spirits. This gift is vital for navigating the unseen battles between good and evil. In 1 John 4:1-3, we are encouraged to test the spirits to see whether they are from God, as false prophets and spirits of the antichrist can deceive.

The ministry of Jesus exemplifies discernment. In Matthew 16:21-23, Jesus rebukes Peter for his earthly mindset, demonstrating an acute awareness of spiritual influences. Jesus' discernment penetrates beyond the physical and into the spiritual realities at play.

Discernment is not only about intellectual understanding but also about spiritual perception, guided by the Holy Spirit. It is a gift to be desired from God, cultivated and employed in our Christian walk safeguarding us from deception and equipping them to walk in alignment with God's truth.

Discernment, as portrayed in the Bible, is deeply intertwined with wisdom and spiritual insight. The Book of Proverbs, a rich source of wisdom literature, frequently emphasizes the value of discernment. Proverbs 3:21-23 encourages keeping sound wisdom and discretion, indicating that they will be life to the soul and adornment to the neck.

Jesus, in his teachings, underscores the importance of discerning the signs of the times. In Matthew 16:2-3, he criticizes the Pharisees and Sadducees for their inability to interpret the present situation, emphasizing the need for discernment in understanding the spiritual climate.

The Apostle John, in the book of Revelation, commends the church in Ephesus for their discernment. Revelation 2:2 praises them for testing those who claimed to be apostles and finding them false. This example illustrates that discernment is not only a personal quality but is also applicable in context of the church, as a whole.

Discernment involves not only recognizing external influences but also understanding the intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 states that the Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. This highlights that true discernment goes beyond surface-level observations; it penetrates the inner motives and attitudes.

The story of the Bereans in Acts 17:11 is a powerful example of discernment in action. The Bereans were commended for examining the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul and Silas were saying aligned with God's Word. Their commitment to testing teachings against the truth demonstrates the practical application of discernment.

Discernment is crucial in navigating the complexities, lies, confusion and deception of this world, especially in a world filled with diverse false beliefs and ideologies. As believers grow in discernment, they become better equipped to navigate

the moral and spiritual challenges that we encounter. It equips us to uphold the truth, avoid deception, and walk in alignment with God's will.

Discerning of spirits is a spiritual gift mentioned by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:10. This gift enables believers to perceive and understand the spiritual realm, distinguishing between the influence of the Holy Spirit, demonic spirits, and human spirits. It is a gift that operates for the well-being of the Church, ensuring that the congregation remains rooted in truth and guarded against deceptive forces.

In the New Testament, Jesus frequently exercised discernment of spirits during his earthly ministry. For instance, in Mark 5:1-20, Jesus encounters a man possessed by a legion of demons. His ability to discern the spiritual forces at work leads to the liberation of the oppressed individual, showcasing the practical impact of this gift.

The Apostle John, in his letters, provides guidance on discerning spirits. 1 John 4:1 instructs believers to test the spirits to see whether they are from God. This implies an active engagement with the spiritual realm, evaluating the source and nature of influences that claim spiritual authority.

Discernment is closely tied to spiritual maturity. Hebrews 5:14 speaks of mature Christians who, because of constant practice, have their powers of discernment trained to distinguish good from evil. This emphasizes that discernment is a skill that can be developed through a consistent walk with God and a deepening understanding of His Word.

The story of Elisha and his servant in 2 Kings 6:8-23 provides a powerful illustration of discernment. When surrounded by an enemy army, Elisha prays for his servant's eyes to be opened. The servant then sees the spiritual forces of God's army surrounding and protecting them. This narrative underscores that discernment unveils the spiritual realities that often operate beyond the scope of the visible.

In the contemporary context, discernment remains a critical aspect of navigating the challenges of a rapidly changing world. It empowers believers to recognize the genuine move of the Holy Spirit, identify deceptive teachings, and discern the motives behind actions. As Christians grow in discernment, they contribute to the spiritual health and vitality of the Church, ensuring that it remains firmly anchored in God's truth.

Discerning the times is spiritual insight or perception, given by God, rooted in understanding the signs of the present era and aligning one's actions with God's purposes. In Matthew 16:3, Jesus rebukes the Pharisees and Sadducees, stating that they can discern the face of the sky but not the signs of the times. This implies a deeper spiritual insight needed to comprehend the divine unfolding of events and the urgency of responding appropriately.

Prophetic voices throughout the Bible emphasized the importance of discerning the times. The Old Testament prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel, were endowed with insights into the unfolding of God's plan for humanity. They warned, encouraged, and provided guidance based on their understanding of the times.

Jesus, in his Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21), delivers a profound teaching on discerning the signs of the end times. He highlights various events, both

natural and societal, that will precede his return. The ability to recognize these signs is crucial for believers, helping them navigate the challenges and remain faithful in the face of tribulations.

The Apostle Paul also addresses the concept of discerning the times in his letters. In Romans 13:11-12, he urges believers to understand the present time, recognizing that the hour has come for them to wake up from their slumber. This awakening involves living in accordance with God's will and being aware of the spiritual significance of the moment.

Discerning the times requires a combination of spiritual insight, prayerful consideration, and a thorough knowledge of God's Word. It involves being attuned to the Holy Spirit's guidance and being vigilant to recognize the unfolding of God's purposes in the midst of worldly events.

The Book of Revelation, penned by the Apostle John, provides a visionary account of the culmination of human history. It emphasizes the need for believers to discern the signs and remain faithful amid trials. Revelation 1:3 pronounces a blessing on those who read, hear, and keep the words of the prophecy, indicating that understanding the times leads to a blessed and purposeful life.

For us in today's times, as disciples of Jesus Christ, having the spiritual gift of discernment from God is essential to navigating the complexities, lies, confusion and spiritual deception in this world by satan and demonic forces, so we can avoid temptations and sin and accomplish God's purpose for each of our lives, without hindrance.

Spiritual discernment enables us to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the present age with wisdom, faith, and a commitment to advancing God's kingdom. This discernment equips us to engage with the world in a manner that reflects God's redemptive plan and love for humanity.

(165) Be Slow To Anger :

James 1:19-20 (AKJV) **"**Why, my beloved brothers, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath (anger) : 20For the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God. *"*

In this New Testament passage, James highlights the importance of a measured response to anger. He points out that anger, when uncontrolled, does not lead to the righteousness that God desires. The command to be "slow to anger" is rooted in the understanding that rash or impulsive anger cannot produce the fruit of righteousness. Rather than responding hastily, believers are called to listen attentively, think carefully, and respond with wisdom. This passage emphasizes that the human tendency to act out of anger often leads to sin, whereas being slow to anger provides room for God's peace and justice to prevail.

Proverbs 14:29 (AKJV) "*He that is slow to wrath (anger) is of great understanding (wisdom): but he that is hasty of spirit exalts folly..*" Proverbs, a book rich in wisdom, repeatedly contrasts wisdom with foolishness. In this verse, a patient person is described as having "great understanding." Patience and being slow to anger go hand in hand with

wisdom. Those who are quick-tempered act out of folly, often making decisions that lead to negative consequences. The wise person, on the other hand, recognizes that anger, especially when unchecked, is not a tool of righteousness or understanding, but a pathway to foolishness.

Proverbs 15:18 (AKJV) "*A wrathful man stirs up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeases strife"* This verse offers a clear contrast between the effects of a quick-tempered person and one who is patient. Anger, when expressed hastily, leads to conflict and division. A hot-tempered person is described as someone who **"**stirs up conflict," making situations worse rather than resolving them. In contrast, a patient person can calm a quarrel, showing that patience has the power to bring peace and reconciliation where anger might only escalate the tension.

Ecclesiastes 7:9 (AKJV) "Be not hasty in your spirit to be angry: for anger rests in the bosom of fools. *."* This verse from Ecclesiastes reinforces the idea that quick temper and impulsive anger are foolish behaviors. Anger is described as residing "in the lap of fools," implying that those who easily succumb to anger are those who lack wisdom. In contrast, wisdom and self-control allow individuals to maintain peace and make sound decisions, even in the face of provocation.

Exodus 34:6 (AKJV) **"***And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious (slow to anger) , long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth""* Here, God**'**s own character is revealed to Moses. One of the key aspects of God's nature is that He is "slow to anger." This divine trait speaks volumes about God**'**s patience with His people, even in their disobedience. The fact that God is slow to anger is often associated with His long-suffering love and willingness to forgive. God**'**s patience is an example for His followers, underscoring that being slow to anger is not merely about controlling emotion but about embodying grace and mercy.

Psalm 103:8 (AKJV) **"***The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. ."* In this Psalm, the psalmist celebrates God's character and praises His slowness to anger. This characteristic of God is portrayed as part of His compassionate and loving nature. The psalmist draws attention to the mercy and grace God extends to His people, contrasting it with the quick and harsh anger often shown by humans. God's patience is meant to be a model for His followers, inviting them to reflect His love and grace in their own relationships.

Matthew 5:22 (AKJV) **"***But I say to you, That whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whoever shall say, You fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. "* In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warns against unrighteous anger, even suggesting that harboring anger toward someone without cause can be spiritually dangerous. This underscores the severity of uncontrolled anger in the eyes of God. Anger, especially when expressed through contemptuous words or actions, has the potential to lead to judgment and spiritual harm. Jesus **'**teaching calls for reconciliation and peace, encouraging His followers to let go of anger before it festers into deeper sin.

Theological Significance of Being Slow to Anger

Reflecting God's Character The Bible consistently portrays God as "slow to anger," a key attribute of His mercy and grace. God, in His patience, gives people time to repent,

to change, and to turn to Him. For us as Christians, being slow to anger is not just about personal self-control, but about reflecting the nature of God to the world. As we grow more like Christ, we are called to reflect His divine patience and mercy in our relationships, both with God and with others.

Preserving Peace and Unity Anger, when not carefully controlled, can destroy relationships, disrupt the church, communities, and harm one's own self. The New Testament, in particular, encourages believers to live in peace with one another, and this peace is directly tied to managing anger. Being slow to anger helps to preserve unity in the church, in families, and in society. It fosters an environment where reconciliation is possible and where love and understanding can thrive.

Promoting Self-Control Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), and being slow to anger is one of the ways in which this fruit is manifested in Christian's life. Self-control in anger prevents us from reacting impulsively or sinfully, leading to wiser, more thoughtful actions. It also allows us to respond in love rather than in wrath, which can bring about life and goodness instead of harm.

Encouraging Personal Growth Being slow to anger is also a process of personal sanctification. It is a sign of maturity and growth in Christ when a person can choose patience over impulsive emotional reactions. This growth often requires the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, who helps cultivate this patience. Over time, the believer becomes more reflective and measured in their responses, reflecting Christ's character more fully.

Conclusion

The Bible**'**s emphasis on being slow to anger is a crucial reminder for us as disciples of Christ to cultivate patience, self-control, and wisdom in our lives. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to reflect the character of God, who is "slow to anger" and "abounding in love." When we allow anger to control us, it can lead to sin and division, but when we respond slowly and thoughtfully to provocation, we bring about peace, reconciliation, and righteousness. Being slow to anger not only fosters healthier relationships but also draws us closer to the heart of God, helping us grow in love, humility, and wisdom as we follow Christ's example.

(166) Serve One Another:

Galatians 5:13-14 (AKJV): "For, brothers, you have been called to liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 15But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another.**"**

Introduction: The Call to Serve One Another

In Galatians 5:13-14, the apostle Paul addresses a critical aspect of the Christian life—freedom and service. After explaining in earlier chapters the believer's freedom in Christ, Paul emphasizes that this freedom is not a license for self-indulgence or selfishness, but

rather an opportunity to love and serve others. The paradox of Christian liberty is that it does not lead to autonomy or self-centeredness but directs believers to humble service in love. The focus of this commentary will explore what it means to serve one another in love, how this service fulfills the law of Christ, and why it is essential to the flourishing of the Christian community.

1. The Biblical Understanding of Freedom

1.1 Freedom in Christ Paul's instruction on serving one another comes in the context of Christian liberty. In Galatians 5:1, Paul writes, "*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*" The freedom that Christians experience through faith in Jesus Christ is freedom from the law's condemnation, sin's power, and the oppressive demands of legalism. This freedom is not an invitation to do whatever one pleases, but rather a call to live according to God's will, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to serve God and one another.

Jesus Himself spoke about freedom in John 8:36, "*If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.*" Freedom in Christ is liberation from sin and its consequences, but also freedom to love, serve, and live in accordance with God's desires.

1.2 Freedom Not for the Flesh Paul warns the Galatians not to use their freedom as an excuse for indulging in the flesh (Galatians 5:13). The "flesh" here refers to sinful desires and behaviors that are opposed to God's holiness. Freedom in Christ is not a freedom to live selfishly, but a freedom to live for God and others. The believer is no longer a slave to sin but is now free to serve others in love.

2. The Heart of Service: Love

2.1 Serving Through Love The call to "serve one another by love" (Galatians 5:13) is the cornerstone of the Christian ethic. Paul insists that the motive for service must be love. Christian service is not about duty or obligation, but about expressing the love that God has shown to us in Christ. Love is the driving force behind every act of service that honors God. Jesus Himself modeled this kind of sacrificial love when He washed His disciples 'feet (John 13:14-15) and ultimately laid down His life for humanity (John 15:13).

This love is not limited to those who love us in return; rather, it is unconditional and selfless. The command to love others, even enemies, is central to the Christian gospel and demonstrates the transformative power of God's love in the believer's heart (Matthew 5:44).

2.2 The Law of Christ In verse 14, Paul declares that "*all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" This refers to the commandment found in Leviticus 19:18, which Jesus reaffirmed as the second greatest commandment, alongside loving God with all one's heart (Matthew 22:37-39). The "law of Christ" encompasses these two commandments: to love God with all our being and to love our

neighbor as ourselves. These are the foundational principles that guide the Christian life and community.

Loving one's neighbor as oneself means not only having empathy and compassion for others but actively seeking their well-being. It calls believers to step outside of their own interests and preferences to serve others in practical and sacrificial ways.

3. The Practical Outworking of Service

3.1 Serving One Another in the Body of Christ Serving one another is a vital expression of Christian community. The apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of mutual service in the body of Christ in passages such as 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, where he compares the church to a body with many parts, each working together for the benefit of the whole. Every believer has been gifted by the Holy Spirit to contribute to the edification of the body through service.

In this context, service involves both the use of spiritual gifts (1 Peter 4:10) and the practical acts of love and care for one another. Whether through encouragement, teaching, hospitality, or providing for others 'needs, service is the means by which Christians demonstrate their love for each other and build up the church.

3.2 Serving in the World While serving within the body of Christ is essential, Christians are also called to serve the broader world. Jesus demonstrated this by reaching out to the marginalized, healing the sick, and showing compassion to the poor and oppressed. The Apostle Paul also encouraged believers to engage in good works for the common good, saying in Galatians 6:10, **"***As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."*

Serving others in the world may involve acts of kindness, standing for justice, working toward the alleviation of suffering, or sharing the gospel with those who have not yet heard it. In all of these actions, believers serve not only the immediate needs of others but also demonstrate the love of Christ to a watching world.

4. The Transformative Nature of Serving One Another

4.1 The Reward of Serving Serving others in love does not go unnoticed by God. In Mark 9:41, Jesus says, **"***For whoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you belong to Christ, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward. "* While the primary motivation for service is love, the promise of God's reward provides encouragement for believers to persevere in serving others.

4.2 Becoming More Like Christ Serving others in love also transforms the believer. As we serve, we become more like Christ, who Himself came "not to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45). Serving others humbles the heart, challenges selfishness, and fosters compassion and empathy. It is a key part of the sanctification process, as believers grow in Christlikeness and reflect His love to the world.

Conclusion: The Call and Freedom to Serve

Galatians 5:13-14 reveals a profound truth: true Christian freedom is not a freedom to live for oneself, but a freedom to live for others in love. The call to serve one another is a call to imitate Christ, who gave Himself for the world. This service is the outworking of love, fulfilling the law of Christ, and is a powerful witness to the world of God's transformative grace.

May we, as the body of Christ, live in such a way that our freedom leads to humble service, that we serve one another in love, and that we reflect God's love in every act of kindness, care, and humility. In doing so, we fulfill the law of Christ and bring glory to God.

SERVE ONE ANOTHER - Continued…

Even though Jesus Christ is truly the King of Kings, He did not come to be served but rather He served others to set the example for us to do what is pleasing to God.

Jesus came into this world to set the example for us, by being a servant towards the needs of others; He wants us to follow and do the same: We should never serve out of compulsion but because we desire to freely give the same love to others that He has given to us.

Those who aspire to become a leader must always be a servant of all.

Reflection:

In a world that often esteems power, prestige, and position, Jesus calls us to a different way of living—a life marked by humility, servanthood, and selflessness. He Himself set the ultimate example of servanthood, willingly laying down His life for the sake of others. As followers of Christ, we are called to emulate His example and to serve one another in love.

The essence of being a servant of all lies in the posture of our hearts. Jesus taught His disciples, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all" (Mark 10:43-44). True greatness, according to Jesus, is found not in positions of authority or recognition but in humble service to others.

Jesus demonstrated this principle throughout His earthly ministry. He washed the feet of His disciples, a task reserved for the lowest servant, and taught them, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:14-15).

Being a servant of all means prioritizing the needs of others above our own desires and preferences. It involves acts of kindness, compassion, and self-sacrifice that seek to uplift and bless those around us. It requires a willingness to step out of our comfort zones and meet people where they are, showing them the love of Christ through our words and actions.

As we serve others, we reflect the heart of Jesus and fulfill His command to love one another as He has loved us (John 13:34-35). Our service becomes a tangible expression of God's love and grace to a world in need.

May we, therefore, embrace the call to be servants of all, following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us humbly serve one another with love and compassion, seeking to glorify God and advance His kingdom on earth.

Luke 22:27 (Jesus said) " ... But I am among you as the One who serves."

Galatians 5:13,14 (AKJV)“ For, brothers, you have been called to liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh**, but by love serve one another**. 14For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 15But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another.'

John 12:26. (AKJV) Jesus said,If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.”

As Christians, we are instructed in God's word to be servants who are alert, faithful, and sensible in accomplishing the will of God and fulfilling certain responsibilities as He has commanded us. If we are faithful to love and serve one another as Jesus Christ loved us, God promises us that our lives will be blessed.

Matthew 24:46,47 (AKJV) “ Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he comes shall find so doing. 47Truly I say to you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods."

Matthew 25:23 (AKJV)“ His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter you into the joy of your lord. "

As Christians, none of us can serve two masters; in other words, we must serve God as the priority of our life, we cannot be self serving, with selfish ambition as we attempt to serve God at the same time.

Luke 16:13 (AKJV) " No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.You cannot serve God and mammon." (Riches)

Luke 22:26 (AKJV) “But you shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that does serve. ."

SERVANT - Scriptures

Mark 9:35 " And sitting down, He **(Jesus)** called the twelve together and said to them, ' If any man wants to be first, let him be last of all, and servant of all.

If you desire to be great in God's Kingdom throughout eternity, then you need to serve the needs of others in this lifetime, as God's directs you.

Matthew 23:10-12 (AKJV) “ Neither be you called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. 11But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12And whoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

Mark 10:43-45 (AKJV) But so shall it not be among you: but whoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: 44And whoever of you will be the most chief, shall be servant

of all. 45For even the Son of man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.10:44 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave (servant) of all.

John 13:5 -16 (AKJV) After that he pours water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples ’feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded. 6Then comes he to Simon Peter: and Peter says to him, Lord, do you wash my feet? 7Jesus answered and said to him, What I do you know not now; but you shall know hereafter. 8Peter says to him, You shall never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash you not, you have no part with me. 9Simon Peter says to him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10Jesus says to him, He that is washed needs not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and you are clean, but not all. 11For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, You are not all clean. 12So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said to them, Know you what I have done to you? 13You call me Master and Lord: and you say well; for so I am. 14If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another’s feet. 15For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. 16Truly, truly, I say to you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.

(168) Servanthood:

Introduction:

Servanthood, is one main attributes of the Christian walk with Jesus Christ towards God and others in the world. The call to "serve one another" is not a mere directive but an invitation to take on the transformative and selfless character of Jesus Christ. Let us explore additional dimensions of servanthood that has essential significance of this call in the life of believers.

Servanthood in Love

As Christians, we are reminded in Galatians 5:13 to serve one another through love. Our servanthood in love means selflessly prioritizing the well-being and needs of those around us. This sacrificial love, modeled by Christ, drives us to engage in genuine and impactful service within our community of believers.

Servanthood in Humility

Philippians 2:3-4 encourages us to consider one another as more significant than ourselves. Our servanthood in humility involves embracing a posture of humility, setting aside our personal agendas, and actively seeking the interests of others. This humble service reflects the example set by Jesus, who washed the feet of His disciples, reminding us of the beauty in serving with grace.

Servanthood in Meeting Physical Needs

Ministering to the physical needs of others is a fundamental aspect of servanthood. This includes providing food, clothing, and shelter, reflecting our commitment to care for those in vulnerable situations. In Matthew 25:35-40, Jesus emphasizes that serving those in

need is akin to serving Him. When we offer meals to the hungry or clothing to the needy, we embody the love and compassion of Christ, making a tangible difference in their lives. This practical service not only addresses immediate needs but also fosters hope and dignity.

Servanthood in Visiting the Sick

Visiting the sick is another profound expression of servanthood. In James 5:14, we are encouraged to care for those who are ill, offering support and encouragement during challenging times. This act of service goes beyond physical presence; it involves listening, providing comfort, and praying for healing. By taking the time to visit those who are unwell, we show them they are not alone in their struggles. This connection can bring immense comfort and reassurance, demonstrating Christ's love and compassion in a very personal way.

Servanthood in Hospitality

In 1 Peter 4:9, we are urged to show hospitality to one another without grumbling. Our servanthood in hospitality involves warmly welcoming others, whether through opening our homes or creating an inviting atmosphere in our gatherings. This gracious hospitality fosters a sense of belonging and community among us as believers.

Servanthood in Compassion

Colossians 3:12 encourages us to clothe ourselves with compassion. Our servanthood in compassion involves actively demonstrating empathy and care for those in need. This compassionate service reflects the heart of Christ, who ministered to the brokenhearted and needy during His earthly ministry, inspiring us to do the same.

Servanthood in Encouragement

1 Thessalonians 5:11 instructs us to encourage one another. Our servanthood in encouragement involves uplifting and inspiring our fellow believers, providing support and reassurance. This encouraging service contributes to a culture of positivity and mutual edification within the body of Christ, helping us all grow in faith.

Servanthood in Prayer

As believers, we find encouragement in James 5:16 to pray for one another. Our servanthood in prayer involves interceding for the needs, challenges, and well-being of our fellow believers. Through this prayerful service, we strengthen the bonds of unity and solidarity within the body of Christ, fostering a deep connection among us.

Servanthood in Teaching

Colossians 3:16 highlights our call to teach and admonish one another. Our servanthood in teaching involves sharing knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual insights for the growth and edification of our community. This instructive service contributes to our maturation in faith, helping us grow closer to God and to each other.

Servanthood in Sharing

Hebrews 13:16 encourages us to do good and share with others. Our servanthood in sharing means adopting a generous and selfless disposition, willingly providing resources

and support to those in need. This sharing service reflects the generosity of God and strengthens the bonds of community among us as we care for one another.

Servanthood in Bearing Burdens

Galatians 6:2 exhorts us to bear one another's burdens. Our servanthood in bearing burdens involves coming alongside fellow believers during times of difficulty, offering support, and sharing the load. This supportive service reflects the communal nature of our Christian journey, reminding us that we are not alone in our struggles.

Servanthood in Consoling the Brokenhearted

Psalm 34:18 assures us that the Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Our servanthood in consoling the brokenhearted calls us to be instruments of God**'**s comfort, offering a listening ear, words of encouragement, and compassionate presence. By extending love and understanding, we reflect Christ**'**s heart for those in pain and remind them that they are not alone in their sorrow.

Servanthood in Encouraging and Helping the Weak

1 Thessalonians 5:14 urges us to encourage the fainthearted and help the weak. Our servanthood in encouraging and helping the weak involves strengthening those who are struggling, whether spiritually, emotionally, or physically. Through prayer, acts of kindness, and uplifting words, we demonstrate God**'**s sustaining grace and reinforce the truth that His strength is made perfect in weakness.

Servanthood in Visiting the Widow and Orphans

James 1:27 defines pure and undefiled religion as caring for widows and orphans in their distress. Our servanthood in visiting the widow and orphans is a tangible expression of God**'**s love, offering them companionship, practical assistance, and reassurance of their worth. By reaching out to those who may feel forgotten, we fulfill Christ**'**s call to love and serve the vulnerable.

Servanthood in Assisting Those with Physical or Mental Challenges

Luke 14:13 encourages us to invite and care for those who cannot repay us. Our servanthood in assisting those with physical or mental challenges reflects Christ**'**s compassion, ensuring that everyone is valued and included. Through patience, kindness, and practical help, we affirm their dignity and demonstrate the unconditional love of God, creating a community where all are embraced and supported.

Servanthood in Gifting Our Help

Gifting our help involves freely offering our time, resources, and skills to assist those in need. This act of servanthood reflects the biblical principle of generosity and kindness, echoing Galatians 6:2, which encourages us to **"**carry each other**'**s burdens." By willingly giving our help, we embody the love of Christ and create a supportive community.

Servanthood -Selfless Generosity

Gifting our help means prioritizing the needs of others without expecting anything in return. Whether it's lending a hand to someone struggling with daily tasks, providing financial assistance, or offering emotional support, our willingness to serve demonstrates selflessness. This kind of generosity can profoundly impact the lives of those we assist, showing them that they are valued and cared for.

Servanthood in Reconciliation

Matthew 5:23-24 emphasizes the importance of reconciliation among us. Our servanthood in reconciliation involves actively seeking resolution and restoring broken relationships within the body of Christ. This reconciling service mirrors the heart of Christ, who came to reconcile humanity to God and calls us to do the same within our community.

Servanthood in Being Impartial

James 2:1 warns against showing favoritism, reminding us that true faith does not discriminate. Our servanthood in being impartial calls us to serve all people with the same love and grace, regardless of their status, background, or circumstances. By treating everyone with dignity and fairness, we reflect God's justice and embody the unity found in Christ, where all are valued and included in His kingdom.

Servanthood in Encountering Struggles

In 2 Corinthians 1:4, we see that God comforts us so we can comfort others. Our servanthood in encountering struggles means sharing our experiences of God's comfort and encouragement with those facing similar challenges. This comforting service fosters a sense of shared journey and solidarity, reminding us that we are stronger together.

Servanthood in Visiting Those in Prison

Visiting individuals in prison is a vital expression of servanthood that aligns with Christ's teachings. In Matthew 25:36, Jesus states, "I was in prison, and you came to visit me," emphasizing the importance of caring for those who are marginalized and often forgotten. This act of service demonstrates compassion and the recognition of each person's inherent dignity, regardless of their circumstances.

Servanthood in Empathy

1 Corinthians 12:26 emphasizes that "if one member suffers, all suffer together." Our servanthood in empathy calls us to enter into the joys and sorrows of our fellow believers, bearing their burdens and rejoicing in their victories. This empathetic service deepens the bonds of compassion and shared experience within our Christian community, strengthening our ties as we walk together in faith.

Servanthood in Mentorship

Titus 2:3-5 instructs older women to teach and mentor younger women. Our servanthood in mentorship involves the intentional sharing of wisdom, guidance, and life experiences to encourage and equip others in their spiritual journey. This mentoring service contributes to the growth and discipleship of believers across generations, fostering a nurturing environment where we can all learn from one another.

Servanthood in Lifting the Fallen

Galatians 6:1 instructs us to "restore [those] in a spirit of gentleness." Our servanthood in lifting the fallen involves extending a gentle hand to those who have stumbled, offering support, and helping them find restoration. This compassionate service reflects the mercy and grace of Christ amidst human frailty, reminding us that we all need each other's support in our walk of faith.

Servanthood in Providing Practical Help

James 2:15-16 challenges us to provide practical help to those in need. Our servanthood in providing practical help means meeting the tangible needs of others, whether through acts of kindness, material support, or assistance in times of trouble. This practical service demonstrates the love of Christ in action, showing that our faith is alive and active through our deeds.

Servanthood in Meeting the Spiritual Needs of Others

Matthew 28:19-20 commands us to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey everything Christ has commanded. Our servanthood in meeting the spiritual needs of others involves sharing the gospel, praying for others, and encouraging spiritual growth. By offering biblical guidance, discipleship, and intercession, we help others draw closer to God, strengthening their faith and equipping them to walk in His truth.

Servanthood in Promoting Unity

Ephesians 4:3 calls us to be "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Our servanthood in promoting unity involves actively pursuing peace, resolving conflicts, and fostering an atmosphere of harmony within the body of Christ. This unifying service contributes to a healthy and flourishing community, allowing us to reflect God's love and grace to the world around us. This does not mean that we should seek to be unified with, or follow numerous pseudo christian religious groups or churches that do not follow the basic foundational doctrines of the Bible.

Servanthood in Parenting

Ephesians 6:4 advises fathers to bring up their children "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Our servanthood in parenting involves a sacrificial commitment to nurturing, guiding, and disciplining our children in a manner that reflects the character of God. This parenting service contributes to the spiritual formation of the next generation, helping them grow in faith and understanding of God's love.

Servanthood in Discernment

Philippians 1:9-10 encourages us to "approve what is excellent" and to be "pure and blameless for the day of Christ." Our servanthood in discernment involves cultivating a spirit of discernment, guiding one another in making wise choices, and upholding a standard of moral excellence. This discerning service contributes to the spiritual well-being of our community, helping us navigate life's challenges with wisdom and grace.

Servanthood in Encouraging Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 14:12 encourages us to "strive to excel in building up the church." Our servanthood in encouraging spiritual gifts involves recognizing, affirming, and supporting the diverse gifts and talents within our community. This encouraging service fosters a

dynamic and flourishing church life, empowering each member to use their unique gifts for the glory of God.

Servanthood in Encouraging Faith

Hebrews 10:24 calls us to "consider how to stir up one another to love and good works." Our servanthood in encouraging faith involves actively spurring one another toward spiritual growth and inspiring each other to love more deeply and engage in acts of kindness. This encouraging service contributes to a vibrant and active faith of fellow Christians, where we uplift and motivate each other in our walks with Christ.

Servanthood in Rejoicing and Mourning Together

Romans 12:15 reminds us to "rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." Our servanthood in rejoicing and mourning together involves deep empathy that allows us to share in the joys and sorrows of one another. This compassionate service strengthens the bonds of fellowship and mutual support within our community, reminding us that we are called to walk alongside each other in all seasons of life.

Servanthood in Accountability

James 5:16 emphasizes the importance of confessing sins to one another and praying for each other. Our servanthood in accountability involves a commitment to mutual transparency and support as we pursue holiness together. This accountable service fosters an environment of trust and spiritual growth within our Christian community, encouraging us to grow closer to God and to one another as we strive to live out our faith.

Servanthood in Admonishment with Love: As Christians, we are encouraged by Colossians 3:16 to "admonish one another in all wisdom." Our servanthood in admonishment means that we correct and guide each other with love, humility, and wisdom. This corrective service reflects our commitment to the spiritual well-being and growth of our fellow believers.

Servanthood in Time and Presence: In Galatians 6:2, we are reminded to "bear one another's burdens." Our servanthood involves dedicating our time and being present for one another during times of need, offering support and companionship. This attentive service demonstrates our commitment to the well-being and relational needs of our Christian family.

Servanthood in Discerning God's Will: Romans 12:2 calls us to "discern what is the will of God." Our servanthood in this area means that we walk alongside one another as we seek God**’**s guidance, providing counsel and support. This discerning service helps establish a unitified Church where we collectively strive to align our lives with God's purposes and will according to His word.

Servanthood in Mentoring Emerging Leaders: In 2 Timothy 2:2, we learn about the importance of entrusting what we have learned to faithful individuals who can teach others. Our servanthood in mentoring emerging leaders involves pouring into the next generation, equipping and empowering them for leadership roles. This mentoring service ensures the continuity and growth of godly leadership within the body of Christ.

Servanthood in Providing Spiritual Comfort: According to 2 Corinthians 1:4, God comforts us so that we can comfort others. Our servanthood in providing spiritual comfort

means sharing our personal experiences of God’s comfort to console and encourage those who are facing similar struggles.

Conclusion: Servanthood, when explored through the lens of encouraging faith, rejoicing and mourning together, accountability, ministering to the needs of one another, admonishment with love, celebrating milestones, dedicating time and presence, discerning God’s will, mentoring emerging leaders, providing spiritual comfort, valuing each member, being quick to forgive, and so much more, reveals the depth and breadth of Christlike living. As we embrace the call to "serve one another" in these various dimensions, we embody the love, humility, and selflessness modeled by Jesus Christ. In doing so, we, the body of Christ, become a radiant expression of God's transformative grace and love.

(169) Submit To One Another:

Introduction: The Call to Mutual Submission in the Christian Community of believers, The Church:

In the world, submission is often viewed as a sign of weakness or inferiority. However, the Bible presents a radically different perspective on submission, especially within the context of the Christian community. In Ephesians 5:21, Paul commands believers to **“**submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” This call to mutual submission is foundational to the life of the church and to the relationships that believers share. Submission in the Christian sense is not about dominance or inferiority, but about love, humility, and a willingness to prioritize the needs of others. Moreover anyone in authority who insists that someone do anything evil, sinful, or contrary to biblical principles, or who exercises an unbiblical, controlling authority beyond God’s intended role for Christian leadership (such as that of a pastor), is acting wrongly. In such cases, a person is not obligated to follow those demands. This commentary explores the biblical teaching on mutual submission, its basis in Christ, its practical implications for relationships within the church and beyond, and the blessings that flow from living in mutual submission.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Submission

1.1 Submission in the Old Testament While the New Testament gives the clearest and most direct teaching on mutual submission, the idea of submission is rooted in the Old Testament, where it is primarily about obedience to God’s authority and the proper order of relationships. The Old Testament emphasizes the importance of respecting authority, whether it be in the family, the community, or before God Himself.

Exodus 20:12 (AKJV): *"Honor your father and your mother: that your days may be long on the land which the LORD your God gives you."* In this Fifth Commandment, God establishes the importance of honoring those in positions of authority, especially parents. This obedience to authority is not just for the sake of order but is also an expression of

reverence for God**’**s authority. This principle of honoring authority foreshadows the submission required within the Christian community.

Micah 6:8 (AKJV): *"He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"*
The call to humility is a constant theme throughout the Old Testament. True submission begins with humility before God, recognizing His sovereignty and yielding to His will. Humility is the cornerstone of biblical submission, setting the stage for mutual submission among believers.

2. Mutual Submission in the New Testament: A Christ-Centered Call

2.1 The Command to Submit to One Another The clearest and most direct teaching on mutual submission comes from the apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:21. In the context of the household and Christian relationships, Paul calls believers to submit to one another **“**out of reverence for Christ.” This submission is not driven by fear, duty, or oppression but by a desire to honor Christ and follow His example.

Ephesians 5:21 (AKJV): *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."* Paul's command to **“**submit to one another” comes right before his instructions on specific relationships—husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves (or, in modern terms, employers and employees). The principle of mutual submission sets the tone for these relationships. Each believer is to live with a mindset of humility, putting the needs and interests of others above their own.

2.2 Submission as a Reflection of Christ’s Humility Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate example of humility and submission, provides the model for how Christians are to relate to one another. Philippians 2:5-8 is one of the clearest passages where Jesus **’**example of humility and submission is laid out.

Philippians 2:5-8 (AKJV): *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7But made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. "* Though He was fully divine, Jesus humbled Himself and became a servant, even to the point of death. His submission to the Father**’**s will was a voluntary act of love and obedience. This example becomes the pattern for Christian submission. Christians are called to submit to one another out of love and reverence for Christ, just as Christ submitted to the Father out of love for humanity.

2.3 The Role of Submission in Christian Relationships Mutual submission is essential in the context of the church and Christian relationships. In a church community, submission is not a hierarchical structure where one person dominates or controls others. Instead, it is a call for humility, service, and love. As believers, we are called to submit to one another in a spirit of cooperation, recognizing that every member of the body of Christ has value and purpose.

Romans 12:10 (AKJV): *"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."* Here, Paul exhorts believers to honor one another and **"**prefer" each other, which is an expression of mutual submission. Preferring others means placing their needs and interests before our own, reflecting the attitude of Jesus who, though equal with God, did not use His position for His own advantage but for the benefit of others.

3. Practical Implications of Mutual Submission

3.1 Submission in Marriage One of the most well-known applications of submission is in the context of marriage, particularly in Ephesians 5:22-33. While the husband is called to love his wife as Christ loved the church, the wife is called to submit to her husband. However, this submission is not one of oppression but is rooted in mutual love, respect, and sacrifice.

Ephesians 5:22-24 (AKJV): *"Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. 24Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."* The wife**'**s submission is not a sign of inferiority but an acknowledgment of the husband's role as the loving leader of the household. However, this passage must be understood in the context of mutual submission. The husband's responsibility is to love his wife sacrificially, as Christ loved the church. A marriage built on mutual submission reflects the love, sacrifice, and respect found in the relationship between Christ and the church.

3.2 Submission in the Church Mutual submission is also important in the life of the church. In a church community, no one is to dominate or control others. Instead, each member is to serve one another in humility. Leaders in the church are called to lead with servant hearts, guiding and shepherding the flock with care and gentleness.

1 Peter 5:5 (AKJV): *"Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves to the elder. Yes, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble"* Here, Peter calls the younger members of the church to submit to the elders, but he also reminds all believers to be **"**subject one to another." Mutual submission is an essential part of the body of Christ, where all members serve one another in humility and love.

3.3 Submission in the Workplace Submission also extends to the workplace, where employees are called to submit to their employers, and employers are called to treat their employees with respect and fairness. This reflects the biblical principle of mutual respect and service.

Ephesians 6:5-7 (AKJV): *"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as to Christ; 6Not with eye-service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:"*

Employees are called to serve their employers as if serving Christ, doing their work wholeheartedly. Similarly, employers are urged to treat their employees with kindness and fairness, knowing that they are ultimately accountable to God.

4. The Spiritual Benefits of Mutual Submission

4.1 Unity in the Body of Christ Mutual submission fosters unity and harmony in the body of Christ. When believers submit to one another, there is a spirit of cooperation, peace, and love that strengthens the church as a whole. Submission allows the church to function as one body, with each member serving the other in humility and love.

Philippians 2:2 (AKJV): *"Fulfill you my joy, that you be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. "* Mutual submission helps believers live in unity, which is one of the most powerful testimonies to the world of the love of Christ.

4.2 Transformation into Christ's Likeness Through mutual submission, believers are transformed into the likeness of Christ. As we humble ourselves and serve others, we reflect the character of Christ and grow in our Christlikeness.

Romans 8:29 (AKJV): *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. "* Mutual submission shapes us into the image of Christ, who is the ultimate example of humility and service.

Conclusion: Living in Mutual Submission

The call to "submit to one another in the fear of Christ" is a radical and transformative command that calls believers to a life of humility, love, and service. Mutual submission is not about power dynamics or control but about living in harmony with one another, reflecting the love and humility of Jesus Christ. It is a command that is to permeate every aspect of the Christian life—marriage, the church, the workplace, and beyond. As we submit to one another out of reverence for Christ, we build up the body of Christ, experience deeper unity, and become more like our Savior. May we embrace the call to mutual submission, allowing it to shape our relationships and glorify God in all that we do.

SUBMIT TO ONE ANOTHER - Continued…

Submit to one another in the Love of God.

Submitting to each other's needs and desires, is part of demonstrating God's love.

We can rightfully submit to other Christians by not insisting on our own way, and by further having a teachable spirit; Choosing to assist others over our own selfish interests, reflects a Christlike love.

As Christians we should obey the laws of the land, however we are not obligated to obey any person in authority who is insisting that we do something illegal or against the moral laws of God.

Moreover, we should never submit to any man, secular or Christian, who asks us to sin in any way; because we should always be a God pleaser and not a man pleaser.

KEY SCRIPTURES

1 Peter 2:13 - (AKJV) **“** Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord**’**s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14Or to governors, as to them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. 15For so is the will of God, that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 16As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. 17Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. 18Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the fraudulent.”

1 Peter 3:1 (AKJV) Likewise, you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with (respect) fear.

1 Timothy 2:11 (AKJV) Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 12But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. 13For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. 15Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

Ephesians 5:21 (AKJV) Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.(Out of reverence for Christ)

The foundation of mutual submission is laid in Ephesians 5:21, where we as disciples of Jesus Christ are instructed to "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." This principle is deeply rooted in the example of Jesus, who, though Lord and Savior, demonstrated humility by washing His disciples' feet (John 13:14-15). Christ's sacrificial love serves as the model for us to submit to one another with a heart of humility and love.

Philippians 2:3 -(AKJV) **“**Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*”* Paul encourages us to prioritize others **’**needs and well-being over our own, fostering a spirit of mutual submission.

1 Peter 5:5 - (AKJV) **“**Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves to the elder. Yes, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. 6Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:” This verse speaks to the importance of humility in relationships, urging us to submit to one another in humility.

Colossians 3:16-24 - (AKJV) **“**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.18Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. 19Husbands, love your wives,

and be not bitter against them. 20Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing to the Lord. 21Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. 22Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; 23And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men; 24Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ. 25But he that does wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done: and there is no respect of persons. This passage highlights the role of mutual encouragement and support in the Christian community.

Romans 12:10 -(AKJV)**“** Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;” Paul instructs us to honor and love each other deeply, reflecting the attitude of mutual submission.

Galatians 5:13-15 -(AKJV)**“** For, brothers, you have been called to liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 15But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another.” This verse emphasizes serving one another in love as a key expression of Christian freedom and mutual submission.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 - **“***Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”* Encouraging and uplifting each other are ways we can practice mutual submission and support within the body of Christ.

Hebrews 10:24 - **“***And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.”* This verse calls us to actively support and motivate one another in our spiritual lives, reflecting a spirit of mutual submission.

1 Corinthians 12:25-26 - (AKJV)**“**That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.*”* Paul speaks about the importance of mutual care and concern within the Christian community, emphasizing unity and submission.

John 13:14-17 - (AKJV) **“**If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another**’**s feet. 15For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. 16Truly, truly, I say to you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.” Jesus sets an example of humble service and submission, demonstrating how we should treat one another with humility and care.

Mutual Submission in Marriage:

Ephesians 5:22-33 provides specific guidance on mutual submission within the context of marriage. Husbands are called to love their wives sacrificially, while wives are called to respect their husbands. This mutual submission creates a harmonious and Christ-centered marital relationship, emphasizing the equality and complementary roles of spouses.

Submitting to Leaders and Authorities:

The Bible extends the principle of submission to various areas of life, including submitting to leaders and authorities. Hebrews 13:17 encourages us to obey and submit to our spiritual leaders, pastors etc. recognizing their responsibility to watch over their souls. Romans 13:1 emphasizes the broader principle of submitting to governing authorities as part of God's ordained order. This does not mean that we should submit to anyone who asking us to do any sin, rather it means to submit to anyone 's request that is according to God's will and his Word, even though it may be different from what we want or like.

This also means we are obligated to obey pastors or any church leader who is over controlling on our personal matters that are beyond the God given responsibility and duties of a pastor or church leader.

Mutual Submission in the Church:

1 Peter 5:5 urges us to clothe themselves with humility toward one another, acknowledging that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. This mutual submission within the Church fosters a spirit of unity, cooperation, and shared responsibility, reflecting the body of Christ working harmoniously together.

The Example of Christ's Humility:

Philippians 2:3-8 presents Christ as the ultimate example of humility and submission. Though equal with God, Jesus humbled Himself, taking the form of a servant and submitting to the will of the Father, even unto death. We are called to emulate this Christlike humility, considering others more significant than ourselves.

Conclusion:

May mutual submission be a hallmark of our Christian identity, promoting humility, love, and unity in the body of Christ so that God's Holy Spirit will transform our lives to be more Christlike without hinderance. Submission to one another in Christ, is a strong testimony and spiritual attribute that overcomes the world; Drawing others to the love of Jesus Christ and salvation as they witness humility and God's love in word and deed.

(170) Edify and Encourage One Another:

Building Up the Body of Christ, Mentoring, Discipleship, and Service

Edifying one another is a vital aspect of living out our faith in Jesus Christ. It involves building each other up through mentoring, discipleship, teaching, and encouragement, all while putting others before ourselves. This selfless approach fosters a strong and healthy community of believers, reflecting the love of Christ in our relationships. Our sincere love and edification of fellow Christians serves as an undeniable witness to others as a testimony of God's great love and saving grace to the world. By this divine love they will know that we are truly Jesus' disciples.

John 13:34,35 (AKJV) A new commandment I give to you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.

The Role of Mentoring Mentoring is a powerful way to edify one another. It involves guiding and encouraging someone in their spiritual walk with Jesus Christ, sharing wisdom, and providing support. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul instructs Timothy, saying, "And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." This model of mentoring emphasizes the importance of passing on knowledge and encouraging others to grow in their faith. When we invest in the spiritual development of others, we help them build a solid foundation in Christ. Always pointing them to Jesus, who is the Author and Finisher of their faith. Reminding others that they can always trust Jesus to accomplish His work within them, and He will help them through all trials and difficult situations by God's Holy Spirit.

Discipleship as a Path to Growth Discipleship is at the heart of edification, as it involves not just teaching but walking alongside others in their faith journey. Jesus **'**command in Matthew 28:19-20, known as the Great Commission, calls us to "make disciples of all nations." Discipleship creates an environment for mutual growth, where we learn from one another and deepen our understanding of God**'**s Word. By prioritizing discipleship, we foster a culture where believers are encouraged to explore their faith and develop a closer relationship with Christ.

Teaching with Love Teaching is another essential component of edification. Ephesians 4:11-12 highlights that God has given some to be teachers for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of ministry. Through sound teaching, we can clarify biblical truths, address misconceptions, and inspire others to apply God**'**s Word in their lives. Teaching should always be approached with love and humility, ensuring that it builds up rather than tears down.

Encouragement in the Faith Encouragement is a vital aspect of edifying one another. Hebrews 10:24-25 reminds us to "stir up one another to love and good works," emphasizing the importance of encouraging each other in our spiritual endeavors. Simple acts of encouragement, such as sharing a kind word, celebrating achievements, or offering support during difficult times, can have a profound impact on someone**'**s faith journey. When we uplift one another, we create a positive atmosphere that fosters growth and resilience.

Putting Others First A key principle of edification is the call to put others before ourselves. Philippians 2:3-4 states, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." This attitude of selflessness is essential in building a strong community. When we prioritize the needs of others, we demonstrate Christ**'**s love and model the servant leadership He exemplified.

The biblical basis for edification is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, where Paul exhorts the Thessalonian believers to "encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing." This mutual support is vital for spiritual health within the church. Edification is not just a suggestion; it is a command that underscores the importance of community in the Christian faith.

Our words have tremendous effect, as highlighted in Ephesians 4:29: "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." Paul instructs us to use our speech intentionally, aiming to build others up rather than tear them down. This means choosing words that encourage, inspire, and offer grace. When we engage in conversations that promote faith and hope, we contribute to a culture of edification within our community.

Edification is closely tied to service, which is emphasized in Galatians 5:13: "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." Serving others in love creates opportunities for spiritual growth and support. This can take many forms: offering practical help, praying for one another, or simply being present during difficult times. By serving, we reflect the love of Christ and strengthen the bonds within the body of believers.

God has gifted each of us uniquely for the purpose of building up the church, as seen in 1 Peter 4:10: "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." Whether through teaching, hospitality, encouragement, or other gifts, each contribution is valuable. By recognizing and utilizing our spiritual gifts, we can effectively edify one another and fulfill God’s design for the body of Christ.

Edification often involves accountability—challenging one another to grow in faith and character. Proverbs 27:17 states, "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another." This sharpening process can be uncomfortable but is essential for spiritual maturity. When we hold each other accountable with love and grace, we encourage deeper faith and greater resilience in our walk with Christ.

Regularly gathering as a community is crucial for mutual edification, as highlighted in Hebrews 10:24-25: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." Through fellowship, worship, and shared experiences, we create an environment where we can encourage and support each other. The early church exemplified this commitment to community, and we are called to do the same.

Conclusion Edifying one another in Christ is a dynamic process that encompasses mentoring, discipleship, teaching, encouragement, and selflessness. By actively engaging in these practices, we create a supportive environment where our fellow Christians can grow and thrive in their faith. As we build one another up, we reflect the love of Jesus, strengthen the body of Christ, and fulfill our calling to be His hands and feet in the world. In doing so, we not only deepen our own faith but also empower others to walk confidently in their relationship with God.

When we edify one another we actively participate in the spiritual growth of the body of Christ. By utilizing our gifts and committing to accountability, we help one another flourish in faith. As we strive to build each other up, we reflect the love of Christ and fulfill our calling as members of His body. In doing so, we strengthen not only individual believers but the church as a whole, advancing God’s Kingdom together.

(171) Upholding The Weak:

Introduction: A Call to Care for the Weak

Throughout the Bible, God repeatedly expresses His concern for the weak, the marginalized, and those who are vulnerable. From the Old Testament laws to the teachings of Jesus and the epistles of Paul, the Bible is clear that one of the hallmarks of godly living is the care and support of those who are weak in body, mind, spirit, or circumstance. The call to "uphold the weak" is not only an imperative for individual Christians but also a communal responsibility within the body of Christ. This commentary explores the biblical call to uphold the weak, the theological foundations behind this call, and the practical implications of living it out in our daily lives.

1. The Biblical Foundation for Upholding the Weak

1.1 God's Concern for the Weak From the very beginning of Scripture, we see God**'**s concern for the weak. In the Old Testament, God gives special attention to the vulnerable, such as orphans, widows, strangers, and the poor. These groups are highlighted as those who require particular care and protection because they have no means of defending themselves or securing justice.

Exodus 22:22-24 (AKJV): *"You shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. 23If you afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all to me, I will surely hear their cry; 24And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless."* This passage from the book of Exodus underscores God**'**s serious concern for the most vulnerable members of society. If the weak are oppressed or mistreated, God Himself promises to intervene, demonstrating His protection over those who are defenseless.

Psalm 82:3-4 (AKJV): "Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. 4Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked. " This psalm is a reminder to believers that God expects His people to stand for justice on behalf of the weak. It is not enough to merely avoid exploiting or ignoring the vulnerable; God calls His people to actively defend and deliver them from oppression.

2. Jesus 'Ministry to the Weak and the Marginalized

2.1 Jesus 'Heart for the Weak When Jesus walked the earth, He demonstrated His deep concern for the weak in every aspect of His ministry. He healed the sick, comforted the brokenhearted, reached out to sinners, and taught the values of compassion and mercy. Jesus **'**interactions with the weak show us not just what God does for them, but also how we are to care for them.

Matthew 11:28-30 (AKJV): *"Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke on you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in*

heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. 30For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.." In this invitation, Jesus calls those who are burdened—whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually—to come to Him. His heart is for the weary and the weak, and He offers them rest, comfort, and peace. Jesus **'**empathy and gentleness toward the weak serve as a model for how Christians should relate to those who are struggling.

Luke 14:13-14 (AKJV): *"But when you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14And you shall be blessed; for they cannot recompense you: for you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."* Jesus teaches that the weak and marginalized should be included in our lives, not as an afterthought but as a primary focus of our hospitality and generosity. Serving the weak, those who cannot repay us, brings honor to God and reflects the nature of His kingdom, where the first will be last and the last will be first.

3. The Church's Responsibility to Uphold the Weak

3.1 Paul's Teachings on Bearing One Another's Burdens In the New Testament, the apostle Paul emphasizes that the Christian community is called to bear with one another**'**s weaknesses. This means offering physical, emotional, and spiritual support to those in need. The church, as the body of Christ, is tasked with upholding and supporting its most vulnerable members.

Galatians 6:1-2 (AKJV): *"Brothers, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. 2Bear you one another**'**s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."* Paul urges believers to restore those who are weak in faith or struggling with sin, doing so with humility and gentleness. We are also called to bear one another**'**s burdens, which could involve anything from helping someone through a personal crisis to walking with someone through a spiritual struggle. By doing so, we fulfill the law of Christ, which is to love one another as He has loved us.

Romans 15:1-2 (AKJV): *"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification"* This passage reinforces the idea that those who are spiritually strong are called to support those who are weak. The purpose of this is not self-promotion or self-satisfaction, but the edification and building up of others. The strong are to be mindful of the needs of the weak, seeking their good rather than their own.

4. Practical Ways to Uphold the Weak

4.1 Providing Physical Support Upholding the weak can involve practical actions, such as providing food, shelter, or financial assistance. The early church demonstrated this kind of care for one another by meeting each other**'**s needs and making sure no one went without.

Acts 4:34-35 (AKJV): *"Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35And laid them down at the apostles ’feet: and distribution was made to every man according as he had need."*

In the early church, believers demonstrated radical generosity by sharing their resources to ensure that everyone’s needs were met. This practice of mutual care for the weak continues to be a model for the church today.

4.2 Providing Emotional and Spiritual Support Upholding the weak also includes offering emotional and spiritual support, listening, praying, and helping others grow in their relationship with God. We are called to walk alongside those who are struggling in faith, offering encouragement and pointing them to the truth of God’s Word.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 (AKJV): *"Now we exhort you, brothers, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. "* Paul encourages the Thessalonian believers to comfort the “feebleminded” (those who are fainthearted or discouraged) and support the weak. This is a call for Christians to be present in the lives of others, to comfort them, and to be patient as they navigate their struggles.

4.3 Standing Up for Social Justice Sometimes, upholding the weak means advocating for social justice, speaking out against the oppression and exploitation of the vulnerable. This may include standing for the rights of the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed in society, whether in relation to racial inequality, poverty, or injustice.

Proverbs 31:8-9 (AKJV): *"Open your mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. 9Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy."* God calls His people to speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves and to defend those who are being unjustly treated. This kind of advocacy is part of upholding the weak and ensuring that they receive justice.

5. The Blessings of Upholding the Weak

5.1 Fulfilling the Law of Christ As believers care for the weak, they fulfill the law of Christ, which is to love one another as He has loved us. In upholding the weak, we reflect Christ’s heart of compassion and humility, drawing closer to His likeness.

5.2 Blessings of Unity and Community When the weak are upheld in the body of Christ, the church grows in unity and strength. The church is called to be a community of support where no one is left behind, and all are cared for. This unity becomes a powerful testimony to the world of the love of Christ.

5.3 Eternal Rewards Jesus promises that acts of compassion to the weak are seen by God and rewarded. In Matthew 25:40, He says, *"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."* Acts of kindness toward the

weak are not just humanitarian gestures but acts of service to Christ Himself, and they will be rewarded in eternity.

Conclusion: A Call to Uphold the Weak

The Bible consistently calls believers to uphold the weak, to care for the marginalized, and to demonstrate compassion to those who are vulnerable. This is not an optional part of the Christian life, but a command rooted in the heart of God and demonstrated supremely in the life of Jesus. Whether through providing physical, emotional, or spiritual support, or standing for justice in society, the church is called to be a place of refuge for the weak.

May we, as the body of Christ, live out this command to uphold the weak in practical ways, demonstrating the love and compassion of Jesus to a world in need.

UPHOLDING THE WEAK - Continued…

Jesus 'Ministry to the Weak, Weary, Poor, Outcasts, Oppressed

In the New Testament, Jesus exemplifies the principle of upholding the weak. His ministry is characterized by compassion for the sick, the poor, and the outcast. In Matthew 11:28-30, He invites those who are weary and burdened to find rest in Him, signifying His role as a supporter of those who struggle.

Scriptural Reference:

Matthew 11:28-30 (AKJV): "Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke on you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. 30For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

The Early Church's Example: The early church took up the call to support the weak within their community. In Acts 4:32-35, we see a picture of unity where believers shared their possessions to ensure that no one was in need. This radical communal living serves as a model for how the church is to respond to the needs of its members.

Scriptural Reference:

Acts 4:32-35 (AKJV): "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that something of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was on them all. 34Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35And laid them down at the apostles 'feet: and distribution was made to every man according as he had need.."

Paul's Instruction on Supporting the Weak The Apostle Paul further emphasizes the importance of upholding the weak. In **Romans 15:1**, he writes, "We who are strong ought

to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves." This exhortation highlights the ethical responsibility of the strong to support the weak, reflecting the essence of Christian love. **Scriptural Reference:**

Romans 15:1 (AKJV): "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification."

A Call to Love and Compassion The command to love one another is foundational to the Christian life. In **1 John 3:17-18**, John challenges believers, asking how God**'**s love can be in someone who has the world**'**s goods and sees a brother in need yet closes his heart against him. This reinforces the idea that true love manifests in action, particularly toward the vulnerable. **Scriptural Reference:**

1 John 3:17-18 (AKJV): "But whoever has this world**'**s good, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him? 18My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.."

Conclusion

The biblical mandate to uphold the weak is a call to embody the character of God, who is just, compassionate, and concerned for those who are vulnerable. From the laws given to Israel to the teachings of Jesus and the actions of the early church, scripture consistently points to the necessity of supporting and uplifting those in need. As modern disciples and followers of Jesus Christ, this call remains vital, urging us to reflect God**'**s love in practical ways within our communities. By fostering an environment where the weak are upheld, we not only obey scriptural commands but also fulfill the mission of the church to be a beacon of hope and compassion in a broken world.

(172) Let You Light Shine:

Text: Matthew 5:14-16 (AKJV): *"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light to all that are in the house. 16Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

Introduction: The Call to Let Your Light Shine

In this passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus offers a powerful exhortation to His followers: "Let your light shine before men." These words are part of His broader teaching on what it means to live as a citizen of the Kingdom of God, to reflect His holiness, and to be a witness to the world. The imagery of light is rich throughout Scripture, symbolizing purity, truth, and the presence of God. By calling His disciples the "light of the world," Jesus is not only highlighting their role in bringing His truth to others, but also the

responsibility they bear in living out their faith visibly and publicly. This commentary will explore the meaning of being the light of the world, how we can let our light shine, and the ultimate purpose behind this call to visibility and action. Reflecting the nature of Jesus Christ in our daily lives, is being the light of the world.

1. Understanding the Light

1.1 Light in Biblical Symbolism In Scripture, light is frequently used to symbolize God's presence, holiness, and truth. From the very beginning of creation, God's first command was, *"Let there be light!"* (Genesis 1:3), and throughout the Bible, light is a metaphor for divine revelation. Psalm 27:1 declares, *"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"* Similarly, in John 8:12, Jesus calls Himself, **"***the light of the world."*

Light in the Bible represents several things:

- **God's Revelation**: Light reveals what is hidden in darkness. In this way, God's truth and wisdom dispel ignorance and sin.
- **Holiness and Purity**: Light is often contrasted with darkness, symbolizing purity in opposition to sin and corruption (1 John 1:5).
- **Guidance and Direction**: As a source of illumination, light also represents guidance. Psalm 119:105 says, **"***Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."*

As believers, we are called to reflect the light of God's truth and holiness into a dark world.

1.2 Jesus, the Light of the World Before He tells His followers that they are the light of the world, Jesus declares that He is the Light. In John 8:12, Jesus says, **"***Then spoke Jesus again to them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."* Jesus is the ultimate source of light, and His life, death, and resurrection reveal the fullness of God**'**s love, truth, and salvation.

It is only because of Christ that we can be light to others. In John 1:4-9, it is written: *"In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."*

Jesus, as the Light of the world, illuminates the path to God. As His followers, we are called to share this light with others.

2. The Role of Believers as the Light of the World

2.1 A City on a Hill Jesus states, *"*You are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light to all that are in the house. 16Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*"* (Matthew 5:14-16).

This powerful image emphasizes the visibility of the believer's life. A city set on a hill is visible from far away, its light shining brightly in the darkness. In the same way, the life of a Christian should be conspicuous and distinct in a fallen world.

This visible presence is not for self-promotion or for the praise of men, but for the glory of God. The world is in darkness, and our light is meant to guide them toward the truth of the gospel. As Christians, our conduct, speech, and actions should reflect the transformative power of Christ in our lives, making us like a beacon of hope in a broken world.

2.2 The Purpose of Our Light Jesus continues by saying, **"***Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house"* (Matthew 5:15). The purpose of a light is to be seen and to dispel darkness. Just as a lamp is placed on a stand to provide light to the entire house, believers are to let their lives shine publicly, so that others may see their good works and glorify God.

This highlights the fact that the light we carry is not for our own benefit or to elevate our own status. It is meant to shine in such a way that others are led to glorify God. Jesus calls us to let our light shine through acts of goodness, kindness, and righteousness that reflect God's love and truth. Our light is meant to be a witness to the world of the glory and grace of God.

2.3 The Light of Good Works Jesus specifically connects our good works to our light shining in the world. In Matthew 5:16, He says, **"***Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* Our works are the fruit of our faith and the evidence of Christ's presence in our lives. These works are not a means to earn God's favor, but the natural outflow of a life transformed by His grace.

Good works can take many forms, such as acts of service, charity, kindness, and justice. However, the key to these works is that they point others toward God, leading them to recognize His goodness and glorify Him. Our actions should reflect the love, mercy, and compassion of Christ, revealing the heart of the Father to a world that desperately needs His light.

3. Practical Ways to Let Your Light Shine

3.1 Living a Godly Life in the World One of the most basic ways to let your light shine is through living a life that is distinct from the darkness of the world. This includes avoiding sin and embracing holiness in every aspect of life—relationships, work, entertainment, and personal habits. As Paul exhorts in Philippians 2:15, *"That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the middle of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world; "*

The world should notice a difference in the way we speak, act, and respond to challenges. Our lives should be a testimony to the transforming power of the gospel.

3.2 Speaking the Truth in Love Letting your light shine also involves boldly sharing the truth of the gospel with others. This doesn't necessarily mean preaching to everyone we meet but living and speaking in such a way that others can see the hope and peace that we have in Christ. The apostle Peter encourages believers in 1 Peter 3:15, **"***But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."*

By sharing the hope we have in Christ, we point others to the ultimate Light, the source of our transformation.

3.3 Serving Others with Christlike Compassion Serving others is another powerful way to let your light shine. Whether through acts of kindness, social justice work, or caring for the needy, our service reflects the heart of Christ. Matthew 25:35-40 teaches that when we serve others, especially the least among us, we are serving Christ Himself.

Through our acts of service, we bring God's light into the darkness of human suffering, offering hope, comfort, and tangible assistance to those in need.

4. The Ultimate Purpose: Glorifying God

The ultimate purpose of letting our light shine is not self-promotion but to bring glory to God. Jesus says, *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* (Matthew 5:16).

Our good works, when done in humility and love, point others to the greatness and goodness of God. Our light is a reflection of God's light, and as such, it should lead others to worship and honor Him. The Apostle Peter echoes this in 1 Peter 2:12, **"***Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."*

Our lives are to be a testimony of God's grace, leading others to acknowledge His work in us and to give Him praise.

Conclusion: Shining the Light of Jesus Christ

To "let your light shine" is to live in such a way that the light of Christ in us is visible to the world. It is a call to live with integrity, love, humility, and service, so that through our actions and words, others may be drawn to the truth of the gospel and the glory of God. Our light is not our own but is a reflection of the divine light that has transformed our lives. By living as a city set on a hill, we testify to the power of Christ and invite others to come to Him.

May we faithfully shine as lights in a dark world, always pointing others to the Savior, and glorifying our Father in heaven in all that we do.

Let Your Light Shine - Continued…

Text: Matthew 5:16 (AKJV):

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Introduction: A Call to Reflect Christ's Glory

In Matthew 5:16, Jesus gives a clear and powerful command to His followers: **"***Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* The imagery of light in this verse represents more than just outward actions; it signifies the inner transformation that occurs when Christ dwells in a believer. To let your light shine is to live in such a way that your life points others toward God and His glory. This calling is not a mere suggestion but a divine imperative that encapsulates the essence of the Christian life.

As followers of Christ, we are called to share the light of Jesus Christ in a world shrouded in darkness. Matthew 5:16 exhorts us to let our light shine before others, not for our own glory, but so that they may see our good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven. Our lives are meant to reflect the love, truth, and grace of Jesus Christ, illuminating the path to God for those around us.

Our light shines brightest when we live out the teachings of Jesus in our daily lives. It is revealed through acts of kindness, compassion, and generosity toward others. When we love our neighbors as ourselves, forgive those who wrong us, and extend grace to the undeserving, we bear witness to the transforming power of the gospel.

Letting our light shine also involves boldly sharing our faith with others, proclaiming the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. We are called to be salt and light in a world desperately in need of hope and redemption. By sharing our testimonies, inviting others into relationship with Jesus, and living lives that reflect His character, we point people toward the source of true light and life.

As we let our light shine, we must remember that it is not our own light but the light of Christ shining through us. We are vessels through which God's glory is revealed to the world. Therefore, let us humbly submit ourselves to God's will, allowing His Spirit to work in and through us for His purposes and His glory.

In this commentary, we will explore the biblical concept of "letting your light shine," examining how this command reflects the nature of God**'**s light in believers, and how it should be demonstrated in both actions and attitudes. We will also explore how kindness, though not the main focus, is one significant way in which Christians can shine as a testimony of God's work in their lives.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Light

The metaphor of light is rich in biblical theology, symbolizing purity, truth, righteousness, and the presence of God. To understand what it means for Christians to let their light shine, we need to explore the significance of light in Scripture.

1.1 Light as God's Presence

In the Bible, light is often associated with the presence of God. In Genesis 1:3, God declares, **"***Let there be light,"* and in Psalm 27:1, David proclaims, **"***The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"* Light represents the illuminating presence of God, and it dispels darkness—symbolizing the defeat of sin and ignorance. In the New Testament, Jesus is described as **"***the light of the world"* (John 8:12), and believers are called to reflect that light to others.

1.2 Jesus, the Light of the World

Jesus **'**role as the light of the world is central to His mission on earth. In John 8:12, He says, **"***I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."* Jesus, as the embodiment of God's truth and grace, brings spiritual light to those in darkness. For Christians, allowing His light to shine through them means reflecting His truth, mercy, and love in all that they do.

1.3 The Call to Shine Brightly

When Jesus says to let your light shine before men in Matthew 5:16, He is not only talking about being morally good or performing righteous acts but about a life that visibly points to God. Just as a city on a hill cannot be hidden, a life filled with the light of Christ cannot go unnoticed. It is through our actions and our witness that others will see Christ in us, and in turn, be drawn to Him.

2. Letting Your Light Shine Through Actions

Letting your light shine involves more than just intentions; it requires visible, intentional actions. These actions should reflect the goodness of God and glorify Him in every area of life. One of the most prominent ways that Christians are called to shine their light is through their good works.

2.1 Good Works as a Reflection of Christ's Glory

In Ephesians 2:10, Paul tells us, **"***For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."* Good works are the natural outcome of a transformed life in Christ. These acts are not done for personal gain or recognition, but to reflect the glory of God. When people witness acts of love, service, and generosity, they are meant to see Christ at work in and through believers.

2.2 The Role of Kindness in Letting Your Light Shine

Kindness, though not the primary focus, is a key expression of the light that Christians are called to let shine. In Colossians 3:12, Paul instructs believers to **"***put on…kindness, humility, meekness, and patience."* Kindness is a visible and tangible way that believers reflect God**'**s love to others. It demonstrates a Christ-like heart that seeks the well-being of others, often in a world where selfishness and hostility dominate.

However, kindness is only one part of the larger picture of letting your light shine. While showing kindness is crucial, the focus here is on living a life that reflects the fullness of God's character. Christians are called to demonstrate the fullness of Christ—truth, justice, love, and grace—through all of their actions.

2.3 Letting Your Light Shine in a Dark World

Jesus **'**command in Matthew 5:16 is a call to shine in a dark world. In a society often marked by division, injustice, and despair, Christians are called to be a beacon of hope. This can be seen through our actions of justice, standing up for the marginalized, offering hope to the hopeless, and living lives of integrity. Our light should be an undeniable reflection of the truth of God, visible in our daily decisions, our relationships, and our commitment to righteousness.

3. Letting Your Light Shine in Christian Community

As believers, our light is not only meant to shine individually but collectively within the body of Christ. The Church is called to be a city on a hill, radiating God**'**s love and truth to the world.

3.1 Building Unity and Fellowship

In John 13:35, Jesus said, **"***By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another."* A key part of letting our light shine is living in love and unity with one another. As Christians, we are called to reflect the love of God within the community of believers. Acts of kindness, forgiveness, and service within the Church are a powerful testimony to the world of the transformative power of the gospel.

3.2 The Church as a Witness to the World

The collective witness of the Church serves as a shining light to a world in darkness. When believers live in love and unity, showing kindness and grace to one another, they provide a living testimony of God**'**s character to the world. Matthew 5:14-15 reminds us that a city on a hill cannot be hidden. The unity and love Christians demonstrate should be visible and serve as an invitation for others to come and experience the light of Christ.

4. How Christians Can Cultivate the Light of Christ

Letting your light shine is a deliberate choice that requires daily commitment and reliance on the Holy Spirit. Christians are called to cultivate this light through intentional practices

that deepen their relationship with God and enable them to reflect His light more effectively to others.

4.1 Through the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in cultivating the light of Christ in believers. Galatians 5:22-23 describes the fruit of the Spirit, which includes virtues such as love, joy, peace, and kindness. The more believers yield to the Spirit's work in their lives, the more they reflect the light of Christ. It is through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit that Christians can live out this calling to shine before the world.

4.2 Through Obedience to God's Word

Obedience to God's Word is central to letting your light shine. In John 15:4-5, Jesus says, *"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."* A life that abides in Christ is a life that bears the fruit of His light. By reading and meditating on Scripture, and by obeying God's commands, Christians allow the light of Christ to shine through them.

4.3 Through Prayer and Dependence on God

Finally, letting your light shine requires a constant dependence on God through prayer. It is in prayer that believers align their hearts with God's will, seek His guidance, and ask for the strength to live faithfully. As we pray for the Holy Spirit's help and for opportunities to serve others, we position ourselves to shine as God intends.

Conclusion: Shining for the Glory of God

To let your light shine is to live a life that points others to the glory of God. It is about reflecting the love, truth, and grace of Christ in a world that desperately needs to see Him. While kindness is an important expression of this light, the call to let your light shine encompasses every aspect of the Christian life—our actions, our words, and our attitudes.

As believers, we are called to shine brightly before the world, not for our own glory, but to bring glory to our Father in heaven. May our lives be a reflection of His light, drawing others to Him and leading them to glorify the One who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

(173) Labor and Responsibilities:

Every Christian should be responsible to labor with their hands, to support themselves, and their family. Even many pastors and Christian teachers should labor when they are able, so as to be a good example.

If God directs us, we also must be willing to forsake all, when called by God to do a certain task or mission, and not have selfish ambition holding us back.

When we earn our own money and then use it for God's work in some way, many people will be blessed including ourselves, because our joy is made full as we fulfill God's purpose. As servants of Jesus Christ we can then provide food, clothing, shelter to the needly and reach the world with God's Good News of Salvation. This is the fast that the Lord has chosen and how we can love others as Jesus Christ loved us, by using the talents and resources that God has given us.

KEY SCRIPTURES

2 Thessalonians 3:8-10 (AKJV) Neither did we eat any man**'**s bread for nothing; but worked with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 9Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves a sample to you to follow us. 10For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat

1 Thessalonians 2:9 (AKJV) For you remember, brothers, our labor and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. 10You are witnesses, and God also, how piously and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you that believe:"

Titus 2:14 (AKJV) :Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Labor and Responsibilities: Biblical Perspective on Work

Work as a Divine Mandate:

Genesis 2:15 reveals that God placed Adam in the garden to work it and keep it. Labor, from the beginning, was part of human existence and life as a divine mandate. This underscores the idea that work, when approached with a sense of purpose and responsibility, aligns with God's intended design for humanity.

Responsibility for Stewardship:

Matthew 25:14-30 conveys the parable of the talents, emphasizing the responsibility of faithful stewardship. Labor is seen as a stewardship of the talents and resources entrusted to us by God. This parable encourages believers to approach work with a mindset of responsibility, recognizing that our efforts contribute to the unfolding of God's kingdom purposes.

Responsibility in Providing for Family:

1 Timothy 5:8 asserts that those who do not provide for their own family have denied the faith. Labor carries the responsibility of providing for one's family, aligning with the biblical principle of familial care and support. This underscores the idea that work is a means by which individuals fulfill their responsibilities to their households.

Work as Worship:

Colossians 3:23-24 encourages believers to work heartily as for the Lord and not for men. Labor, when viewed as an act of worship, transforms the mundane into a way to honor God and a righteous and good endeavor. This perspective elevates the responsibility

associated with work, reminding believers that they are ultimately serving God in their vocational pursuits.

Responsibility for Fair Wages and Treatment:

James 5:4 condemns the withholding of wages from laborers. This highlights the responsibility of employers to treat workers justly and pay them fairly. It underscores the importance of ethical business practices and the equitable treatment of those engaged in labor.

Responsibility in Diligence and Excellence:

Proverbs 22:29 extols the value of diligence and excellence in work, stating that those who are diligent will stand before kings. Labor carries the responsibility of diligence and excellence, reflecting the commitment to perform one's duties with skill and dedication. This ethic aligns with the biblical principle of doing everything as unto the Lord.

Responsibility for Integrity:

Proverbs 16:11 emphasizes the importance of honest scales and weights. Labor comes with the responsibility of conducting business and work with integrity. This includes honesty, transparency, and a commitment to ethical practices in all professional dealings.

Work as a Means of Contribution:

Ephesians 4:28 exhorts believers to labor, doing honest work with their own hands so that they may have something to share with those in need. Labor carries the responsibility of contributing not only to personal well-being but also to the welfare of others. This highlights the social responsibility inherent in the biblical perspective on work.

Responsibility for Time Management:

Psalm 90:12 prays for God to teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. Labor involves the responsibility of wisely managing one's time, recognizing the transient nature of life. This biblical principle encourages believers to approach work with a sense of urgency and purpose.

Responsibility for Generosity:

Luke 6:38 encourages believers to give, and it will be given to them. Labor carries the responsibility of generosity, whether through charitable acts, supporting others in need, or contributing to community development. This generous responsibility reflects the spirit of Christ's selfless giving.

Responsibility for Philanthropy:

Acts 20:35 quotes Jesus, saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Labor involves the responsibility of philanthropy, using one's resources to contribute to charitable causes and make a positive impact on society. This philanthropic responsibility reflects a commitment to love and serve others beyond the workplace.

(174) Go the Extra Mile:

Reflecting Christ's Love through Servanthood

Matthew 5:38-42 (AKJV): *"You have heard that it has been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39But I say to you, That you resist not evil: but whoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40And if any man will sue you at the law, and take away your coat, let him have your cloak also. 41And whoever shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two. 42Give to him that asks you, and from him that would borrow of you turn not you away.*

Introduction: The Call to Go the Extra Mile

In the midst of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus challenges His followers with a radical teaching about responding to wrongdoing and injustice. The command to "go the extra mile" comes in a series of instructions where Jesus overturns conventional wisdom and societal norms. His teaching presents an ethic of love, forgiveness, and sacrificial service that defies the natural human tendency to seek vengeance or retaliate in kind.

In Matthew 5:38-42, Jesus expands upon the law of retribution, which is rooted in the Old Testament principle of "an eye for an eye" (Exodus 21:24). However, Jesus introduces a countercultural approach: not merely to avoid retaliation, but to actively love, serve, and even sacrifice for those who wrong us. "Going the extra mile" is not just about being generous, but about demonstrating a Christ-like heart in the face of injustice.

This commentary will explore the meaning of "going the extra mile," the context in which it was spoken, and how this teaching applies to the life of a believer today.

1. The Context of "Going the Extra Mile"

1.1 **The Roman Custom: A Forced Mile** The phrase "go with him twain" (Matthew 5:41) refers to a specific practice in first-century Palestine, particularly under Roman occupation. Roman soldiers had the legal right to compel a Jewish citizen to carry their gear for a mile. This was a form of forced labor that many Jews resented, as it symbolized the oppression of the Roman Empire. The law required that a person could only be compelled to carry a burden for one mile, and anything beyond that was voluntary.

In this context, when Jesus instructs His followers to go "twain" (two miles) when forced to carry a Roman soldier**'**s pack, He is calling them to demonstrate an extraordinary attitude of grace and love. Instead of begrudgingly fulfilling the legal requirement of one mile, Jesus invites His followers to willingly exceed expectations by going further than what is required, thereby turning an act of oppression into one of kindness.

1.2 **The Law of Retaliation: Eye for an Eye** Jesus begins this teaching by addressing the common understanding of the law, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" (Matthew 5:38). This principle, rooted in the Old Testament (Leviticus 24:20), was meant to limit vengeance, ensuring that retaliation was proportional to the offense. However, by the time of Jesus, it had become a legal tool for seeking personal revenge, rather than a guide for justice.

Jesus challenges this interpretation by commanding His followers not to resist an evil person (Matthew 5:39). He calls them to respond with grace, turning the other cheek, and going beyond the requirements of the law in every situation, including those where they are wronged. This is not passivity, but an active decision to choose love over retaliation.

2. The Radical Love of "Going the Extra Mile"

2.1 **A Life of Non-retaliation** To "resist not evil" (Matthew 5:39) may sound counterintuitive in a world that often demands an eye for an eye. However, Jesus' command is not about passivity in the face of injustice or enabling wrongdoing. Rather, He is calling His followers to refuse to allow personal grievances and offenses to dictate their actions. By refusing to retaliate, Christians break the cycle of vengeance that perpetuates hatred and division.

Going the extra mile is a demonstration of radical love. In this, Jesus is teaching His followers to love in a way that mirrors the love of God—unmerited, sacrificial, and not based on the behavior of others. As God has shown mercy to us, we are to show mercy to others, even to those who treat us unjustly.

2.2 **The Spiritual Impact of Non-Violent Resistance** "Going the extra mile" can also be seen as a form of non-violent resistance. By offering more than what is demanded, the believer places the burden of grace on the oppressor, challenging the status quo and opening the door to transformation. This mirrors the example of Christ, who responded to the violence of the world with the power of love, ultimately overcoming sin and death by His sacrificial death on the cross.

In times of conflict, responding with generosity and humility may not immediately change the situation, but it has the potential to change hearts and minds, leading others to reconsider their actions and to witness the love of Christ in us.

2.3 **Going Beyond Expectations** The principle of "going the extra mile" extends beyond the specific historical context of Roman soldiers. It applies to everyday life: to the relationships, conflicts, and challenges we face in our communities, workplaces, and homes. Jesus calls us to exceed expectations in all areas of life—not out of obligation, but as an expression of our love for God and for others.

When we as Christians bless others and fulfill their requests, and go beyond their exceptions, this is great testimony of the love of Jesus Christ. Many non-believers desire to know more about Jesus Christ and why we all need Jesus to saved as their lord and Savior by witnessing our actions blessings others more than the norm of society.

Going the extra mile is about showing love in ways that surprise and disarm. It’s not just fulfilling basic obligations, but offering something extra—an act of kindness, patience, or generosity that reflects the heart of God. In doing so, we point others to the radical love that Christ has shown us.

3. Practical Ways to "Go the Extra Mile"

3.1 **Responding to Offense with Grace** When someone wrongs us, we often want to seek revenge or justice. Jesus calls us to take a different approach—to respond with grace and generosity. This can be as simple as offering a kind word instead of a harsh retort, or as radical as forgiving someone who has hurt us deeply, without holding it against them.

By responding to offense with grace, we follow the example of Christ, who, despite being unjustly persecuted, prayed for His enemies and forgave those who crucified Him.

3.2 **Serving Others Beyond Expectation** Going the extra mile can also manifest in acts of service. For example, in the workplace, we might go above and beyond our duties, not out of a desire for recognition, but to serve others well. In our families, we might sacrifice our own time or comfort to support our loved ones in ways that go beyond what is expected of us.

This is a form of love that reflects Christ**'**s sacrificial love for us. Just as He laid down His life for our sake, we are called to serve others with the same selflessness.

3.3 **Giving Generously** Jesus **'**teaching also touches on generosity: "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (Matthew 5:42). Going the extra mile can include giving when it is inconvenient or when the recipient cannot repay us. Whether through financial support, time, or emotional investment, Jesus calls us to open our hearts and hands to oters without expecting anything in return.

4. The Ultimate Purpose: Reflecting the Love of Christ

The ultimate purpose of going the extra mile is to reflect the love and character of Christ. By responding to injustice with grace, exceeding expectations with service, and giving generously, we reveal the nature of our Savior to a world that desperately needs it. Jesus calls us to be agents of change in the world—not through force or power, but through love, humility, and sacrifice.

In Matthew 5:16, Jesus says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." When we go the extra mile, we are not seeking our own glory, but pointing others to the glory of God.

Conclusion: Living the Radical Love of Christ

"Going the extra mile" is a call to live out the radical, sacrificial love of Christ in our everyday lives. It is about responding to others with grace, generosity, and humility, even when we are wronged or taken advantage of. In doing so, we not only demonstrate the love of God but invite others to experience it as well.

As believers, we are called to reflect Christ in every interaction and to live in such a way that our actions reveal the transforming power of His love. May we go beyond what is

required, going the extra mile to serve others, to forgive, and to love, so that through us, God's light may shine in a dark world.

Go The Extra Mile - Continued…

Scripture: Matthew 5:41 "And whoever shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two."

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches His disciples the principle of going the extra mile—an act of exceeding expectations and demonstrating selfless service to others. This teaching challenges us to go above and beyond what is required, reflecting the love and generosity of Christ in our interactions with others.

By encouraging His followers and all Christians to go with those who ask us to one mile, go with them two miles, (figuratively speaking) Jesus teaches a radical response to obligations and daily tasks—one that transcends mere compliance with what is required or expected and embraces a spirit of voluntary service and generosity.

Going the extra mile in doing more that what we are asked to do, is a great testimony of the divine love of Jesus Christ. People will take notice that Jesus is the way, by the way we demonstrate and extend his love to others.

Going the extra mile is more than just fulfilling our obligations; it is about seizing opportunities to bless and serve others beyond what is expected, even when it may be inconvenient or costly. It is a manifestation of Christlike love, which seeks the welfare and well-being of others above our own comfort and convenience.

As followers of Christ, we are called to emulate His example of servanthood and sacrificial love. We are called to look for ways to go above and beyond in serving others, demonstrating kindness, compassion, and generosity in all that we do. Whether it's lending a helping hand, offering a word of encouragement, or extending forgiveness and grace, we are called to go the extra mile in showing Christ's love to those around us.

Going the extra mile not only blesses others but also bears witness to the transformative power of Christ's love. It opens doors for meaningful connections and opportunities to share the gospel, as people witness the tangible expressions of God's love through our actions.

May we, as followers of Christ, be known for our willingness to go the extra mile in serving others, reflecting His love and grace in all that we do. And may our lives be a testimony to the boundless love of our Savior, who went the extra mile for us by laying down His life for our salvation.

(175) Run The Race:

Running the Race: As followers of Jesus with Perseverance and Endurance:

Hebrews 12:1-11 (AKJV) "**Why seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;** who for the joy that was set before him

endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds. 4You have not yet resisted to blood, striving against sin. 5And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to children, My son, despise not you the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of him: 6For whom the Lord loves he chastens, and whips every son whom he receives. 7If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chastens not? 8But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons. 9Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? 10For they truly for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby."

Introduction:

The metaphor of "running the race" is a compelling illustration used throughout the Bible to convey the Christian life with Jesus even as a marathon that requires perseverance, endurance, and a steadfast focus on the ultimate prize. Rooted in various passages, this exploration delves into key biblical principles that emphasize the importance of running the race with faith, endurance, and a commitment to finishing well serving God, ministering His love to others and declaring the Good News of Salvation through Jesus Christ.

Running the race with Jesus Christ requires for us to have a sincere repentance, the removal of every hindrances, to lay aside every sin and evil way that weighs us down, while looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith. We can and will complete the race set before us by the grace of Jesus Christ and God's Holy Spirit strengthening and guiding us who put their trust and faith in Jesus.

During this time we will be disciplined, chastened, and discipled for God loves us and he desires that we take up our cross daily, die to our old worldly nature and mature into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

As Paul expressed (in Philippians 3:14) his commitment to pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. This biblical principle guides us to maintain a forward focus, persistently pursuing the spiritual prize.

As Christians, we are not to shrink back, back slide into our old carnal ways, loose faith nor be lukewarm but rather finish the race regardless if fall short and sin, a righteousness person gets up and finishes the course, our calling and God's will for each person's life.

Running with Perseverance: In James 1:12, we are promised the crown of life when we endure trials and persevere in our love for God. While not explicitly about running the race, this biblical principle encourages us to endure hardships with perseverance.

Running with Certainty:In 1 Corinthians 9:26, Paul emphasizes that he does not run aimlessly, guiding us to run with purpose and certainty in our Christian journey.The Discipline of Running:

1 Corinthians 9:27 speaks of disciplining the body and making it a slave to avoid disqualification. This biblical principle underscores the need for self-discipline in the Christian race.

Finishing the Course: In 2 Timothy 4:7-8, Paul declares that he has fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith. This foundational teaching underscores the importance of finishing our course with faithfulness and dedication to the Lord.

The Crown of Righteousness: 2 Timothy 4:8 speaks of the crown of righteousness that the Lord will award to those who have loved His appearing. While not explicitly about running the race, this biblical principle motivates us to persevere with the assurance of a heavenly reward.

Running for he Imperishable Crown: In 1 Corinthians 9:25, the imperishable crown is mentioned as the reward for those who exercise self-control in their Christian race. This biblical principle motivates us to run with self-discipline and receive an eternal reward.

Let us finish the race and receive the imperishable so that we can cast our crowns before the Lord, in love and thankfulness, to God be all the Glory

Conclusion:

As we learn various biblical principles about running the race regarding persevering in serving Jesus Christ and others, further enriches the understanding of the Christian's calling as a race not of speed but of steadfastness and commitment that encompasses various aspects of faith, character, and service. Grounded in these principles, we are given God's strength and understanding to run the Lord's race, not by being slothful, inactive but rather with endurance, perseverance, and a commitment to living out the teachings of Christ in every aspect of our lives. As we press on toward the heavenly prize, we are encouraged to run with faith, unity, humility, and a heart aligned with God's purposes. We are called to press on, laying aside hindrances and sin, and finishing well for the glory of God.

(176) Steadfastness:

Steadfastness is the quality of unwavering spiritual stability that we, as Christians, choose to have by remaining firm in our beliefs and convictions. It involves sincerely following Jesus by faith, spirit, and truth, in alignment with the Word of God, and the direction of God's Holy Spirit. This steadfastness reflects our commitment to living according to God**'**s desires and purposes for our lives, ensuring that we remain true to His guidance in every aspect that God purposed our lives to become. Through this commitment, God sees our genuine faith in Him and recognizes that we are not unbelieving, wavering, double-minded, uncommitted, or lukewarm, but instead, we truly love and trust Him above all else.

Every Christian must resolve in their mind and heart to be immovable away from the life-giving truth and principles of Jesus Christ, We need to be fixed on doing and

fulfilling God's will, and obeying His commandments without wavering, even in the midst of trials, opposition, ridicule, temptation and even after failure.

However if and when a Christian does fail and sin it is imperative that they still steadfastly repent and continue to follow Jesus.

What convinces us and persuades us to remain firm in living out the truth of Jesus Christ is for several reasons, First, God desires that we love Him and to be fruitful in ministering to others with the same love Jesus gave to us. Good spiritual fruit comes from being steadfast to Jesus Christ in all areas of our life. Furthermore, by remaining firm in our faith, we have the assurance of our salvation, the hope of eternal life in Heaven, and the promise of receiving countless blessings from God. This steadfastness also allows us to experience daily the love, goodness, mercy, and blessings that God continually bestows upon our lives.

Lamentations 3:22-23 (AKJV) It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. (His steadfast love never ceases) 23They are new every morning: great is your faithfulness."

Our spiritual life and growth depends upon being steadfast in God's love and abiding in Jesus.

The spiritual welfare and the deliverance from evil of our lives depend upon us remaining steadfast in Jesus Christ under His protection, grace and power. As Christians we need to remain steadfast resisting temptations and satan so that we can overcome recommitting and practicing sin and rather abide in the holiness and love of Jesus Christ .

Jesus Christ is the Rock of our salvation and if we stand upon Him and His truth we will not be moved in the midst of any storm. Jesus remained steadfast for us even to death on the cross, so that we would be free from all sin and receive eternal life. As Jesus said, " Father, Not My will but Thy will be done. "

As we are engaged in spiritual warfare - " steadfast " means, in a military sense of the word, ' one who does not retreat or give in to the enemy.' Likewise when tempted with evil we should not give in to the enemy.

God's Holy Spirit helps us, and strengthens us to remain steadfast in Jesus, through his living Word of Truth, so that we are not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine and receive the promises of God.

Anchor your life to the rock of Jesus Christ, so that you will fulfill all that God has called you to achieve, and so you will never drift away from your eternal destination and home in the Kingdom of God.

KEY SCRIPTURES

1 Corinthians 15:57,58 (AKJV) But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58Therefore, my beloved brothers, be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

2 Peter 3:17,18 (AKJV) You therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before, **beware lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.** 18But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Hebrews 3:14 (AKJV) For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end;

Isaiah 26:3 - (AKJV) You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed (steadfast) on you: because he trusts in you

Psalm 51:10 -(AKJV) Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right (steadfast) spirit within me. .

Psalm 119:5 -(AKJV) O that my ways were directed (steadfast) to keep your statutes!

Hebrews 4:14- (AKJV)Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

1 Peter 5:9- Whom resist (satan) steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brothers that are in the world

Lamentations 3:22-23 (AKJV) It is of the LORD**'**s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. (His steadfast love never ceases) 23They are new every morning: great is your faithfulness.

Steadfastness is a vital character trait for Christians to develop. God's word urging us to maintain an unwavering commitment to His will and promises.

Throughout Scripture, we see steadfastness portrayed as essential for enduring trials, resisting temptation, and staying faithful in our spiritual walk. It is a quality that enables us to persevere through challenges and remain loyal to our faith.

In the Old Testament, the story of Job resonates deeply with us. Job faced immense suffering and loss, yet he remained faithful to God. His unwavering commitment during such severe trials illustrates for us what true steadfastness looks like. It shows that steadfastness involves trusting in God**'**s goodness and sovereignty, even when we may not understand the reasons for our difficulties. Job**'**s story encourages us to hold onto our faith and trust that God is with us through every trial.

In the New Testament, we find further encouragement about steadfastness in James 1:12: "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him." This verse reassures us that remaining steadfast through our trials is not only a test of endurance but also a demonstration of our love for God. It promises us a divine reward for our faithfulness, reminding us that steadfastness is integral to receiving God**'**s blessings and living out His promises.

The Apostle Paul**'**s letters are rich with encouragement about steadfastness. In 1 Corinthians 15:58, Paul urges us to be "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." This call to steadfastness is not just about enduring personal struggles but also about being unwavering in our commitment to God**'**s work and mission. Paul**'**s

message challenges us to integrate our personal faithfulness with active engagement in spreading the Gospel and serving others.

Moreover, the attribute of steadfastness in the Bible is deeply connected to the character of God Himself. Lamentations 3:22-23 reassures us that "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." Knowing that God's love and faithfulness are constant and unchanging provides us with a solid foundation for our own steadfastness. His unending faithfulness motivates us to mirror His consistency in our own lives.

Hebrews 10:23 encourages believers to hold fast to the confession of their hope without wavering. Steadfastness in faith involves anchoring one's beliefs in the unchanging truth of God's Word, regardless of external circumstances. A steadfast faith withstands doubt and remains secure in the promises of God.

Steadfastness in Love:

1 Corinthians 16:14 advises believers to do everything in love. Steadfastness in love involves expressing genuine and enduring love for God and others. This steadfast love is characterized by patience, kindness, and forgiveness, reflecting the unwavering love of Christ.

In summary, Steadfastness, a character trait that we as Christians should develop in every aspect of life —Such as following Jesus Christ, doing the will of God, in love, in forgiveness, discipleship, suffering, contentment, fasting, prayer, resisting temptation, parenting, integrity, financial stewardship, building godly habits, and pursuing holiness—steadfastness remains a testament to one's commitment and trust in the Lord.

Steadfastness is a core aspect of our Christian walk. It involves enduring trials, remaining committed to God's work, and reflecting His unwavering love. The Bible provides us with powerful examples and promises that encourage us to stay steadfast, knowing that our perseverance is both a testimony of our faith and a path to experiencing God's abundant blessings.

(177) Weakness And Failures:

Introduction: Embracing Weakness and Failure in the Christian Life

In tour walk of faith, weakness and failure are inevitable aspects of the human experience. None of us are immune to moments of struggle, disappointment, or even moral failure. Yet, the Bible provides a radically different perspective on weakness and failure, encouraging us not to hide from them but to face them with faith and hope. Weakness, in particular, is often seen as a negative state, something to be avoided or overcome. However, the Bible teaches that God's power is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9), and that through failure, we can learn, grow, and experience God's grace in profound ways. This commentary explores the biblical perspective on weakness and failure, how God uses these experiences to shape us, and the transformative power of His grace in our lives.

1. The Biblical View of Weakness

1.1 The Reality of Human Weakness The Bible does not shy away from the reality of human weakness. From the fall of Adam and Eve to the struggles of God's chosen people, weakness is an inherent part of the human condition. Scripture acknowledges that humanity, in its natural state, is frail, fraught with limitations, and prone to failure. These weaknesses are not to be ignored, but they are opportunities for God's strength to be revealed.

Romans 5:6 (AKJV): *"And hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost (Spirit) which is given to us."* This verse speaks to our helplessness in sin—our spiritual weakness. We were incapable of saving ourselves, and in our weakness, Christ demonstrated His love by dying for us. This highlights a key biblical truth: in our weakest moments, God's strength is most evident.

2 Corinthians 4:7 (AKJV): *"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."* Paul uses the metaphor of "earthen vessels" to describe our fragile human nature. Though we are weak and frail, God**'**s power is placed within us to shine through our imperfections. Our weakness becomes a platform for His greatness to be displayed.

2. Weakness as an Opportunity for God's Power

2.1 God's Strength Perfected in Weakness In 2 Corinthians 12:9, Paul shares a profound insight he received from God about weakness: **2 Corinthians 12:9 (AKJV):** *"And he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me.."* Paul, who had experienced tremendous hardship, came to understand that his weaknesses were not obstacles to his effectiveness in ministry but opportunities for God's power to be more fully displayed. It is in moments of weakness that God's grace is often most tangible and His strength most evident. This divine paradox challenges the world's view, which often sees weakness as something to be ashamed of or avoided.

Isaiah 40:29 (AKJV): *"He gives power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increases strength."* God promises to empower those who are weak and weary. His strength is not dependent on human effort or ability but is freely given to those who are humble enough to admit their need.

2.2 The Role of Weakness in Spiritual Growth Weakness is also an essential part of the Christian process of sanctification. As believers, we are not meant to rely on our own strength, but to lean on God**'**s strength. Weakness becomes a means by which we are shaped and molded into the likeness of Christ.

James 1:2-4 (AKJV): *"My brothers, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; 3Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. 4But let patience have her*

perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.." James speaks of trials, which often expose our weaknesses, as opportunities for spiritual growth. Through the trials and testing of our faith, we become more mature and complete in Christ. In our weakness, we learn dependence on God, which leads to spiritual strength.

3. The Reality of Failure and Redemption

3.1 The Experience of Failure in the Scriptures Failure is a common theme in the Bible. Many of God's servants—people like Moses, David, Peter, and even Paul—experienced moments of failure. These failures were not the end of their journeys, but rather pivotal moments that revealed God's mercy and led to personal transformation.

- **Moses' Failure:** Moses, who had a strong sense of calling, failed when he killed an Egyptian (Exodus 2:11-12). He fled into the wilderness, feeling like a failure. However, God met him in his failure and called him to lead Israel out of Egypt, using his previous failure to bring about great redemption.

- **David's Failure:** King David's moral failure with Bathsheba and the subsequent murder of her husband (2 Samuel 11) was a grievous sin. Yet, David's repentance (Psalm 51) led to God's forgiveness and the continuation of God's covenant promise. God used David, despite his failure, to fulfill His purposes for Israel.

- **Peter's Denial:** Peter, one of Jesus' closest disciples, failed miserably when he denied Christ three times (Luke 22:61-62). But after his failure, Jesus restored him (John 21:15-17) and empowered him to lead the early church.

Romans 8:28 (AKJV): *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. "* This verse assures us that even our failures can be redeemed by God. While we may fall short of His glory, God works through our failures to accomplish His ultimate purpose in our lives.

3.2 Failure as an Opportunity for God's Mercy Failure, in the Christian life, is not a final judgment on our worth. Instead, it serves as an opportunity to experience the depth of God's mercy. Jesus, in His great love, reaches out to us in our failure, offering forgiveness and restoration.

1 John 1:9 (AKJV): *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* Failure does not sever our relationship with God. Instead, it invites us to return to Him in repentance, where we find forgiveness and cleansing. God's mercy is new every morning, and His grace covers all our failures.

4. Responding to Weakness and Failure in Faith

4.1 Embracing Weakness with Humility Rather than resisting or being ashamed of our weaknesses, the Bible calls us to embrace them with humility. When we acknowledge our limitations, we open the door for God's strength to be made perfect in us.

Philippians 4:12-13 (AKJV): *"I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."* Paul**'**s words in Philippians speak to the strength that comes through Christ, whether in times of abundance or in moments of weakness. Humility in weakness allows us to rely on God's power and sufficiency.

4.2 Learning from Failure The Bible encourages believers to learn from failure and not be defined by it. Failure is not the end of the story; it can be a stepping stone to greater maturity and a deeper relationship with God.

Proverbs 24:16 (AKJV): *"For a just man falls seven times, and rises up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief."* This verse speaks to the resilience of the righteous. Though we may fail, it is not our failure that defines us, but our willingness to rise again in faith, trusting in God**'**s grace to restore us.

4.3 Trusting in God's Faithfulness In moments of failure, the believer is called to trust in God**'**s faithfulness. Failure does not define our value in Christ, nor does it disqualify us from His purposes. God is faithful to redeem and restore us, using our weaknesses and failures to bring about His will.

2 Timothy 2:13 (AKJV): *"If we believe not, yet he stays faithful: he cannot deny himself.."* Even in our moments of failure and doubt, God remains faithful. He does not abandon us in our weakness; He walks with us through it, leading us to greater dependence on Him.

Conclusion: The Power of God's Grace in Weakness and Failure

Weakness and failure are not the end of the Christian journey but the beginning of deeper dependence on God and greater transformation. God**'**s power is most evident in our weakness, and His grace is sufficient to meet us in our failures. As we acknowledge our frailty and turn to Him in humility, we experience the depth of His mercy and the strength that only He can provide. May we embrace our weakness and failures, knowing that through them, God's grace is magnified, and His power is perfected in our lives.

WEAKNESS / FAILURES - Continued…

As we grow in Christ, God will begin to reveal our weaknesses. We may even fall short and fail many times in various areas of our walk with God.

However we should not be discouraged or give up because God will be faithful, to complete the work that He first began in our lives.

At times we may feel inadequate or to weak to complete the tasks and purpose that God has called us to become and do. However we need to remember that we have the Creator of the universe abiding in us and we can do all things in Christ Jesus who strengthens us. It is God doing the work not us, therefore when we are weak we are strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9,10)

We should never allow ourselves to fall into disbelief but rather to put our trust in God. God is able and will give us spiritual strength and stability, to overcome.

Nor should we ever justify sin, because of weakness but rather purpose to repent and overcome. God’s grace is sufficient for us and His power and purpose is made perfect in our weakness.

God has chosen us who are foolish and weak in the world to confound the wise, so that He gets the glory, because it's His Wisdom, not ours!

As we continue to empty ourselves of trusting only in our own human strengths, God will then fill our lives with His perfect strength which is able to bring true success in all things.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Zechariah 4:6 (AKJV)“ Then he answered and spoke to me, saying, This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the LORD of hosts. "

Proverbs 24:16 " A righteous mans falls seven times, and rises again.”

2 Corinthians 12:9,**10 (AKJV)** " And he (Jesus) said to me, My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me. 10Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ**’**s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

- **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**: Paul discusses God's grace being sufficient in weakness, emphasizing that His power is made perfect in weakness, leading to boasting in weaknesses.
- **Psalm 34:18**: Assures that the Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit, recognizing God's presence in times of emotional weakness.
- **Philippians 4:13**: Declares the ability to do all things through Christ who strengthens, indicating reliance on Christ's strength in times of personal weakness.
- **Matthew 26:41**: Jesus advises His disciples to watch and pray, acknowledging the spirit's willingness but the flesh's weakness, recognizing human frailty.
- **Romans 8:26**: Discusses the Spirit helping in weakness and interceding for believers, highlighting the role of the Holy Spirit in times of spiritual weakness.
- **Hebrews 4:15-16**: Describes Jesus as a high priest who sympathizes with weaknesses, encouraging believers to approach the throne of grace with confidence in times of need.
- **Psalm 73:26**: Affirms that God is the strength of the heart and portion forever, acknowledging human weakness and dependency on God.

- **1 Corinthians 1:27-29**: Stresses that God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, emphasizing the divine purpose in using human weakness for His glory.
- **Romans 7:18-19**: Paul reflects on the struggle with doing what he wants to do, acknowledging human weakness and the ongoing battle with sin.
- **Psalm 6:2-4**: David pleads for mercy in times of physical and emotional weakness, expressing the human experience of frailty.
- **Romans 15:1**: Encourages the strong to bear with the failings of the weak, emphasizing the need for mutual support and understanding within the Christian community.
- **Proverbs 24:16**: States that the righteous falls seven times and rises again, illustrating the idea of persistence and resilience in the face of personal failures.
- **Luke 22:32**: Jesus tells Peter that he will deny Him three times, acknowledging Peter's weakness, yet expressing confidence in his eventual restoration.
- **Psalm 51:17**: Recognizes a broken and contrite heart as acceptable to God, highlighting the spiritual value in acknowledging personal weaknesses and failures.
- **Galatians 6:1**: Encourages restoring a brother caught in transgression with a spirit of gentleness, recognizing the reality of human frailty and the need for restoration.
- **James 5:16**: Advises confessing sins to one another and praying for each other, emphasizing the healing power of acknowledging weaknesses and seeking support.
- **2 Corinthians 4:7**: Describes believers as having a treasure in jars of clay, illustrating the contrast between the eternal power of God and the human weakness of the vessel.
- **Psalm 40:12**: David acknowledges his innumerable evils and sins, expressing the reality of personal failures and the need for God's mercy.
- **1 Peter 5:10**: Encourages us that after we have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish us, indicating God's redemptive work in times of weakness.
- **Psalm 103:14**: Recognizes that God knows our frame and remembers that we are dust, acknowledging the frailty and inherent weakness of humanity.
- **Isaiah 40:29**: Declares that God gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless, emphasizing divine empowerment in times of physical and spiritual weakness.
- **1 Corinthians 10:12**: Warns those who think they stand to be cautious, acknowledging the potential for spiritual stumbling and the need for humility in recognizing personal weaknesses.

- **Psalm 147:3**: Describes God as the healer of the brokenhearted and binder of wounds, offering comfort and restoration in times of emotional weakness and brokenness.
- **Romans 3:23**: Affirms that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, establishing the universality of human weakness and the need for redemption.
- **Jeremiah 17:9**: Declares that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick, pointing to the innate spiritual weakness and fallen nature of humanity.
- **Psalm 22:24**: Praises God for not despising the afflicted or abhorring the afflicted's affliction, expressing God's compassion in times of weakness.
- **2 Corinthians 4:16**: Highlights our inner renewal despite the outer nature wasting away, illustrating the contrast between temporal physical weakness and eternal spiritual renewal.
- **Romans 7:24-25**: Paul expresses a wretchedness and the need for deliverance from the body of death, recognizing the struggle with sin and the weakness of human nature.
- **Psalm 73:26**: Affirms that God is the strength of the heart and portion forever, acknowledging dependence on God's strength in times of personal weakness.
- **Hebrews 4:15-16**: Describes Jesus as a high priest who sympathizes with human weaknesses, encouraging us to approach the throne of grace in times of need.
- **2 Samuel 24:14**: David acknowledges the difficulty of falling into the hands of the Lord but expresses a preference for God's mercy over human punishment, revealing an awareness of human frailty.
- **Isaiah 41:10**: God promises to strengthen and help, upholding with His righteous right hand, offering divine support in times of weakness and fear.
- **Psalm 34:6**: David asserts that the Lord hears the cry of the afflicted, recognizing God's attentiveness to those experiencing weakness and distress.
- **2 Timothy 4:17**: Paul reflects on the Lord standing by him and strengthening him, illustrating God's presence and empowerment during times of personal weakness.
- **Isaiah 42:3**: Prophecies about the Messiah not breaking a bruised reed or quenching a faintly burning wick, portraying God's tenderness and compassion toward those in spiritual weakness.
- **Lamentations 3:22-23**: Affirms the steadfast love and mercies of the Lord that never cease, emphasizing God's faithfulness even in the face of human failures.
- **Psalm 40:2**: Describes God lifting the psalmist out of the pit and setting feet upon a rock, highlighting divine rescue and stability in times of weakness.
- **1 John 1:9**: Assures us that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us, providing a pathway to restoration from moral weakness.

These verses collectively reveal the multifaceted nature of weakness and failures, acknowledging both the physical and spiritual dimensions of human frailty. They also highlight the redemptive and compassionate nature of God, who offers strength, forgiveness, and restoration in the face of weakness.

God’s word and perspective on weakness and failure acknowledges our human limitations and imperfections, but it also delivers a powerful message of hope and redemption. When we encounter our own weaknesses, we are invited to lean into God's strength, seek His forgiveness, and embrace the chance for personal growth and transformation. Even though we may struggle and stumble, God uses these moments to shape and refine us, turning our vulnerabilities into some of our greatest strengths through the transformative work of the Holy Spirit. This process not only highlights God's boundless mercy but also reveals the incredible potential for a renewed and fortified faith.

(178) Endurance / Perseverence:

1 Corinthians 13:7,8 Love bears all things, hopes all things, **endures all things**, love never fails.

Perseverance Through Daily Trials

James 1:2-4 AKJV " My brothers, count it all joy when you fall into divers (many) temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience (Perseverance). But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

Trials and difficulties are an inevitable part of life, but as disciples of Jesus, we are called to respond to them with faith and perseverance. James 1:2-4 encourages us to consider it pure joy when we face various trials, knowing that they produce perseverance in our lives.

Perseverance is the quality of steadfastness and endurance in the face of adversity. It is cultivated through the testing of our faith and the trials we encounter along the journey of life. Instead of viewing trials as obstacles to be avoided, we can see them as opportunities for growth and spiritual maturity.

Just as a muscle grows stronger through resistance and exercise, our faith is strengthened through the challenges we face. Each trial we endure builds endurance and fortitude, equipping us to face future difficulties with confidence and trust in God's faithfulness.

As we persevere through daily trials, we are reminded of our dependence on God and His sufficiency to sustain us. We are encouraged to fix our eyes on Jesus, who endured the cross for the joy set before Him (Hebrews 12:2). Like Him, we can press on in faith, knowing that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us (Romans 8:18).

May we embrace the trials we face with joy, knowing that God is at work in our lives, producing perseverance and maturity. May we trust in His promises and lean on His strength to carry us through every trial and difficulty we encounter.

Anyone going through this life needs endurance. Perseverance is the ability or state of persisting in doing the will of God. It is the continued pursuit for that which is good regardless of the obstacles, trials or time involved. We gain perseverance and endurance by the power and encouragement of God's Holy Spirit as we trust in God an His Word, as we go through various trials. Jesus, will be the Author and Perfecter of our faith.(Hebrews 12:1-3)

The very circumstances that try to hinder our lives are the very things that God uses sometimes to strengthen our lives to be able to endure other obstacles and to overcome.

Endurance and perseverance are vital character traits in the Bible, emphasizing the importance of remaining steadfast in faith, especially during challenging times. The Scriptures consistently encourage believers to develop resilience, highlighting that trials can lead to spiritual growth and maturity. For instance, the Apostle Paul speaks about the necessity of perseverance in his letters, emphasizing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance fosters character. This progression illustrates that enduring hardships is not merely about surviving but about cultivating a deeper faith that can withstand life's storms, trials and tribulations.

The Old Testament offers numerous examples of individuals who exemplified endurance and perseverance. Job is a profound figure who, despite facing unimaginable loss and suffering, remained faithful to God. His story demonstrates the struggle of maintaining faith in the face of adversity, showing that perseverance can lead to greater understanding and eventual restoration. Additionally, the Israelites' journey through the wilderness serves as a reminder of the importance of trusting God's promises, even when the path seems long and arduous. Their experiences teach that faith requires patience and a willingness to press on, despite the challenges.

In the New Testament, James encourages followers of Jesus Christ to consider trials as opportunities for growth. This perspective shifts the focus from the pain of the moment to the potential for developing a robust faith. The call to rejoice in trials might seem counterintuitive, yet it reflects the biblical principle that endurance leads to a more profound sense of wholeness and completeness in one's faith journey. The early Christians faced persecution and hardship, yet their perseverance became a powerful testimony to the strength found in their commitment to Christ.

Galatians 6:9 encourages believers to "not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up." Perseverance involves maintaining a commitment to living in accordance with God's principles, even when faced with challenges and opposition.Patient Waiting:

James 5:7-8 highlights the importance of patient waiting: "Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient.

Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." Endurance involves patiently waiting for God's timing and promises to be fulfilled.

Counting Trials as Joy: James 1:2-4 challenges believers to "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." Perseverance is developed through the refining process of trials.

The Apostle Paul encourages believers to "pray without ceasing" in 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Perseverance is demonstrated in a continual and unwavering commitment to seeking God in prayer, regardless of circumstances.

The Apostle Paul encourages believers to "hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful" in Hebrews 10:23. Perseverance involves holding firm to the truth of the gospel and remaining steadfast in faith.

Hebrews 12:1-3 AKJV “1Why seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds. 4You have not yet resisted to blood, striving against sin.

Moreover, the metaphor of running a race is frequently used to illustrate the Christian walk. The comparison of a race emphasizes not only the need for endurance but also the importance of focusing on the ultimate prize, salvation, our resurrection, heaven, and eternal life. Believers are called to fix their eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of their faith, who exemplified perfect perseverance. This encourages us to remain committed to our spiritual walk, regardless of the obstacles we may encounter. Ultimately, the biblical narrative assures that endurance and perseverance are not just about enduring trials but are integral to becoming who God intends each believer to be.

ENDURANCE / PERSEVERANCE Continued…

Key Scriptures

Romans 5:1-5 (AKJV) Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works patience; 4And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5And hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us

Matthew 24:13 (AKJV) But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.

Romans 2:6,7 (AKJV) Who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7To them who by patient continuance (perseverance) in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life:

James 1:2-4 (AKJV) My brothers, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; 3Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. (endurance) 4But let patience (endurance)have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

James 1:12 (AKJV) Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him.

Proverbs 24:16 (AKJV) For a just man falls seven times, and rises up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.

Hebrews 12:1-3 AKJV "1Why seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds. 4You have not yet resisted to blood, striving against sin.

Hebrews 11:24-,26 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; **choosing rather to endure** ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ as greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

Luke 8:15-(AKJV) But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.(**perseverance**.)

Romans 2:7-(AKJV) To them who by patient continuance (perseverance) in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life:

Biblical Examples Of Endurance and Perseverance:

1. **Jesus:** Hebrews 12:2 encourages believers to look to Jesus, who endured the cross, despising its shame, for the joy set before Him. His willingness to endure the pain and humiliation of crucifixion highlights His unwavering commitment to God**'**s plan for our salvation. Jesus exemplified that fulfilling God**'**s will and bearing good spiritual fruit through genuine love often involves enduring and persevering through significant trials and suffering.
2. **Job:** Job endured immense suffering, including the loss of his children, wealth, and health. Despite his profound grief and confusion, he remained faithful to God, demonstrating unwavering perseverance in the face of intense trials.

- **Job 1-2** describes Job's initial trials and suffering, showcasing his unwavering faith despite losing everything.
- **Job 42:10-17** details Job**'**s restoration after enduring his trials.

3. **Joseph**: Joseph faced betrayal by his brothers, false accusations, and imprisonment. Throughout these hardships, he maintained his integrity and trust in God. His perseverance ultimately led to his rise to power in Egypt, where he was able to save many from famine.

- Genesis 37 recounts Joseph**'**s betrayal by his brothers and his initial struggles.

- Genesis 39-41 highlights his perseverance through slavery and imprisonment, culminating in his rise to power in Egypt.

4. **Moses**: Moses endured many challenges, including the reluctance of the Israelites to follow him, their frequent complaints, and the burden of leading a rebellious people through the wilderness for forty years. His perseverance and faith in God's promises allowed him to guide the Israelites toward the Promised Land.

- Exodus 3-4 describes God's calling of Moses and his initial reluctance.
- Exodus 32:9-14 shows Moses interceding for the Israelites after their rebellion, reflecting his perseverance in leadership.

5. **David**: King David faced numerous adversities, including persecution from King Saul and personal tragedies. Throughout his life, he demonstrated endurance by continually seeking God's guidance and strength, ultimately becoming a man after God's own heart.

- 1 Samuel 16-31 chronicles David's anointing and the subsequent challenges he faced while fleeing from Saul.
- 2 Samuel 11-12 recounts personal trials, including family strife and loss, demonstrating his endurance

6. **Esther**: Esther showed remarkable courage and perseverance when she risked her life to advocate for her people. Despite the dangers, she remained steadfast in her mission, demonstrating faith and determination in the face of potential death.

- Esther 4 reveals Esther's courage and resolve to approach the king for her people, despite the risks involved.
- Esther 7-9 shows her successful perseverance in saving the Jews from destruction.

7. **Paul**: The Apostle Paul faced multiple hardships, including imprisonment, beatings, shipwrecks, and constant opposition. Despite these challenges, he persevered in his mission to spread the Gospel and encouraged others to remain steadfast in their faith.

- 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 lists the numerous hardships Paul endured for the sake of the Gospel.
- Philippians 3:12-14 illustrates his determination to press on toward his heavenly calling despite challenges.

8. **Daniel**: Daniel endured exile in Babylon and faced persecution for his faith, including being thrown into a den of lions. His unwavering commitment to God and his refusal to compromise his beliefs exemplify his perseverance.

- Daniel 1 describes Daniel's commitment to God's dietary laws in exile, demonstrating his perseverance.
- Daniel 6 recounts his steadfastness in faith that led to being thrown into the lions' den, yet he remained unyielding.

9. **The Early Christians**: The early church faced persecution and hardship for their faith. Many believers endured suffering, imprisonment, and martyrdom, demonstrating incredible endurance as they spread the message of Christ.

- Acts 5:40-42 describes the apostles being beaten and then rejoicing for suffering for Christ's name, showing their perseverance.
- Hebrews 11:36-38 highlights the sufferings endured by many early believers, showcasing their faith amidst persecution.

(179) Fortitude - Be Strong And Of Good Courage:

Introduction: The Call to Fortitude in the Christian Life

Fortitude, or courage, is an essential virtue for the believer, especially in a world filled with challenges, opposition, and suffering. The Scriptures repeatedly encourage God's people to be strong and courageous, not in their own strength, but in the power of God. The call to be "strong and of good courage" is not simply an exhortation to human bravery or resolve, but a deep trust in God's promises, His presence, and His ultimate victory over all adversities. This commentary explores the biblical understanding of fortitude, how believers are called to cultivate courage in the face of trials, and the ways in which God's strength and presence empower His people to stand firm and advance His kingdom.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Fortitude

1.1 The Command to Be Strong and Courageous In Scripture, the command to be strong and courageous is often given in moments of transition or difficulty, where the people of God are called to step out in faith. This command is not just about physical strength or emotional resolve; it is about trusting in God's faithfulness and power to sustain His people in every circumstance.

Joshua 1:6-9 (AKJV): *"Be strong and of a good courage: for to this people shall you divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7Only be you strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded you: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success. 9Have not I commanded you? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be you dismayed: for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."*

In this passage, God commands Joshua to be strong and courageous as he leads Israel into the Promised Land. The emphasis is not on Joshua's own strength, but on the certainty of God's presence ("for the LORD thy God is with thee") and the importance of adhering to God's Word as a source of guidance and strength. Courage is directly tied to obedience to God's law and trust in His presence.

Deuteronomy 31:6 (AKJV): *"Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD your God, he it is that does go with you; he will not fail you, nor forsake you."*

God**'**s command to be strong and courageous is always accompanied by the assurance of His presence. True fortitude is not based on personal ability but on the unshakeable foundation of God's promises.

2. Fortitude Rooted in God's Presence and Promises

2.1 Courage from God's Presence One of the most comforting aspects of the biblical command to be courageous is the promise that God will never leave His people. Courage in the Christian life is not about acting independently of God, but about stepping forward in faith because God is with us. His presence transforms fear into trust, and His power enables us to overcome obstacles.

Isaiah 41:10 (AKJV): *"Fear you not; for I am with you: be not dismayed; for I am your God: I will strengthen you; yes, I will help you; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness. 11Behold, all they that were incensed against you shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with you shall perish*

In this powerful promise, God assures His people that He will provide strength, help, and upholding in the face of fear and difficulty. The foundation of true courage is knowing that the Almighty God stands beside us and empowers us.

Matthew 28:20 (AKJV): *"Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and, see, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.."*

Jesus' final words to His disciples offer the same assurance of His abiding presence. As we face trials, we do so with the confidence that God is with us, enabling us to endure and persevere.

Hebrews 13:5-6 (AKJV): *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for he has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you. 6So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me."*

2.2 Courage from God's Promises Fortitude is also sustained by God**'**s promises—His Word that never fails. When we are grounded in His truth, we are able to face trials with confidence, knowing that God will fulfill every promise He has made. His promises are the anchor for our courage.

Romans 8:31-32 (AKJV): *"31What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"*

Paul reminds believers that if God has already given His Son for our salvation, there is nothing He will withhold from us. With such a promise, we are encouraged to press forward in faith, no matter the challenges before us.

3. The Role of Fortitude in Facing Adversity

3.1 Courage in the Midst of Trials Fortitude is especially important in times of trial and suffering. The Bible does not promise that life will be free of difficulty, but it does assure believers that God will give them the strength to endure. Courage in the Christian life is not the absence of fear, but the determination to move forward in faith despite it.

Psalm 27:1 (AKJV): *"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? "*

David declares his courage in the face of threats, not because of his own might, but because of the strength he finds in God. The presence of fear is not the issue—it's where we place our trust and how we respond to fear.

2 Timothy 1:7 (AKJV): *"For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."*

This verse reminds believers that the fear we experience is not from God. Instead, He gives us a spirit of power (fortitude), love, and a sound mind to face challenges with confidence. Courage is not a natural human trait, but a supernatural gift given by the Holy Spirit.

4. The Example of Christ: Courage in Obedience

4.1 Jesus as the Model of Courage The ultimate example of fortitude is Jesus Christ, who faced the greatest adversity in the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross. His courage was not a display of physical strength but an unwavering commitment to the will of the Father, even in the face of intense suffering.

Luke 22:42 (AKJV): *"Saying, Father, if you be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but yours, be done. 43And there appeared an angel to him from heaven, strengthening him"*

Jesus' willingness to submit to the Father**'**s will, despite the excruciating trial ahead, is the epitome of courage. His example encourages believers to take courage in following God's will, even when it involves hardship.

Hebrews 12:2 (AKJV): *"Saying, Father, if you be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but yours, be done. 43And there appeared an angel to him from heaven, strengthening him"*

Christ's endurance through the cross teaches us that courage involves not just facing difficulty but enduring it for the greater purpose of God's glory and the salvation of His people. The joy set before Him—reconciliation with humanity and the victory over sin—gave Him the strength to endure.

5. Fortitude in the Life of the Believer

5.1 Encouraging One Another in Courage Fortitude is not just an individual trait but something that is cultivated in community. The body of Christ is called to encourage and strengthen one another, especially in times of hardship. The church should be a place where believers lift each other up, helping one another find strength and courage in the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (AKJV): *"Why comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also you do."*

The church is a community of believers who are meant to build each other up in faith and courage. We are called to support one another in times of weakness and fear, reminding each other of God**'**s promises and His faithfulness.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (AKJV): *"And let us consider one another to provoke to love and to good works: 25Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching."*

Conclusion: Living in Courage and Strength

The call to "be strong and of good courage" is not a call to human bravado, but to a deep, abiding trust in God. Courage comes from knowing that God is with us, that His promises are true, and that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. Whether we face personal trials, persecution, or the challenges of life, God calls His people to stand firm in faith, holding fast to the hope we have in Christ. As we look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, we find the ultimate example of courage—one that endures suffering for the joy set before Him. May we, too, walk in that same courage, relying on God's strength and encouraging one another along the way.

FORTITUDE, BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE - Continued…

Developing and Having Fortitude In Our Walk Of Faith, Amiss Trials and Tribulations

Scripture:

Joshua 1:9 (AKJV) - "Have not I commanded you? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be you dismayed: for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Fortitude, often described as courage in the face of adversity, is an essential quality for every believer. In the journey of faith, we encounter challenges, trials, and obstacles that require strength and resilience. Let's explore how we can cultivate fortitude in our faith.

Today in our walk of faith, fortitude stands as a cornerstone, an unwavering resolve amidst the tempests of trials and tribulations. Let us willfully obey God’s command to be strong and of good courage. It’s not merely about enduring hardship but about embracing it with a spirit unyielding, rooted deeply in the belief that every challenge is an opportunity for growth and transformation. Moreover with the strength and courage that God’s Holy Spirit gives us. Developing fortitude in our walk of faith requires a profound commitment to trust in a God when doing His will and purpose, to anchor ourselves in the certainty that even in the darkest of moments, there lies a glimmer of divine grace, in Jesus Christ, guiding our steps. It's a quality forged in the fires of adversity, strengthened through perseverance, and refined by the trials that test the very essence of our faith. In moments of despair, when the weight of the world seems unbearable, it is fortitude that lifts our spirits, infusing us with the courage to press onward, knowing that our faith in Jesus and the Holy Spirit is the compass guiding us through the wilderness of uncertainty. Through prayer, reflection, and unwavering trust in the wisdom of our divine Lord Jesus Christ, we cultivate the resilience needed to face each challenge with grace and dignity. In the face of adversity, let us stand firm in our faith, drawing strength from the wellspring of His fortitude that flows within us, knowing that through our steadfastness, we are not only transformed but also become beacons of hope and inspiration to others on their own walk of faith with Jesus.

- **Trust in God's Promises:** Ground your confidence in the promises of God's Word. Trust that He is faithful to His promises and will never leave nor forsake you, no matter what you face (Hebrews 13:5-6).
- **Prayer and Dependence:** Seek God's strength through prayer and dependence on Him. Draw near to Him in times of trouble, knowing that He is your refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1).
- **Courageous Obedience:** Be willing to obey God's commands and follow His leading, even when it requires courage and boldness. Trust that obedience to God's will is the surest path to His blessing and favor (Joshua 1:7-8).
- **Perseverance in Trials:** Endure hardships with perseverance and patience, knowing that they produce character and strengthen your faith (James 1:2-4). Trust that God uses trials to refine and shape you into the person He wants you to be.
- **Facing Fear with Faith:** Confront your fears with faith in God's power and presence. Remember that God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7).

- **Learning from Adversity:** Embrace challenges and setbacks as opportunities for growth and learning. Allow them to build resilience and fortitude in your character, trusting that God works all things together for good for those who love Him (Romans 8:28).
- **Encouragement from Scripture:** Draw strength and encouragement from the stories of faith and perseverance recorded in Scripture. Meditate on the examples of faithful men and women who endured trials with fortitude, knowing that the same God who sustained them will sustain you (Hebrews 12:1-2).
- **Community Support:** Surround yourself with a community of believers who can provide encouragement, support, and accountability in your journey of faith. Lean on one another for strength and encouragement, bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).
- **Empowerment by the Holy Spirit:** Rely on the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit to strengthen you and give you boldness in times of weakness. Trust that the Spirit intercedes for you with groanings too deep for words, enabling you to stand firm in faith (Romans 8:26-27).
- **Embracing God's Strength:** Acknowledge your own limitations and weaknesses, but also recognize that God's strength is made perfect in your weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). Surrender to His strength and power, allowing Him to work through you for His glory.
- **Maintaining Hope:** Hold fast to the hope that is found in Christ, knowing that He has overcome the world (John 16:33). Trust that God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power at work within us (Ephesians 3:20).
- **Pressing Forward in Faith:** Keep pressing forward in faith, regardless of the obstacles or challenges you may face. Fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of your faith, and trust that He will lead you safely through every trial to the victory that is found in Him (Philippians 3:13-14).

Reflection:

Let exhort one another to be strong and of good courage in serving Jesus Christ and ministering to others. Take a moment to reflect on areas in your life where you need to cultivate fortitude in your faith. Are there challenges or obstacles that you are currently facing? How can you apply these principles of fortitude to overcome them? Trust in God's strength and presence to sustain you, knowing that He is with you wherever you go.

(180) A Man Or Woman After God's Own Heart:

Scripture:"But the LORD said to Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart. "- 1 Samuel 16:7 AKJV

In the biblical narrative, David is often referred to as a man after God's own heart. What does it mean to be a person after God's heart? It's a question that transcends superficial appearances and delves deep into the core of one's character and relationship with God.

David wasn't without his flaws and failures. He made mistakes, some grievous, yet his heart remained tender toward God. What set David apart was his genuine desire to seek God, to pursue righteousness, and to repent when he fell short. His relationship with God wasn't just about outward rituals or appearances; it was marked by authenticity and intimacy.

Therefore, to be a man or woman after God**'**s own heart is to love Him above all else and to desire and purpose to do God**'**s will, regardless of our weaknesses or failures; to trust Him and depend upon His strength and faithfulness.

God's declaration to Samuel regarding David emphasizes an essential truth: God sees beyond the externals. He looks at the heart—the innermost thoughts, intentions, and affections. It's not about being perfect but about being sincere in our pursuit of God, allowing Him to shape and transform us from the inside out.

To be a person after God's heart means aligning our desires with His, seeking His will above our own, and loving Him wholeheartedly. It involves humility, obedience, and a willingness to continually grow in faith and character.

Like David, we may stumble along the way, but God's grace is always available to forgive and restore. As we draw near to Him with open hearts, He delights in us, not because of our achievements or appearances, but because of our sincere devotion and love for Him.

We should have a heart love towards God and others, a heart of compassion, kindness, a heart of forgiveness and mercy, a heart that worships God, a heart that follows after Jesus Christ and His righteousness.

Today, let us strive to be people after God's own heart, seeking Him earnestly, loving Him deeply, and allowing His transformative power to work within us.

A Man or Woman After God**'**s Own Heart

Text: 1 Samuel 13:14 (AKJV): "But now your kingdom shall not continue: the LORD has sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be captain over his people, because you have not kept that which the LORD commanded you.."

Introduction: The Heart of a Believer

In 1 Samuel 13:14, God describes King David as a **"**man after His own heart," a powerful statement that highlights a central theme of Scripture: God**'**s desire for His people to reflect His heart in their lives. To be a person "after God's own heart" means more than merely following His commands or living a morally upright life. It involves a deep, intimate relationship with God, characterized by love, trust, obedience, and humility. This commentary will explore what it means to be a man or woman after God's own heart, how

we can align our hearts with His, and the profound implications for our lives as followers of Christ.

1. The Biblical Foundation of a Heart After God

A heart after God is first and foremost about a personal, intimate relationship with the Creator. It is a heart that longs to know Him deeply and reflect His character in everyday life. Throughout Scripture, we see that God's heart is directed toward those who earnestly seek Him, who love Him above all else, and who desire to live in harmony with His will.

1.1 David's Heart for God

David is known as a "man after God's own heart" not because of his perfection but because of his deep passion for God. Despite his flaws, including his sins of adultery and murder, David continually repented, sought God's forgiveness, and loved God with sincerity.

Scripture Reference: Acts 13:22" And when he had removed him, he raised up to them David to be their king; to whom also he gave their testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, which shall fulfill all my will."

David's life was marked by a pursuit of God's presence. His Psalms are filled with expressions of longing for God's guidance, closeness, and favor. He understood that the heart of worship was not just about external rituals but about a life lived in genuine relationship with God.

1.2 A Heart of Obedience and Trust

A man or woman after God's heart is characterized by obedience and trust in God, even when circumstances seem uncertain. David's trust in God was evident in his youth when he faced Goliath. He relied on God's strength, not his own, to defeat the giant. Likewise, a heart after God is one that trusts God's plans and purposes, even when life is difficult.

Scripture Reference: 1 Samuel 17:37 (AKJV) "David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Go, and the LORD be with you."

This trust is a central aspect of a heart after God. It means believing in His power and faithfulness, especially when the challenges of life seem insurmountable.

1.3 The Role of Repentance and Humility

A heart after God is also humble and repentant. While David sinned grievously, particularly in his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, his response to sin was different from that of many other leaders. David confessed his sins, turned to God in humility, and sought restoration.

Scripture Reference: Psalm 51:10-12“ Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.”

David’s heart remained tender before God. He was quick to repent and turn back to God. This shows that having a heart after God isn’t about being sinless, but about being quick to return to Him when we fall short.

2. Characteristics of a Man or Woman After God’s Heart

Being a person after God’s heart is not about perfection; it is about direction. It involves cultivating specific qualities that align our hearts with God's desires. These characteristics are foundational to the life of a believer who desires to live in close relationship with God.

2.1 A Desire for God’s Presence

A person after God’s own heart seeks to dwell in God’s presence. Just as David longed for God’s presence in the tabernacle, Christians today are called to seek God’s presence through prayer, worship, and the Word.

Scripture Reference: Psalm 27:4“ One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.”

David expressed his deep longing for God’s presence, not just for physical blessings but for spiritual communion. A person after God’s heart places a premium on intimacy with God, seeking His presence above all else.

2.2 A Heart of Worship and Praise

A man or woman after God’s own heart is also a person of praise and worship. David’s life was filled with worship; he led Israel in praise and wrote many of the Psalms that continue to inspire and lead believers in worship today.

Scripture Reference: Psalm 34:1“ I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth.”

A heart after God understands that worship is not limited to music or song, but is a lifestyle that reflects gratitude, awe, and reverence for God’s goodness.

2.3 A Willingness to Serve and Lead

David’s heart for God was expressed in his willingness to serve and lead others. Although he was anointed to be king, he did not seek power for personal gain but served God’s people with humility.

Scripture Reference: 1 Samuel 16:12-13 (AKJV)“ And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and with of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. 13Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the middle of his brothers: and the Spirit of the LORD came on David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.”

David’s leadership was a reflection of his heart for God. He understood that true leadership comes from serving others with a heart of compassion, humility, and a desire to honor God in all things.

3. The Command to Pursue God’s Heart

Just as David was a man after God’s own heart, Christians are called to pursue God’s heart. This pursuit is a continual process of growing in faith, obedience, and love for God and His people. As believers, we are to make our hearts like His, seeking His will above our own.

3.1 Pursuit Through Prayer

The primary way to cultivate a heart after God is through prayer. Prayer is the means by which we communicate with God, align our desires with His, and receive His guidance.

Scripture Reference: Psalm 42:1-2 (AKJV)“ As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after you, O God. 2My soul thirsts for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? ?”

A heart after God desires to commune with Him regularly, pouring out our hearts in prayer and listening for His voice.

3.2 Pursuit Through Obedience

A heart after God is also one that desires to obey His Word. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). True love for God is expressed through obedience to His commands, and a heart after God seeks to honor Him in every area of life.

Scripture Reference: John 14:23-24“ Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings.”

3.3 Pursuit Through Repentance

A heart after God is quick to repent when it goes astray. Just as David responded to his sin with genuine repentance, believers today are called to confess their sins, receive God’s forgiveness, and return to Him with a humble heart.

Scripture Reference: 1 John 1:9“ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

4. How Christians Can Develop a Heart After God?

Developing a heart after God requires intentional effort and dependence on the Holy Spirit. It is through the Word, prayer, obedience, repentance and and above all have a deep geniune love for God, that we grow in our relationship with God and align our hearts with His.

4.1 Through the Word of God

The Word of God is a key tool in shaping our hearts. As we read, meditate on, and apply Scripture, we align our desires with God**’**s desires.

Scripture Reference: Psalm 119:11 "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

4.2 Through Prayer and Worship

Prayer and worship are vital for maintaining a heart that seeks after God. In prayer, we pour out our hearts to God, and in worship, we express our love and adoration for Him.

Scripture Reference: Philippians 4:6-7“ Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

4.3 Through Service and Sacrifice

A heart after God is also shown through service to others. Jesus said, "The greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:11). We demonstrate our love for God by loving others and serving them selflessly.

Scripture Reference: 1 John 3:16-18“ Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world**’**s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

4.4 Through Loving God with All Our Heart, Mind, and Strength

A key aspect of cultivating kindness is rooted in our love for God. Jesus teaches that the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). This love for God is not merely an emotional or intellectual exercise but a comprehensive devotion that permeates every aspect of our lives.

When we love God in this way, we reflect His kindness in our actions toward others. Loving God transforms our hearts, making us more like Him and empowering us to show kindness to others. As we meditate on His goodness, grace, and mercy, our capacity to extend these same qualities to those around us increases. The more we experience God's love in a personal, intimate way, the more we are able to offer kindness that is not self-generated but flows directly from our relationship with Him.

Loving God with all our being means that our attitudes, words, and deeds reflect His heart. It becomes easier to show kindness when we are filled with love for God, because His love compels us to treat others with the same grace and compassion that He shows us daily. This kind of love lays the foundation for a life that is not just about following rules, but about living out the heart of God in

Conclusion: A Heart Aligned with God's Will

To be a man or woman after God's own heart is to pursue God with everything we have—our thoughts, our desires, our actions. It involves an ongoing relationship with God, characterized by obedience, trust, worship, repentance, and service. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we all strive to cultivate hearts that reflect God's love and grace, seeking to honor Him in all we do. As we do so, we become more like the One who has called us to be His own.

(181) Exhort One Another:

Introduction

"Exhort one another" is a phrase that captures a vital aspect of Christian community and discipleship. To "exhort" means to strongly encourage, advise, or urge someone to pursue a particular course of action, often in light of God's truth. It is an essential practice in the life of the Church, we are called to encourage one another in faith, love, and good works. Exhortation, grounded in Scripture, helps strengthen the body of Christ and keeps individuals focused on God's purposes, especially in the face of trials, doubts, or complacency.

This commentary will explore the biblical teaching on exhorting one another, the purpose of exhortation, how it should be done, and why it is so important in the Christian life.

1. The Biblical Command to Exhort One Another

The New Testament makes several references to the need for believers to exhort one another. Exhortation is a key part of mutual encouragement and accountability in the Christian community.

1.1 Exhortation in the Context of Fellowship

- **Hebrews 3:13** (AKJV)— "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. "
    - The author of Hebrews stresses the importance of daily exhortation in the life of believers. The goal of this exhortation is to prevent spiritual hardening

due to the deceitfulness of sin. Encouraging one another regularly helps keep our hearts soft toward God and strengthens our resistance to the temptations of the world.

- **Hebrews 10:24-25** (AKJV)— "And let us consider one another to provoke to love and to good works: 25Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching."
    - Exhortation is linked to our regular gathering of other Christians in Church or other felowships and group ministries or activities. The purpose is to stir up one another to love and good works, encouraging each other to live out the commands of Christ. In a world that increasingly discourages commitment to the faith, regular fellowship and exhortation are critical to maintaining zeal for God**'**s kingdom.

1.2 Exhortation and Accountability

Exhortation involves not only encouragement but also a challenge to live according to God's standards. It serves as a form of accountability, urging one another to stay true to God**'**s Word and to grow in holiness.

- **Colossians 3:16** (AKJV)— "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.."
    - Exhortation includes teaching, admonishing, and encouraging one another in wisdom. This practice ensures that believers grow in understanding and obedience to God**'**s Word.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:11** (AKJV)— "Why comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also you do."
    - Paul urges the Thessalonians to continue building each other up through encouragement and exhortation. Exhortation is a way of nurturing spiritual growth and helping one another remain faithful.

2. The Purpose of Exhorting One Another

Exhortation serves several key purposes in the life of the believer and the Church:

2.1 To Encourage Growth in Holiness

One of the primary purposes of exhortation is to encourage one another to live holy lives that honor God. As we speak the truth in love, we help each other to pursue godliness and resist sin.

- **Romans 15:2** (AKJV)— "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification"
    - Exhortation should always aim at building others up, helping them grow in Christlikeness. It involves guiding others toward spiritual maturity by pointing them to God**'**s Word and God**'**s will.

- **Ephesians 4:29** (AKJV)— "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers.."
    - Our words should be used to build up others spiritually. Exhortation is a way of using our speech to encourage others in their pursuit of righteousness.

2.2 To Provide Strength and Perseverance in Times of Trial

Life is full of challenges, and believers need the encouragement and support of others to remain steadfast in their faith. Exhortation helps believers keep their eyes on Jesus, even in difficult circumstances.

- **Hebrews 12:12-13** (AKJV)— "Why lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.."
    - Exhortation can be a form of spiritual strengthening. When we are weary or discouraged, we need others to encourage us to keep going, helping us to stay on the path of righteousness.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:14** (AKJV)— "Now we exhort you, brothers, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men."
    - Paul**'**s words emphasize that exhortation is not one-size-fits-all. Some people need a strong challenge (admonishment), while others need comfort and encouragement (encouragement to the fainthearted). The goal is to meet people where they are and help them press on in their faith.

2.3 To Guard Against Sin and Spiritual Complacency

Exhortation is a preventive measure against spiritual drift and sin. It challenges believers to remain faithful and vigilant, reminding them of their identity in Christ and the importance of walking in holiness.

- **Galatians 6:1** (AKJV)— "Brothers, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted."
    - When a believer falls into sin or spiritual complacency, those who are spiritually strong are called to gently exhort and restore them, helping them back onto the path of righteousness.
- **2 Timothy 4:2** (AKJV)— "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. "
    - Paul exhorts Timothy to be diligent in preaching the Word, which includes correcting and encouraging believers. Exhortation helps prevent believers from wandering from the truth and keeps them grounded in God's Word.

3. How to Exhort One Another

Exhortation is not just about words; it is a holistic practice that involves speaking the truth in love, offering practical help, and providing prayerful support. Here are some biblical principles for how to exhort one another effectively.

3.1 Speak the Truth in Love

- **Ephesians 4:15** (AKJV)— "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:."
    - Exhortation involves speaking the truth clearly but always with a spirit of love. We are not called to rebuke or correct in a harsh or condemning way but to do so with the goal of helping others grow into Christlikeness.
- **Colossians 4:6** (AKJV)— "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man. "
    - Our words should be seasoned with grace, aiming to uplift and encourage. Exhortation should be thoughtful, encouraging, and respectful, not accusatory or judgmental.

3.2 Be Patient and Gentle

- **2 Timothy 2:24-25** (AKJV)— "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, 25In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;."
    - Exhortation requires patience and gentleness, especially when confronting sin. It's important to recognize that change is often slow, and the goal is restoration, not condemnation.
- **Galatians 6:1** (AKJV)— "Brothers, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted.."
    - The spirit of meekness, gentleness is crucial in the process of exhortation. The goal is to restore and strengthen, not to shame or humiliate.

3.3 Encourage and Pray for One Another

- **James 5:16** (AKJV)— "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."
    - Prayer is a powerful way to exhort one another. Praying for each other helps to strengthen faith, bring healing, and provide spiritual support in times of difficulty.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:11** (AKJV)— "Why comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also you do. "
    - Encouraging words, shared prayers, and practical acts of love all play a role in exhorting one another in the faith.

4. Conclusion: The Importance of Exhorting One Another

Exhortation is a vital part of the Christian life. We are called to exhort one another—encouraging, urging, and challenging one another to grow in faith, remain steadfast in the truth, and pursue holiness. This practice strengthens the body of Christ and helps each follower of Jesus remain faithful, especially during difficult times.

Exhorting one another is not just about offering advice; it is a deep and loving act that reflects God's heart for His people. As we speak the truth in love, hold one another

accountable, and support one another in prayer, we help each other live out the fullness of God's calling on our lives. The Church is called

(182) Three Cord Is Not Easily Broken:

Introduction The biblical phrase "a threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:12) highlights the strength of unity and the value of relationships that are built on mutual support. While it is often quoted in the context of marriage, (Husband, Wife and Jesus) this principle extends to all aspects of Christian fellowship—particularly in relationships between believers. The threefold cord symbolizes the strength that comes from God-centered relationships, where individuals are united in faith, love, and commitment to one another. This commentary will explore the biblical teaching behind the threefold cord, its significance in the Christian life, and how we can apply this principle to our relationships and community life.

1. The Biblical Foundation of the Threefold Cord

The concept of a "threefold cord" originates from **Ecclesiastes 4:12**: *"And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken:"* This verse is often used to emphasize the importance of unity and cooperation, illustrating how strength multiplies when individuals stand together. The passage in Ecclesiastes highlights the value of companionship and mutual support, teaching that two people are stronger together than apart. However, the inclusion of a third element—the "threefold cord"—adds a deeper layer, suggesting that when a relationship is built on a foundation of God, it becomes even more resilient.

1.1 The Context of Ecclesiastes 4

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 speaks to the benefits of partnership and companionship. In verses 9 and 10, Solomon states that two are better than one because they can help each other in times of trouble. In verse 12, the image of a "threefold cord" further emphasizes the unparalleled strength and stability that come from mutual support, enhanced by the presence of a third element—God**'**s guidance and presence.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (AKJV)— **"***Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. 10For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he has not another to help him up. 11Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? 12And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."*

1.2 The Role of God in the Threefold Cord

The "threefold cord" is not merely about two people supporting each other—it points to the divine presence that strengthens relationships. God is the third strand that binds and sustains the connection between believers, making the relationship unbreakable. In the context of Christian relationships, this third strand is essential for true unity and strength. Without God at the center, even the best of human relationships can falter.

2. The Purpose of the Threefold Cord

The threefold cord serves as a metaphor for relationships that are grounded in love, mutual support, and a shared commitment to God. These kinds of relationships are vital for both personal growth and the spiritual well-being of the Church.

2.1 Strength in Unity

Matthew 18:20 (AKJV)— *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the middle of them."* When believers come together in unity, God's presence strengthens the bond between them. This unity is not just physical or emotional but spiritual. The threefold cord illustrates how three believers—joined by love, commitment, and God—form an unbreakable bond that enables them to face life's challenges together.

Psalm 133:1 (AKJV)— *"*1Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! *"* Unity among believers is a beautiful and powerful thing. It fosters peace, encouragement, and strength, both within the community and in the individuals who make up the body of Christ. A unified group can overcome trials, confront difficulties, and accomplish much for the kingdom of God.

2.2 Support and Encouragement in Times of Difficulty

Galatians 6:2 (AKJV)— *"Bear you one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."* The threefold cord illustrates the power of mutual support. When believers come together in Christ, they are better able to bear one another's burdens, offering encouragement, prayer, and practical help. In times of trial, the combined strength of the Christian community—grounded in Christ—helps individuals persevere and remain steadfast in faith.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (AKJV)— *"*Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. 10For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he has not another to help him up*"* When one person falls, it is the duty of others to help lift them up. The threefold cord signifies that no one is meant to walk alone in the Christian faith. We are called to walk alongside one another, offering the support necessary to keep moving forward.

2.3 Protection Against Spiritual Weakness

Proverbs 27:17 (AKJV)— *"IIron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.."* A threefold cord not only offers support but also sharpens and strengthens the believer. Relationships rooted in Christ help Christians grow spiritually, offering constructive feedback and godly counsel. The strength of a unified Christian community helps believers avoid the dangers of isolation, spiritual complacency, and temptation. Just as iron sharpens iron, so too does the fellowship of believers sharpen and refine one another.

3. How to Build a Threefold Cord

To experience the strength of a threefold cord relationship of like-minded Christians, we must intentionally develop relationships that are grounded in love for one another and centered on God, His word and His will. Here are some biblical principles for building such relationships.

3.1 Make God the Center of the Relationship

Colossians 3:14-15 (AKJV)— "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfection. 15And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also you are called in one body; and be you thankful." The love that unites believers must be rooted in God's love. As believers, we are called to put on love (charity), which binds us together in perfect unity. When God's peace rules in our hearts, it enables us to relate to one another in a way that strengthens and supports our bond. A threefold cord, with God at the center, cannot be broken because it is held together by His unshakable love.

Matthew 7:24-25 (AKJV)— *"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, which built his house on a rock: 25And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it fell not: for it was founded on a rock"* For a relationship to be unbreakable, it must be founded on Christ, the solid rock. Relationships based on mutual commitment to Christ will endure through challenges, temptations, and trials. It is God's presence in the relationship that makes it strong and resilient.

3.2 Practice Mutual Support and Accountability

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (AKJV)— *"Why comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also you do."* To build a strong, threefold cord, believers must intentionally support and encourage each other. This involves comforting one another in times of hardship, lifting each other up, and building one another up in faith. Mutual support creates a resilient bond that can withstand difficulties and trials.

James 5:16 (AKJV)— *"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. ."*

Accountability and prayer are key elements of the threefold cord. Believers must be transparent with one another, confessing sins and praying for one another. This spiritual support strengthens the bond and helps protect against the temptations that might otherwise break relationships.

3.3 Maintain Unwavering Commitment

Romans 12:10 (AKJV)— *"Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;"* Building a strong, threefold cord requires commitment to love one another unconditionally and sacrificially. Relationships built on brotherly love are marked by humility, honor, and a willingness to serve. Such relationships grow in strength because each person is committed to the well-being of the other.

Philippians 2:3-4 (AKJV)— "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Commitment to one another involves humility and selflessness. The strength of the threefold cord comes from each person esteeming the other and placing their needs above their own. This sacrificial love ensures that the bond remains unbroken.

4. Conclusion: The Strength of a Threefold Cord

The biblical principle of a threefold cord emphasizes the power of unity when Christians come together in mutual support, rooted in God's presence and love. When God is the third strand in relationships—whether in marriage, friendship, or church fellowship—the bond becomes unbreakable. Believers are called to build strong, godly relationships that

endure through commitment, support, and accountability. As we center our relationships on God, we experience a strength that cannot be easily broken, enabling us to persevere through life's trials and grow together in faith. The threefold cord is not just a metaphor for unity; it is a powerful reminder of the strength we find when we are bound together by the love of God.

(183) True Success In Life:

What things are truly worthwhile for us to be a success at in life, of which any of us can have the potential to accomplish and do for others regardless of our financial standing, intellect, physical abilities or ethnic background ?

To often we strive to be successful in many things which will never rightly fulfill our foremost needs and heartfelt desires. In our ignorance, we engage in mixed up priorities and overly give our attention and time to areas which should take a lesser place within our life or even should not be there at all. In our pursuit for all what the world regards as success, we find ourselves engaged, preoccupied, and struggling in many detrimental endeavors, which can personally adversely affect not only ourselves, but essentially hurt others by our actions. The things which can be eventually, exceedingly disappointing and grievous to us, are when we long for, envy, and relentlessly pursue, that which is beyond our needs of actual contentment. Such as our greed for materialistic gain and luxury beyond our needs, a higher social status, prideful recognitions, extreme physical goals, with no true lasting moral substance, striving with no real purposeful direction, and attaining fleeting vain appearances.

We invariably miss out in obtaining and sharing life's most precious virtues, if we allow ourselves to become entangled in a world of pride and selfish ambition.

Why should we grasp the wind, only to find nothing to satisfy ?…

Let us rather learn and follow the Way of Jesus Christ, continue in His Word, and thereby know the TRUTH, and be set free, to truly Love God and those around us, so that our Joy will be full.

KEY SCRIPTURES -

Ecclesiastes 12:8-14; (AKJV)- Vanity of vanities, says the preacher; all is vanity. 9And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. 10The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. 11The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. 12And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. ¶ 13Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. 14For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Joshua 1:8 (AKJV)“ This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success. .”

Matthew 16:26 (AKJV)“ For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

1 Timothy 6:6-11 (AKJV)“ But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11But you, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. ”

Psalm 37:4-5 (AKJV)“ Delight yourself also in the LORD: and he shall give you the desires of your heart. 5Commit your way to the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.”

Philippians 4:11-13 (AKJV)“ Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. 12I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

Colossians 3:23-25 (AKJV)“ And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men; 24Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ. 25But he that does wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done: and there is no respect of persons.”

Proverbs 16:16 (AKJV)

“How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!”

Proverbs 16:3 (AKJV)“ Commit your works to the LORD, and your thoughts shall be established.”

Matthew 5:14-16 (AKJV)“ You are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light to all that are in the house. 16Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven..”

Matthew 6:19-21 (AKJV)

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust does corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 (AKJV)“ Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things

to enjoy; 18That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

Luke 12:15-21 (AKJV)" And he said to them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man**'**s life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses. 16And he spoke a parable to them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20But God said to him, You fool, this night your soul shall be required of you: then whose shall those things be, which you have provided? 21So is he that lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God..'"

Proverbs 10:22 (AKJV)" The blessing of the LORD, it makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it.."

Philippians 4:19 (AKJV)" But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20Now to God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Earthly Riches that Waste Away

James 5:1-3 (AKJV)" Go to now, you rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come on you. 2Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. 3Your gold and silver is corroded; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. You have heaped treasure together for the last days"

Ecclesiastes 5:10 (AKJV)" He that loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loves abundance with increase: this is also vanity."

1 Peter 1:24-25 (AKJV)" For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass wither, and the flower thereof falls away: 25But the word of the Lord endures for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached to you'"

Proverbs 23:4-5 (AKJV)" Labor not to be rich: cease from your own wisdom. 5Will you set your eyes on that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.."

Matthew 13:22 (AKJV)" He also that received seed among the thorns is he that hears the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23But he that received seed into the good ground is he that hears the word, and understands it; which also bears fruit, and brings forth, some an hundred times, some sixty, some thirty."

Summary

These verses highlight the difference between true riches, which come from a relationship with God and a focus on eternal values, and earthly riches, which are temporary and can lead to dissatisfaction and spiritual emptiness. True riches involve investing in good deeds, generosity, and spiritual growth, while earthly riches are fleeting and ultimately unfulfilling

True Succes In Life - Continued

True Success in Life—Is not gaining the world for ourselves but rather receiving Jesus and His blessings, being transformed and saved, abiding in His Love, ministering to the needs of others with our resources and God's Love and receiving Eternal Life

Introduction

Most often, success is defined by the world in terms of wealth, power, achievement, and recognition. However, the Bible presents a radically different definition of success. According to Scripture, true success is not found in worldly pursuits or the accumulation of material goods, but in receiving Jesus Christ, experiencing transformation through Him, abiding in His love, and securing eternal life.

In a culture that often equates success with external accomplishments, it is vital for believers to understand that real success lies in a relationship with Jesus Christ. This relationship leads to spiritual transformation, fulfillment, and the eternal blessings that only He can provide. Through Christ, believers are offered the ultimate success: a life that is both abundant and eternal.

1. True Success is Found in Receiving Jesus Christ

1.1 Jesus as the True Source of Life

- **John 10:10** (AKJV)– **"***The thief comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. ."*
    - In this verse, Jesus contrasts Himself with the thief, who represents the forces of sin and evil in the world. While the world offers counterfeit success—success that ultimately destroys—Jesus offers true life. This "abundant life" is not about material wealth or external circumstances, but about spiritual fulfillment and peace with God. True success begins when we receive Jesus into our lives, recognizing Him as the source of all true life, joy, and peace.

1.2 Receiving Jesus Is the Gateway to Blessings

- **John 1:12** (AKJV)– **"***But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."*
    - Receiving Jesus is not just an intellectual acknowledgment but a personal reception of Christ into one's life. Those who receive Him, believe in His name, and accept His gift of salvation are granted the privilege of becoming children of God. This new identity in Christ is the foundation of true success. It means being part of God's family, receiving His love, and experiencing His blessings in ways that the world cannot offer.

1.3 True Success Is Living for Christ, Not for the World

- **Matthew 16:26** (AKJV)– **"***For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

- Jesus poses a critical question: What is the value of gaining everything the world offers—fame, wealth, power—if it leads to the loss of one's soul? True success is not found in the pursuit of worldly goals but in the pursuit of God's kingdom and His righteousness. The world's standards of success are fleeting, but the success of receiving Christ and living for Him has eternal value.

2. True Success is Found in Being Transformed and Saved by Christ

2.1 Salvation Is the Ultimate Success

- **Ephesians 2:8-9** (AKJV)– **"***For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9Not of works, lest any man should boast..*"
  - The ultimate success in life is not something we can achieve on our own; it is a gift from God. Salvation is entirely a work of grace, not something we can earn by our good deeds or achievements. It is through faith in Jesus Christ that we are saved, transformed, and made new. This spiritual transformation—being saved from sin and death—is the highest form of success that anyone can experience.
- **2 Corinthians 5:17** (AKJV)– **"***Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new..*"
  - Salvation is not just about forgiveness; it is about becoming a new creation in Christ. The transformation that happens through salvation is profound—our hearts and lives are completely changed. We no longer live for the fleeting pleasures of this world, but we are transformed to live for God, walking in His ways and reflecting His love and righteousness. This transformation is the true evidence of success in the life of a believer.

2.2 Transformed Life = Living in the Will of God

- **Romans 12:2** (AKJV)– **"***And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

- To live a transformed life is to live in the will of God, not according to the patterns of this world. The process of transformation involves a renewed mind, a reorientation of our desires and goals toward what pleases God. This transformation is ongoing, as the Holy Spirit works within us to shape our character and our actions. True success is found in living according to God's will, rather than the world's fleeting standards of success.

3. True Success Is Abiding in the Love of Christ

3.1 The Love of Christ Is the Foundation of True Success

- **John 15:9** (AKJV)– **"***As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: continue you in my love. 10If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.*"

- The love of Christ is the foundation of our success as Christians. To "abide" in His love means to remain in it, to live in constant fellowship with Him, and to allow His love to shape and guide us. This love is unconditional, unbreakable, and everlasting. Abiding in Christ's love means living in the security of knowing that we are loved by the Creator of the universe, and that His love empowers us to live out His will and purpose for our lives.

3.2 Abiding in Christ's Love Produces Fruitfulness

- **John 15:5** (AKJV)– **"***I am the vine, you are the branches: He that stays in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing."*
  - Abiding in the love of Christ leads to fruitfulness in the Christian life. Jesus teaches that when we remain connected to Him, like branches to a vine, we bear much fruit. This fruit includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and all the virtues that reflect the character of Christ. A fruitful life is a life that honors God and impacts others for His kingdom. True success is not about what we can accomplish on our own, but about what Christ accomplishes through us when we abide in His love.

3.3 Abiding in His Love Brings Peace and Security

- **Romans 8:38-39** (AKJV)– **"***For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
  - Abiding in the love of Christ also brings an overwhelming sense of peace and security. No matter what challenges we face in life, we can be confident that nothing can separate us from God**'**s love. This assurance allows us to face life's trials with courage and hope, knowing that true success is not about avoiding hardship, but about remaining rooted in God's love regardless of circumstances.

4 True Success is Serving And Giving To The Needs Of Others

4.1 Feed, Shelter The Homeless, Be Hospitable, Clothe The Needy

- **Isaiah 58:5-7** (AKJV) Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? will you call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? 6Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? 7Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor that are cast out to your house? when you see the naked, that you cover him; and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh?

5. True Success Is Receiving Eternal Life

5.1 Eternal Life: The Ultimate Reward for Believers

- **John 17:3** (AKJV)– **"***And this is life eternal, that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent"*

- Jesus defines eternal life as knowing God and knowing Him through Jesus Christ. Eternal life is not merely about living forever, but about knowing and experiencing a deep, intimate relationship with God. This eternal relationship begins now and continues into eternity. For the believer, true success is not measured by earthly accomplishments but by the fact that we have eternal life through faith in Christ.

5.2 Eternal Life: A Gift, Not a Result of Works

- **Ephesians 2:8-9** (AKJV)– **"***For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9Not of works, lest any man should boast"*
  - Eternal life is a gift given by God**'**s grace. It is not something we can earn through our own efforts, but is freely given to all who believe in Jesus Christ. True success in life is not about how many good deeds we can accumulate, but about accepting God**'**s grace and living in the light of His eternal promises.

5.3 The Hope of Eternal Life Should Shape Our Lives Now

- **Colossians 3:1-2** – **"***If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. 2Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. "*
  - The hope of eternal life should influence how we live today. True success in life involves setting our hearts and minds on things above—on the eternal promises of God—rather than on the temporary pursuits of this world. This eternal perspective helps believers live with purpose, joy, and confidence, knowing that their true home is in heaven, and their success is secured in Christ.

5.3 The Hope of Eternal Life Should Shape Our Lives Now

Conclusion

True success in life is found not in the fleeting pursuits of the world, but in receiving Jesus Christ, being transformed by His grace, abiding in His love, and securing eternal life through Him. While the world defines success by power, wealth, and achievement, God defines success by our relationship with Jesus and the eternal blessings He gives to those who follow Him. As we walk in this relationship, we experience the fullness of life that only He can offer—transformed lives, abiding love, and the sure hope of eternal life. May we seek this true success and live in the fullness of Christ's blessings today and forever.

(184) Integrity:

Introduction

Integrity is a foundational virtue in the Christian life, reflecting a heart that is truthful, transparent, and trustworthy. The word "integrity" comes from the Latin word *integritas*, meaning wholeness or completeness. In a biblical context, integrity refers to living in alignment with God's truth, being undivided in our commitment to Him, and acting with

honesty in all areas of life. This commitment to truth and moral uprightness is critical for believers, not only because it reflects the character of God but also because it builds trust within the Christian community and with the world. Integrity is essential to living a life that honors God, influences others, and fosters spiritual growth.

This commentary will explore the biblical understanding of integrity, its significance in the believer's life, and how to cultivate it through faithfulness, honesty, and alignment with God's Word.

1. The Biblical Teaching on Integrity

The Bible teaches that integrity is a vital component of godly living. It is both an internal character trait and an outward expression of honesty, justice, and moral purity. Scripture emphasizes that integrity is a reflection of the heart's devotion to God and is essential for those who desire to walk in righteousness.

1.1 Integrity as a Reflection of a Godly Life

Proverbs 10:9 (AKJV)—"He that walks uprightly walks surely: but he that perverts his ways shall be known."

Integrity is closely tied to security and stability. The Proverbs emphasize that those who walk in integrity are secure in their relationship with God and in their dealings with others. When we walk with integrity, we are assured of God's protection and favor. Conversely, those who are dishonest or deceitful will eventually be exposed, as their actions contradict their words.

Psalm 15:1-2 (AKJV)—"Lord, who shall abide in your tabernacle? who shall dwell in your holy hill? 2He that walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart. "

David presents integrity as a prerequisite for fellowship with God. Those who desire to dwell in God's presence must walk uprightly, live righteously, and speak truthfully. Integrity is not only about external actions but also about having a heart that is pure before God. It begins with a commitment to truth in the innermost parts of the heart.

1.2 Integrity as a Means of Witness, Reliable, a Person of Their Word

Matthew 5:37 (AKJV)—"But let your communication be, Yes, yes; No, no: for whatever is more than these comes of evil."

Jesus teaches the importance of honesty and straightforwardness in our speech. A person of integrity does not need to embellish or manipulate words; their word is their bond. Our integrity in everyday matters serves as a powerful witness to the world of the truth and trustworthiness of God's people.

Titus 2:7-8 (AKJV)—"In all things showing yourself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing soundness, gravity, sincerity, 8Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you"

Paul instructs Titus to set an example of integrity, especially in teaching and speech. Integrity in a believer's life not only reflects God's character but also silences critics and serves as a testimony to unbelievers of the transforming power of Christ.

2. The Purpose of Integrity in the Christian Life

Integrity serves several key purposes in the believer's life, from protecting the relationship with God to serving as a witness to the watching world. It builds trust, strengthens our walk with God, and allows us to reflect His righteousness.

2.1 To Glorify God

1 Corinthians 10:31 (AKJV)—"Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God"

Living with integrity is one of the ways we bring glory to God. Integrity honors God by reflecting His truth, holiness, and justice in all our actions. Whether in small or significant matters, doing all things with integrity demonstrates our devotion to God's purposes.

Proverbs 12:22 (AKJV)—"Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight."

God delights in those who speak the truth and live with integrity. A life marked by integrity glorifies God by reflecting His nature. When we live honestly and with moral uprightness, we align ourselves with His holy character.

2.2 To Build Trust and Relationships

Proverbs 20:7 (AKJV)—"The just man walks in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.."

Integrity is vital in building and maintaining relationships, both within the family and in the wider community. A person of integrity is trustworthy, and their actions earn the respect and confidence of others. This creates a foundation for strong, lasting relationships. In particular, the integrity of parents is a powerful example for children, teaching them the value of truth and righteousness.

Ephesians 4:25 (AKJV)—"Why putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another."

Living with integrity enhances our relationships with others. When we speak the truth, avoid deceit, and live transparently, we foster trust and unity within the body of Christ and in the broader community.

2.3 To Protect Against Sin and Compromise

Psalm 25:21 (AKJV)—"Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on you. ."

Integrity acts as a guard against sin and compromise. It keeps the believer steadfast in righteousness, preventing the erosion of moral standards that often comes with dishonesty or duplicity. When we choose to walk in integrity, we are protected from the deceitful allure of sin, which often begins with small compromises in truth.

Job 2:3 (AKJV)—"And the LORD said to Satan, Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God, and eschews evil? and still he holds fast his integrity, although you moved me against him, to destroy him without cause.'"

Job's integrity was a key part of his testimony before God and man. Even in the face of suffering and loss, Job's commitment to integrity remained intact. His example

shows that integrity is not conditional on circumstances but is a reflection of a heart committed to God's will.

2.4 To Reflect God's Holiness

Leviticus 19:2 (AKJV)— "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them, You shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy." The call to integrity is tied to the call to holiness. Just as God is holy, His people are to reflect His character through their actions and attitudes. Integrity is a crucial part of holiness, as it involves living consistently with God's moral standards in every area of life.

1 Peter 1:15-16 (AKJV)— "But as he which has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation; 16Because it is written, Be you holy; for I am holy." We are called to embody God's holiness in our conduct, and integrity is an essential part of that. It involves more than outward behavior—it encompasses the motives, attitudes, and decisions that align with God's will.

2.5 To Maintain a Testimony of Christ

Matthew 5:16 (AKJV)— "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Integrity is a powerful witness to the world. When believers live with integrity, their lives reflect the truth of the gospel, and their good works point others to God. A life marked by integrity draws attention to the character of Christ and testifies to the transformative power of the gospel.

Philippians 2:15 (AKJV)— "That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the middle of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" In a world marked by deceit, corruption, and compromise, integrity allows believers to stand out as lights in the darkness. Their conduct should be above reproach, providing a clear testimony of God's work in their lives.

2.6 To Strengthen the Faith of Others

Proverbs 4:25-27 (AKJV)— "Let your eyes look right on, and let your eyelids look straight before you. 26Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. 27Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove your foot from evil." The example of integrity in a believer's life encourages others to stay on the path of righteousness. By living consistently according to God's Word, believers become a model for others to follow, helping them to remain faithful and grow in their own walk with God. Integrity serves as a powerful tool for discipleship within the Church.

3. How to Live with Integrity

Integrity is not a natural trait but a fruit of the Spirit and a choice that believers must actively cultivate. Here are some key biblical principles for living with integrity.

3.1 Uphold Truth in All Things

Ephesians 4:25 (AKJV)— "Why putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.." Living with integrity begins with truth. Believers are called to speak the truth, even when it is difficult or unpopular. Integrity requires a commitment to honesty in speech, actions, and relationships, ensuring that nothing is hidden or deceptive.

Colossians 3:9 (AKJV)— "Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds." Integrity demands that believers forsake the old ways of dishonesty and deceit. Living truthfully is evidence of the new life in Christ, where the old self is crucified, and the new self is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

3.2 Live According to God's Word

Psalm 119:1-2 (AKJV)— "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. 2Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. " Integrity requires a commitment to living according to God's Word. Those who seek to follow God wholeheartedly will find His Word a reliable guide for every decision, ensuring that their actions align with His will.

James 1:22 (AKJV)— "But be you doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." True integrity is demonstrated not just in knowledge of God's Word but in obedience to it. A life that reflects integrity is one that continually seeks to align with Scripture in all areas, from private thoughts to public actions.

3.3 Seek Accountability and Support

Proverbs 27:17 (AKJV)— "Iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend." Integrity thrives in community. Believers are called to hold one another accountable and encourage each other to live lives that honor God. Regular fellowship with other believers provides the support and encouragement needed to maintain integrity in the face of temptation.

Galatians 6:1 (AKJV)— "Brothers, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted." When one member of the body falters, it is the responsibility of the others to restore them with gentleness and humility. Living in integrity is not always easy, and we need the help of others to stay true to God's Word.

4. Conclusion: The Call to Integrity

Integrity is not merely about avoiding lies or deceit; it is a deeper reflection of the character of God and the truth of the gospel. It requires a steadfast commitment to living in righteousness, truthfulness, and holiness in every area of life. Integrity strengthens the believer's walk with God, enhances the unity of the Church, and serves as a powerful witness to the world. As disciples and followers of Yeshua (Jesus Christ), we are called to reflect God's integrity in our words, actions, and relationships, knowing that through His grace, we can live lives of consistent holiness that honor Him.

(185) The Importance of Being Equally Yoked:

Scripture Reference:“ Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness? ” — 2 Corinthians 6:14 (AKJV)

Reflection: In life, and in the biblical metaphor of being "yoked" refers to two oxen working together to plow a field. For this partnership to be effective, both oxen must pull

in the same direction and share the same strength and purpose. Paul's warning against being unequally yoked is a profound reminder of the significance of alignment in our personal and business relationships.

When we choose partners who do not share our faith and values, we risk being pulled away from our spiritual commitments. This does not mean we should shun relationships with non-believers; rather, it emphasizes the importance of surrounding ourselves with those who uplift and encourage our walk with Christ.

Consider the impact of your closest relationships. Do they inspire you to grow in faith, or do they lead you to compromise your values? A relationship grounded in shared beliefs provides a solid foundation for mutual support and spiritual growth.

Prayer:
Dear Lord, thank You for the relationships You've blessed me with. Help me to discern those that strengthen my faith and those that might lead me astray. Guide my heart to seek connections that are rooted in Your truth. May I always strive to be equally yoked, fostering partnerships that glorify You and encourage growth in Your love. Amen.

Contemplation:
Take a moment to reflect on your current relationships. Ask yourself: Are they aligned with your values? In what ways can you strengthen your connections with those who share your faith? Consider reaching out to someone today to share your life, testimony and encourage each other in your walk with Christ.

(186) Have No Fellowship With Darkness:

Introduction

The Bible calls us as followers of Jesus Christ, to live in the light, reflecting God's holiness, truth, and righteousness. One of the central themes of Christian living is the clear distinction between light and darkness. Throughout Scripture, darkness represents sin, evil, falsehood, and separation from God, while light symbolizes purity, truth, and the presence of God. To "have no fellowship with darkness" is to avoid the influence, practices, and ideologies of a world that is in opposition to God's truth and holiness.

This commentary will explore the biblical command to have no fellowship with darkness, examining what "darkness" refers to in Scripture, why believers must avoid it, and how we are to walk in the light instead.

1. What Does "Darkness" Represent in Scripture?

In the Bible, darkness has several symbolic meanings, primarily representing sin, evil, and the absence of God. Darkness is associated with everything that stands in opposition to God's holiness and truth.

1.1 Darkness as Sin and Evil

- **Ephesians 5:8-11** (AKJV)— "For you were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light: 9(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) 10Proving what is acceptable to the Lord.

11And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. ."

    - Here, Paul contrasts the believer's former life in darkness (sin and rebellion) with their new life in the light (holiness and righteousness). Darkness refers to sin and the works of the flesh—things that are opposed to God's will. Paul urges Christians to avoid participating in sinful deeds and instead expose them through their godly lives.

- **John 3:19-20** (AKJV)— "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.."

    - Jesus explains that people who live in darkness (sin) avoid the light (truth) because they do not want their sinful deeds to be revealed. Darkness represents evil actions that are in opposition to the righteousness and holiness of God.

1.2 Darkness as Spiritual Blindness and Deception

- **2 Corinthians 4:4** (AKJV)(— "In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine to them"

    - Spiritual darkness is also linked to blindness and deception. Those who are in darkness are unable to see the truth of the gospel, as their minds are blinded by the god of this world (Satan). This spiritual darkness keeps people from recognizing the light of Christ, which brings salvation.

- **1 John 1:5-6** (AKJV)— "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: ."

    - Here, darkness is associated with deception and living in sin while claiming fellowship with God. To walk in darkness means to live in sin, to live a life that contradicts the truth of God's Word.

2. Why Are Believers Called to Have No Fellowship with Darkness?

The call to avoid fellowship with darkness is a central aspect of the Christian's life of holiness. Believers are called to be distinct from the world and its ways because they have been brought into the light of Christ. Fellowship with darkness is incompatible with the new nature of a believer.

2.1 Believers Are Transformed into the Light

- **Ephesians 5:8** (AKJV)— "For you were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light:"

    - Paul emphasizes that believers were once in darkness but have now been brought into the light of Christ. Because of this transformation, they are called to live according to their new identity. Fellowship with darkness is inconsistent with the believer's new life in Christ.

- **1 Peter 2:9** (AKJV)— "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light;"
    - Believers are described as a people who have been called out of darkness into God's marvelous light. This divine calling separates them from the world and its ways, calling them to live in holiness and truth.

2.2 Fellowship with Darkness Pollutes and Corrupts

- **2 Corinthians 6:14-15** (AKJV)— "Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness? 15And what concord has Christ with Belial? or what part has he that believes with an infidel?"
    - Paul warns against being "unequally yoked" with unbelievers, using the analogy of light and darkness to show that there is no true fellowship between the two. Fellowship with darkness corrupts and pollutes the believer**'**s life and faith, leading to spiritual compromise.
- **James 4:4** (AKJV)— "You adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."
    - The friendship with the world is likened to spiritual adultery because it represents a divided loyalty. To align oneself with the ways of the world is to be in opposition to God, which is an act of spiritual betrayal.

2.3 Darkness Leads to Spiritual Death

- **Romans 6:21-22** (AKJV)— "What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life. "
    - Darkness, or sin, leads to death and destruction. When believers live in darkness, they return to the things they once did before knowing Christ—things that lead to spiritual death. The call to have no fellowship with darkness is a call to live a life that leads to life—eternal life in Christ.

3. How Should Believers Avoid Fellowship with Darkness?

Believers are called not only to avoid direct participation in sinful acts but also to reject the underlying attitudes, values, and systems that are in opposition to God. This involves both an internal and external commitment to live according to the light of God's truth.

3.1 Reject Sinful Behaviors and Practices

- **Ephesians 5:11** (AKJV)— "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. "
    - Believers are called to reject and expose the "unfruitful works of darkness"—the sinful actions and behaviors that are common in a world that is spiritually lost. Instead of participating in sin, Christians are to live in a way that shines the light of Christ into the darkness.

- **Colossians 3:5-7** (AKJV)— “(Put to death) Mortify therefore your members (old spiritual nature) which are on the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6For which things ’sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience: 7In the which you also walked some time, when you lived in them. "
    - Paul gives a list of sinful behaviors that belong to the "old life" and urges believers to put them to death. These sinful practices are associated with the darkness that believers are to flee from.

3.2 Walk in the Light of God’s Word

- **Psalm 119:105** (AKJV)— "Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path."
    - God’s Word is a source of light that guides believers away from darkness and toward righteousness. To avoid fellowship with darkness, believers must immerse themselves in the truth of Scripture, allowing it to direct their steps.
- **1 John 1:7** (AKJV)— "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleans us from all sin."
    - Walking in the light means living in accordance with God’s truth. Fellowship with one another is grounded in walking in the light of Christ, which cleanses believers from sin and enables them to live in purity.

3.3 Avoid Worldly Influence and Associations

- **1 John 2:15-17** (AKJV)— "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God stays for ever.."
    - Believers are called to reject the world’s system and values, which are often based on desires, pride, and selfishness. Instead, they are to focus on doing the will of God, which leads to eternal life.

3.4 Expose Darkness through Righteous Living

- **Matthew 5:14-16** (AKJV)— "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light to all that are in the house. 16Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.."
    - Believers are called to be the light of the world, and one of the ways they expose darkness is by living lives that reflect God’s glory. Through good works and a godly life, Christians show the world the difference Christ makes, thereby dispelling darkness.

4. Conclusion: Living as Children of Light

The command to "have no fellowship with darkness" is a call to live in a way that reflects the holiness and righteousness of God. Darkness, which represents sin, evil, and spiritual blindness, has no place in the life of a believer. Christians are called to walk in the light of God's truth, reject sin, and live in a way that brings glory to God.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are to continually distance ourselves from the ways of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and instead walk in the light of Christ. This means rejecting sin, living according to God's Word, and shining as lights in a dark world, showing others the way to salvation through Jesus Christ. By doing so, we fulfill our calling to be distinct, holy, and set apart for God's purposes.

(187) Awake, O Sleeper:

Scripture Reference: *Ephesians 5:14 (AKJV)* - "Why he says, Awake you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. 15See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17Why be you not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.'"

Reflection:

In our busy lives, it's easy to drift into a state of spiritual slumber, lulled by daily routines and distractions. The call to "Awake, O sleeper" is a powerful reminder of our need for spiritual vigilance and awareness.

When Paul penned these words to the Ephesians, he urged them to live in the light of Christ. This awakening is not just about physical alertness but a deep spiritual awareness that transforms our lives and our relationship with God.

Being Aware:

1. **Awareness of God's Presence**: We often forget that God is ever-present, guiding us. *Psalm 139:7-10* reminds us that there is nowhere we can go to escape His Spirit. Being aware of His presence encourages us to live in a way that honors Him.
2. **Awareness of the Times**: We live in a world filled with uncertainty and change. *Matthew 24:42* tells us, "Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." Being aware of the times helps us stay prepared for Christ's return and live with urgency in our mission.
3. **Beware of False Teachings**: In a world filled with various ideologies, we must be discerning. *2 Timothy 4:3* warns us that people will accumulate teachers who suit their own passions. It is vital to ground ourselves in Scripture and seek the truth so we won't be led astray.
4. **Beware of Temptations**: Life is filled with distractions and temptations that can pull us away from God. *1 Peter 5:8* encourages us to be sober-minded and watchful, reminding us that our adversary seeks to lead us astray. Awareness of our weaknesses and the enemy's tactics is essential in our spiritual journey.

5. **Conviction and Repentance:** Is there something that God**'**s Holy Spirit is convicting your heart about? Perhaps it**'**s time to return to your first love, as mentioned in *Revelation 2:4-5*, where we are called to remember where we have fallen and repent. Overcoming lukewarmness (Revelation 3:15-16) means reigniting our passion for Christ and actively seeking to follow His call. Ask yourself: What is God calling me to do today?
6. **The Harvest is Ripe**: Jesus tells us in *John 4:35*, **"**Do you not say, **'**There are yet four months, then comes the harvest**'**? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest." As we awaken, we recognize the urgency of the mission to share the Gospel and serve others. The world is in need of hope, and we are called to be the light.
7. **Awareness to Love:** Above all, we are called to love. *John 13:34-35* reminds us that Jesus instructed us to love one another as He loved us. This selfless, sacrificial love is the hallmark of our faith. Are we embodying this love in our interactions with others? Being aware of our capacity to love as Jesus did transforms not only our hearts but also the world around us.
8. **Understanding the Will of God:** The key to understanding God's will is rooted in walking wisely and intentionally. Ephesians 5:17 urges us to "understand what the will of the Lord is." This requires waking up from spiritual slumber and intentionally seeking His guidance in every aspect of our lives. We are called to redeem the time, not to waste it, as the days are evil. This means living with purpose, making decisions that reflect God's will, and walking in alignment with His truth, grace, and love.

Romans 12:1-2:(AKJV)

"I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2**And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**"

1 Thessalonians 4:3:

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18:

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

By awakening to God's presence and leading, we can better understand His will for us and navigate the challenges of life with wisdom. This awareness not only helps us individually but also positions us to impact the world around us for His Kingdom. As we embrace His calling, we come to know His will, not just in our lives but in the lives of those we encounter.

Response:

Take a moment to reflect on your spiritual state. Are there areas where you feel asleep or distracted? Ask God to awaken your heart and mind. Pray for clarity to discern the times, the teachings you encounter, and the temptations you face.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, awaken my spirit from slumber. Help me to be vigilant and aware of Your presence, the times we live in, and the truth of Your Word. Guard my heart against false teachings and temptations, and remind me of the urgency of the harvest. May Your light shine brightly in me and through me. In Jesus ’name, I pray. Amen.

As you go through your day, carry this reminder with you: **Awake, O sleeper**. Let the light of Christ enlighten your path and inspire you to share His love with the world around you.

(188) Surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus Christ:

Introduction

The lordship of Jesus Christ is foundational to our Christian faith. It is not merely a theological concept but a call to personal surrender and transformation. Jesus, as sovereign Lord, holds authority over all creation, and believers are called to submit to His reign in every aspect of their lives. This surrender is not one of passive acceptance but an active, ongoing choice to acknowledge His rule and align one's life with His will. If we don’t surrender our old sinful nature to Jesus, and abide in His grace and forgiveness, then we are not of God and rebellious, foolishly making ourselves lord, or satan and an enemy of God. Jesus The New Testament teaches that true discipleship involves recognizing the authority of Jesus and responding in obedience, worship, and devotion. This commentary will explore the biblical teaching on the lordship of Jesus Christ, the necessity of surrender, and the practical outworking of submitting to Christ's reign in the life of the believer.

1. The Sovereignty of Jesus Christ

Jesus' lordship is rooted in His divine nature as the Son of God and the second person of the Trinity. His sovereignty is not just a future reality but a present one, demonstrated through His resurrection, ascension, and reign at the right hand of the Father.

1.1 Jesus is Lord Over All Creation

Colossians 1:16-17 (AKJV) – "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. ." These verses affirm that Jesus, as Creator, has ultimate authority over all things. His lordship encompasses both the material and spiritual realms, as well as earthly and heavenly powers. This sovereign control is not a distant or abstract concept, but an active reality in which everything is held together by Him. To surrender to the lordship of Jesus means recognizing that He is the ultimate authority in our lives, not just in our spiritual lives, but in every aspect of creation.

1.2 Jesus is Lord Over His People

Ephesians 1:22-23 (AKJV) – "And has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23Which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all." As Lord, Jesus is not only the ruler of the cosmos but also the head of the Church. The Church, as His body, exists under His authority, and its mission is to submit to His guidance and direction. The lordship of Jesus is central to the identity of the Church; it is through His authority that the Church lives, grows, and carries out its mission in the world. To surrender to Jesus as Lord is to recognize that the Church exists to glorify Him and fulfill His purposes on earth.

1.3 Jesus is Lord Through His Death and Resurrection

Matthew 28:18 (AKJV) – "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.'" The resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate demonstration of His sovereignty. In rising from the dead, Jesus triumphed over sin, death, and the powers of darkness, affirming His rightful rule over all things. The declaration of "all authority" confirms that His reign is not limited but universal. His sovereignty is not just theoretical but is exercised in the world today, as He actively works through His people to advance His kingdom.

2. The Necessity of Surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus

Surrendering to Jesus as Lord is not optional for a Christian; it is the heart of true discipleship. This surrender involves a complete reorientation of one's life, from self-rule to submission to Christ's authority. It requires a willingness to yield one's will, desires, and plans to God's purposes.

2.1 A Call to Total Surrender

Luke 9:23-24 (AKJV) – "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24For whoever will save his life shall lose it: but whoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. .'" Jesus teaches that discipleship involves denying oneself, taking up the cross daily, and following Him. This call to self-denial is an invitation to surrender all areas of life—our ambitions, desires, and possessions—to Christ. The daily decision to submit to His lordship is essential to living as His disciple. True life is found not in the pursuit of self-fulfillment but in giving oneself over to the purposes of Christ.

2.2 Surrender is an Act of Obedience

John 14:15 (AKJV) – "If you love me, keep my commandments." Surrendering to Jesus as Lord is synonymous with obedience. A believer's love for Jesus is demonstrated through obedience to His commands. This obedience is not a burdensome duty but a joyful response to His grace and authority. When we recognize Jesus as Lord, we understand that His commands are for our good and His glory. True submission to His lordship leads to a transformed life marked by holiness, righteousness, and a deepening relationship with Him.

2.3 Surrender Brings Freedom and Purpose

Romans 6:16-18 (AKJV) – "Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness? 17But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18Being then made

free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness." Surrendering to Jesus brings true freedom. While the world promotes self-rule and independence, the Bible teaches that true freedom is found in surrendering to the Lordship of Christ. As believers, we are freed from the bondage of sin and called to live in obedience to Jesus. This surrender leads to righteousness and fulfillment of God's purposes in our lives.

3. Practical Ways to Surrender to the Lordship of Jesus

Surrendering to Jesus as Lord involves more than a one-time decision; it is an ongoing process of submitting every part of life to His authority. Here are practical ways to live out this surrender:

3.1 Live with an Eternal Perspective

Colossians 3:1-2 (AKJV) – "If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. 2Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Living under the lordship of Christ involves setting our minds on eternal priorities rather than earthly concerns. This perspective shifts how we view our possessions, relationships, work, and time. Surrendering to Christ means we live for His kingdom, not just for our own comfort or gain.

3.2 Submit in Every Area of Life

Romans 12:1-2 (AKJV) – "I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." True surrender involves presenting every part of our lives—our bodies, minds, time, and talents—as living sacrifices to God. This is not a passive submission but an active choice to align our lives with His will. This involves ongoing transformation through the renewing of our minds, enabling us to discern and obey God**'**s will.

3.3 Trust in Jesus **'**Lordship

Matthew 11:28-30 (AKJV) – "Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke on you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. 30For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
Surrendering to Jesus as Lord involves trusting in His care, provision, and leadership. Jesus invites us to take His yoke upon us, which symbolizes shared responsibility. His lordship is not a harsh burden but a gentle guide. Surrendering to Him leads to rest for our souls as we trust in His perfect will and leadership.

4. Conclusion: The Joy of Surrendering to Jesus **'**Lordship

Surrendering to Jesus as Lord is the heart of authentic discipleship. It is a call to acknowledge His sovereignty over all creation and to submit our lives to His perfect will. In surrender, we find true freedom, purpose, and fulfillment. By continually yielding to His authority in every area of our lives, we align ourselves with His kingdom purposes, bringing glory to God and advancing the mission of the Church. The call to surrender is not one of defeat but of victory, as we experience the peace and joy of living under the reign of Jesus Christ, our Sovereign Lord.

Jesus Our Sovereign Lord: Surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus Christ as Our King - Continued … Introduction Jesus Christ is not only our Savior, Lord but also our King. The New Testament presents Jesus as the King of the Kingdom of God, the one who reigns with all authority over heaven and earth. His kingship is not limited to a future reality but is a present, dynamic reign that governs the lives of His people. As our King, Jesus demands our allegiance and submission. His kingdom is radically different from the kingdoms of this world, and His reign is marked by love, justice, and holiness. Surrendering to the lordship of Jesus as our King means recognizing His authority, submitting to His rule, and living out the values of His Kingdom.

This commentary will explore the biblical teaching on Jesus' kingship, the nature of His reign, and the practical implications of surrendering to Him as King. It will examine how acknowledging Jesus as King transforms our lives, our priorities, and our relationships with others.

Philippians 2:10-11(AKJV): That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1. The Kingship of Jesus Christ

Jesus **'**kingship is central to the gospel message. His reign, inaugurated through His life, death, and resurrection, is now exercised in the hearts of believers and will one day be fully realized when He returns to establish His eternal Heavenly Kingdom.

1.1 Jesus is the King of God's Kingdom

Matthew 28:18 (AKJV) – "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.'" Jesus declares His universal authority as King over all things. His kingship is not limited to a geographical region or specific people; it is global and eternal. As the King of God's Kingdom, He has been given all authority to rule, both in the spiritual realm and in the physical world. His reign is already established, and all believers are called to live under His sovereign authority, submitting to His rule in every area of life.

1.2 Jesus is the Promised King from the Line of David

Luke 1:32-33 (AKJV) – "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give to him the throne of his father David: 33And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Jesus **'**kingship fulfills the ancient promise made to King David that one of his descendants would sit on his throne forever (2 Samuel 7:16). Jesus, as the eternal Son of God, has come to establish this promised Kingdom. His reign is not temporary, but eternal, and His authority is established on the basis of His divine nature and His fulfillment of the Davidic covenant.

1.3 Jesus is the King Who Reigns with Justice and Righteousness

Isaiah 9:6-7 (AKJV) – "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given: and the government shall be on his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, on the throne of David, and on his kingdom, to order it,

and to establish it with judgment and with justice from now on even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." Jesus ’reign is marked by justice and righteousness. Unlike the rulers of this world, whose authority is often tainted by corruption and injustice, Jesus ’kingship brings perfect peace, justice, and order. His reign is characterized by the fulfillment of God’s will, the establishment of truth, and the lifting up of the humble and oppressed. His Kingdom is one where righteousness dwells, and His subjects are called to reflect His character in their lives.

2. Surrendering to the Kingship of Jesus

To surrender to Jesus as King means to acknowledge His authority and to live in submission to His reign. This involves a radical shift in how we view our lives, our priorities, and our relationships with others. The Kingdom of God is not a mere extension of our worldly ambitions but a completely new reality that demands a life of obedience and humility.

2.1 Surrender is a Call to Submission and Obedience

Matthew 6:33 (AKJV) – "But seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.." Jesus calls His followers to seek His Kingdom first—above all other things. This involves submitting to His rule in every area of life, from our ambitions and careers to our relationships and finances. To surrender to Jesus as King means that His will takes precedence over our own. We are called to prioritize His Kingdom, knowing that when we submit to His rule, He will take care of our needs.

2.2 Surrender is a Call to Humility and Service

Mark 10:42-45 (AKJV) – "But Jesus called them to him, and says to them, You know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority on them. 43But so shall it not be among you: but whoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: 44And whoever of you will be the most chief, shall be servant of all. 45For even the Son of man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.'" The Kingdom of God operates under a completely different set of values from the kingdoms of this world. In the world, power is exercised through domination and control, but in the Kingdom of God, true greatness is found in humility and service. Jesus, the King, exemplified this by coming not to be served but to serve. To surrender to His kingship means embracing a life of humble service, following His example of self-sacrificial love and putting others ’needs before our own.

2.3 Surrender is a Call to Repentance and Transformation

Luke 13:3 (AKJV) – "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; " The Kingdom of God is a kingdom of repentance. Jesus, as King, calls His subjects to turn away from sin and live according to the values of His Kingdom. Repentance is not merely a one-time act but a continual turning away from self-rule and sin, and a turning toward the King’s will. True surrender to Jesus means allowing Him to transform us from the inside out, making us more like Him in character, thought, and action.

3. The Implications of Living Under the Kingship of Jesus

Living under the kingship of Jesus impacts every area of life. It affects how we relate to others, how we view the world, and how we carry out our mission as His ambassadors.

3.1 Our Identity is Defined by His Kingship

1 Peter 2:9 (AKJV) – "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; " As citizens of the Kingdom of God, our identity is rooted in Jesus, our King. We are no longer defined by our past sins or earthly status, but by our relationship to Him. We are part of a royal priesthood, called to represent Him in the world. Our lives are to be a testimony to the power and grace of the King who called us into His marvelous light.

3.2 Our Relationships Reflect His Kingship

Matthew 22:37-40 (AKJV) – "Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38This is the first and great commandment. 39And the second is like to it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'" Under the kingship of Jesus, our relationships with others are transformed. We are called to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus **'**command to love our enemies, forgive those who wrong us, and serve others is a direct reflection of His Kingdom values. As we submit to His kingship, our relationships reflect His love, mercy, and grace.

3.3 Our Mission is to Extend His Kingdom

Matthew 28:18-20 (AKJV) – "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.19Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and, see, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen..” The Great Commission is a call to extend the rule of King Jesus to the ends of the earth. As His subjects, we are called to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey the King**'**s commands. Our mission is not just to spread information but to bring people into the kingdom, where they will acknowledge Jesus as their King and live under His reign. This mission requires sacrifice, boldness, and a willingness to go wherever the King leads.

4. Conclusion: The Blessing of Surrendering to Jesus as King

Surrendering to Jesus as our King is the ultimate act of worship and obedience. His reign is just, loving, and transformative, and living under His kingship brings peace, purpose, and fulfillment. As we submit to His rule, we experience the blessings of His Kingdom and are called to extend those blessings to others. Ultimately, the reign of Jesus is not only the hope of the future but a present reality in the lives of all who follow Him. Living under His kingship is a life marked by joy, service, humility, and a deep commitment to fulfilling the mission of His Kingdom on earth.

(189) Maintain Unity Within The Church:

Introduction

The unity of the Church is a central doctrine and teaching in the New Testament, often emphasized by Jesus and the apostles as essential for the spiritual health, witness, and mission of the Church, both within the Church and to the world. Unity within the body of Christ reflects the oneness of God and His desire for His people to be united in purpose, faith, and love. Division, on the other hand, is seen as a source of weakness, confusion, and harm to the Church**'**s witness in the world.

Maintaining unity does not mean to condone sin and evil within the church, but rather for the individuals within the church to examine themselves if there be anything with their own lives that is contrary to the nature of Jesus Christ and for each Christian to personally repent, and purpose to do the will of God. By so doing the unity of our faith and the love of Jesus will be fully established by God's Holy Spirit.

This commentary will explore the biblical teaching on maintaining unity within the Church. It will address the nature of Christian unity, the reasons for maintaining it, and practical ways to preserve and promote unity among believers.

1. The Foundation of Unity: God's Purpose for the Church

Christian unity is rooted in God**'**s own nature and purpose. The Church is called to reflect the oneness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and to live in harmony as a testimony to the world of God**'**s love and salvation.

1.1 Unity Reflects the Nature of God

- **John 17:20-23** (AKJV)— *"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21That they all may be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22And the glory which you gave me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23I in them, and you in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that you have sent me, and have loved them, as you have loved me."*
    - Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17 reveals the deep connection between unity and the nature of God. Just as the Father and Son are one, Jesus desires that His followers be one with each other. This unity reflects the perfect unity of the Godhead and serves as a witness to the world of God's love and mission. The Church**'**s unity is not merely for its own benefit but for the advancement of the gospel and the glory of God.

1.2 Unity Is the Will of God

- **Ephesians 4:3-6 (AKJV)**— *"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; 5One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. ."*
    - Paul exhorts the Ephesian church to "maintain" the unity of the Spirit, indicating that unity is not just a natural outcome of Christian community but a continual responsibility. The unity of the Church is a gift from the Holy Spirit, but believers are called to actively preserve it through their actions

and attitudes. The bond of peace is essential for maintaining unity, as conflict and strife disrupt the peace that is meant to characterize Christian relationships.

1.3 Unity Is a Sign of the Church's Mission

- **1 Corinthians 1:10** — *"Now I beseech you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.."*
    - Paul's appeal to the Corinthians highlights that unity is central to the effectiveness of the Church's witness. When divisions and quarrels arise within the Church, the message of the gospel is compromised, and the Church's testimony to the world is weakened. Unity in thought and judgment is essential for the Church to fulfill its mission to proclaim the gospel in a divided and hostile world.

2. The Importance of Unity Within the Church

Unity within the Church is not a mere ideal; it is vital to the life and health of the Church. It affects relationships among believers, the integrity of the Church's witness, and the effectiveness of its mission.

2.1 Unity Promotes Peace and Harmony

- **Romans 15:5-6** (AKJV)— *"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: 6That you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."*
    - Harmony and peace within the Church are vital for promoting unity. The God of peace and encouragement desires His people to live in harmony with each other, united in worship and praise. When believers are united in spirit and purpose, they bring glory to God as they worship together with one voice.

2.2 Unity Provides Strength and Support in Times of Trial

- **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** (AKJV)— *"(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: "*
    - While not originally written for the Church, these verses in Ecclesiastes highlight the importance of mutual support in times of difficulty. The Christian life is filled with challenges, and believers are called to support one another. The unity of the Church provides strength and encouragement, especially during trials, so that no believer is left to struggle alone.

2.3 Unity Reflects the Love of Christ

- **John 13:34-35** (AKJV)— *"A new commandment I give to you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another*
    - The love that Christians show to one another is a direct reflection of the love that Christ has shown to them. This love is the foundation of unity, and when the Church is united in love, it becomes a powerful testimony to the world of the reality of Christ's love and the gospel.

3. How to Maintain Unity Within the Church

Maintaining unity within the Church requires intentional effort, humility, and a commitment to peace and reconciliation. The New Testament provides specific guidance for how believers can protect and promote unity.

3.1 Embrace Humility and Gentleness

- **Ephesians 4:2-7 (AKJV)** — *"With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; 3Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; 5One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. 7But to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.."*
    - Humility and gentleness are key virtues in maintaining unity. Believers are called to bear with one another, showing patience and forbearance in the face of differences. These attitudes prevent division and foster an environment where peace and unity can thrive.

3.2 Avoid Pride, Selfish Ambition, and Divisiveness

- **Philippians 2:3-4** (AKJV)— *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."*
    - Pride and selfish ambition are major threats to unity. When individuals prioritize their own desires over the well-being of others, divisions naturally arise. In contrast, humility and selflessness are essential for maintaining harmony and peace within the body of Christ.
- **Titus 3:9-10** (AKJV)— *"But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. 10A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject;"*
    - Paul warns against divisive arguments and quarrels that can disrupt the peace of the Church. Believers are called to avoid engaging in unprofitable disputes and to address those who cause division after careful warning.

3.3 Pursue Peace and Reconciliation

- **Matthew 18:15-17** (AKJV)— *"Moreover if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone: if he shall hear you, you have gained your brother. 16But if he will not hear you, then take with you one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*

17And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be to you as an heathen man and a publican. "

- Conflict is inevitable in any community, but the Bible provides clear steps for resolving disputes and maintaining peace. Believers are called to confront one another lovingly and privately, seeking reconciliation rather than allowing conflicts to fester and divide the body.

3.4 Focus on the Gospel and Common Purpose

- **1 Corinthians 1:10** (AKJV)— *"Now I beseech you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."*
  - The gospel is the central foundation of Christian unity. When believers focus on the essential truths of the gospel—salvation by grace through faith in Christ—they are united in purpose and mission. Disagreements and divisions often arise when secondary issues overshadow the central truths of the faith. Keeping the gospel at the forefront of church life is crucial for maintaining unity.

3.5 Pray for Unity

- **John 17:20-21** — *"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21That they all may be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that you have sent me."*
  - Jesus prayed for the unity of all believers. Prayer is a powerful tool in maintaining and promoting unity within the Church. Believers should regularly pray for one another, for the Church, and for peace and harmony within the body of Christ.

4. Conclusion: Unity as a Testimony to the World

Unity within the Church is not optional; it is essential to the life and mission of the Church. It is a reflection of God**'**s nature, a demonstration of Christ**'**s love, and a powerful witness to the world of the gospel. Christians are called to maintain unity through humility, love, and reconciliation, focusing on the gospel and the shared mission of the Church.

When the Church is united, it becomes strong in faith and in God's Spirit, a beacon of light in a fractured and divided world. As the body of Christ lives in harmony, it demonstrates the transformative power of the gospel and invites others to experience the peace and unity found in Jesus Christ. Therefore, maintaining unity within the Church is not only for the benefit of its members but is also a vital part of the Church**'**s mission to bring glory to God and to make disciples of all nations.

(180) Keep God's Commandments:

Introduction

The call to "keep God’s commandments" is a foundational doctrine throughout Scripture, emphasizing that true love for God is expressed through obedience to His Word. While salvation is a gift of grace and not something earned by works, obedience to God’s commandments remains a vital part of the Christian life. To keep God’s commandments is not a burden but a privilege, reflecting a heart that seeks to honor and please Him. Jesus Himself summarized the commandments as love for God and love for others (Matthew 22:37-40), showing that keeping God’s commandments is rooted in love, not mere rule-following. This commentary will explore the biblical teaching on keeping God’s commandments, the blessings that come from obedience, and how believers can live in accordance with God's will.

1. The Biblical Call to Keep God’s Commandments

From the Old Testament to the New, the Bible consistently calls God’s people to keep His commandments, underlining the importance of obedience as an expression of faith and love.

1.1 The Old Testament Foundation: Obedience as Covenant Loyalty

Deuteronomy 5:33 (AKJV)— *"You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess.."* In the Old Testament, keeping God’s commandments was integral to the covenant relationship between Israel and God. Obedience was tied to the promise of blessing—life, prosperity, and peace in the land. The Israelites were called to walk in God’s ways to experience the fullness of His promises. The commandments were not arbitrary rules but a pathway to a life of fulfillment and blessing in relationship with God.

Exodus 19:5 (AKJV)— *"Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people: for all the earth is mine:"*
The Israelites were set apart as God’s special people, but their special status was contingent on obedience to God’s covenant. To keep God’s commandments was to demonstrate loyalty and to be a witness of His holiness and justice to the world.

1.2 The New Testament Revelation: Obedience as an Expression of Love

John 14:15 (AKJV)— *"If you love me, keep my commandments"* Jesus' words in the Gospel of John make it clear that obedience to God’s commandments is not about legalistic rule-keeping but is a direct expression of love for Christ. The basis for obedience is love, not fear or duty. When believers keep God’s commandments, they demonstrate their love for Him and their desire to honor His Word.

1 John 5:3 (AKJV)— *"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."* The Apostle John teaches that love for God is shown through obedience. Importantly, John reminds believers that God’s commandments are not burdensome. Obeying God is not meant to be a heavy, tiresome task but a joyful response to His love and grace.

Matthew 7:24-25 (AKJV)— "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, which built his house on a rock: 25And the rain

descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it fell not: for it was founded on a rock." In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus emphasizes the importance of not just hearing His words but obeying them. Those who do so are likened to a wise builder whose house stands firm in the face of trials. Obedience to God's commandments is the foundation of a life that withstands life's challenges.

2. The Blessings of Keeping God's Commandments

Obedience to God's commandments brings blessings both in this life and in the life to come. Scripture highlights the benefits of living in accordance with God's will.

2.1 Blessings in the Present Life

Deuteronomy 28:1-2 (AKJV)— *"And it shall come to pass, if you shall listen diligently to the voice of the LORD your God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command you this day, that the LORD your God will set you on high above all nations of the earth: 2And all these blessings shall come on you, and overtake you, if you shall listen to the voice of the LORD your God. ."* In the Old Testament, God promised that obedience would bring blessings of prosperity, peace, and security in the land. These blessings were tangible, affecting all aspects of life—from agriculture to family life, to health and wealth. Keeping God's commandments led to a flourishing life under His care and protection.

Psalm 119:1-2 (AKJV)— "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. 2Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. The psalmist declares that those who walk in the law of the Lord are blessed. There is a deep sense of fulfillment and joy that comes from living according to God's Word. The commandments are not restrictive but are a source of blessing for those who earnestly seek God with their whole heart.

John 15:10-11 (AKJV)— "If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.11These things have I spoken to you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Jesus promises that keeping His commandments will lead to abiding in His love and experiencing His joy. Obedience to God does not diminish joy but increases it, as the believer's life is in alignment with God's will and purpose.

2.2 Eternal Blessing

Matthew 19:17-19 (AKJV)— "And he said to him, Why call you me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if you will enter into life, keep the commandments. 18He says to him, Which? Jesus said, You shall do no murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, 19Honor your father and your mother: and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus teaches that eternal life is linked to keeping God's commandments. Though salvation is by grace through faith, keeping God's commandments is evidence of a transformed life and a desire to enter fully into the kingdom of God.

Revelation 22:14 (AKJV)— *"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city"* In the final vision of the New Jerusalem, those who keep God's commandments are promised the blessing of eternal life, access to the tree of life, and the joy of entering into God's

presence forever. Keeping God's commandments is tied to the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises for His people.

3. How to Keep God’s Commandments

Keeping God’s commandments involves more than outward compliance; it requires a transformed heart and a deep desire to live according to God’s will.

3.1 By Loving God and Loving Others

Matthew 22:37-40 (AKJV)— *"Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38This is the first and great commandment. 39And the second is like to it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."* Jesus teaches that the entire law is summed up in two commandments: love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. The foundation of keeping God’s commandments is love—love for God and love for others. When these are prioritized, all other commandments fall into place.

John 14:21 (AKJV)— *"He that has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me: and he that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."* Jesus connects keeping His commandments with love. The believer’s love for Christ is demonstrated through obedience. When we obey Christ’s commands, we show our love for Him, and in return, He reveals more of Himself to us.

3.2 Through the Power of the Holy Spirit

Romans 8:4 (AKJV)— *"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."* The Holy Spirit enables believers to live according to God’s will. While obedience is a choice, it is through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit that we are able to live out God’s commandments. The Spirit transforms our hearts, helping us to desire what God desires and to walk in His ways.

Ezekiel 36:27 (AKJV)— *"And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them."* In the Old Testament, God promised that He would give His people a new heart and put His Spirit within them. This transformation would enable them to obey His commands. This promise finds its fulfillment in the New Testament through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in every believer’s life.

3.3 By Renewing the Mind

Romans 12:2 (AKJV)— *"And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."* To keep God’s commandments, we must allow our minds to be transformed by the truth of God’s Word. This entails spending quality time in God’s word, reading, meditating on His word, and intently listening. This renewal of the mind enables us to understand God’s will more clearly and to live in alignment with His commands.

4. Conclusion: Keeping God’s Commandments as a Response to His Love

Keeping God’s commandments is not about legalistic adherence to rules but a loving response to God’s grace and love. It is the way believers express their relationship with God and demonstrate their love for Him and for others. The blessings of obedience—both

now and in eternity—are the result of living in alignment with God’s will. As believers, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to keep God’s commandments, and we do so joyfully and willingly as an act of love. In keeping His commandments, we experience the fullness of life that God desires for us, both in this life and in the life to come.

(191) Be Christlike:

Scripture: Ephesians 5:1-2 (AKJV):"Be you therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling smell."

To be Christlike is to embody the character and actions of Jesus Christ in our daily lives. As followers of Christ, we are called to imitate His love, compassion, humility, and servanthood. The Scriptures provide us with a clear blueprint for what it means to live a life that reflects the heart of Christ.

One of the central aspects of being Christlike is to walk in love. Jesus demonstrated love for all people, regardless of their background or circumstances. He reached out to the marginalized, the outcasts, and the sinners, showing compassion and acceptance to everyone He encountered. As followers of Christ, we are called to love one another as He loved us. It should be also mentioned that bringing correction, edification and reproof in a Christlike manner is important as well as when it necessary to confront hypocrites and those whom are lukewarm in the church, who need to repent.

Furthermore, being Christlike involves developing a spirit of humility and servanthood. Jesus, the Son of God, humbled Himself and took on the form of a servant, willingly laying down His life for the redemption of humanity. He taught us that true greatness is found in serving others and putting their needs above our own. As His disciples, we are called to follow His example, serving others with humility and selflessness.

Another aspect of being Christlike is to walk in obedience to God's Word. Jesus lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father, fulfilling His divine mission and carrying out His will on earth. He taught us the importance of aligning our lives with God's purposes and following His commandments. As we study the Scriptures and seek to obey God's Word, we grow in conformity to the image of Christ, becoming more like Him in character and conduct.

To overcome temptations and repeating various sins, we need to maintain an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, following His word and emulating His life in word and deed. As we purpose to love as Jesus loved us, we find ourselves sinning less and less, and overcome temptations.

Moreover, being Christlike involves sharing the good news of salvation with others and making disciples of all nations. Jesus commissioned His followers to go into all the world and preach the gospel, baptizing believers and teaching them to obey His commandments. As ambassadors of Christ, we are called to proclaim His message of

hope and reconciliation to a lost and broken world, inviting others to experience the transformative power of His love and grace.

In conclusion, being Christlike is not merely about outward actions but about the transformation of the heart and mind. It is a lifelong walk of faith becoming more like Jesus in our attitudes, behaviors, and relationships. As we abide in Him and allow God's Holy Spirit to work in us, we will be able to put off our old sinful ways and increasingly reflect His image to the world, bringing glory to His name and advancing His kingdom.

Key Scriptures

John 13:15 (AKJV) "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."

1 Peter 2:21 (AKJV) "For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps:"

1 John 2:6 (AKJV) "He that said he stays in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

1 John 3:16 (AKJV) "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers."

Ephesians 5:1-2 (AKJV) "Be you therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling smell."

Colossians 3:12 (AKJV) "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering;"

Philippians 2:3-5 (AKJV) "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"

1 Corinthians 11:1 (AKJV) "Be you followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

Philippians 2:5 (AKJV) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

Romans 15:1-3 (AKJV) "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached you fell on me."

(192) Keep Oil In Our Lamps:

Scripture: Matthew 25:1-13 (AKJV)

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened to ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom comes; go you out

to meet him. 7Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8And the foolish said to the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go you rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12But he answered and said, Truly I say to you, I know you not. 13Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man comes."

In Jesus' parable of the ten virgins, He illustrates the importance of being prepared for His return by using the metaphor of oil for lamps. The wise virgins took extra oil in jars along with their lamps, while the foolish ones did not. This oil symbolizes spiritual readiness and vigilance in anticipation of Christ's coming.

Oil has various symbolic meanings throughout Scripture, often representing the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. In this parable, it signifies the spiritual vitality, endurance, and preparedness needed for the journey of faith.

Just as oil was essential for keeping lamps burning brightly in ancient times, spiritual oil is vital for keeping our hearts aflame with love for God and readiness for His return. It represents the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to live holy and obedient lives, to persevere in faith amidst trials, and to be vigilant and watchful for Christ's coming.

The wise virgins' decision to bring extra oil demonstrates their foresight and wisdom in preparing for the unexpected delay of the bridegroom's arrival. In contrast, the foolish virgins' lack of oil reveals their negligence and lack of foresight, leading to their exclusion from the wedding feast.

As followers of Christ, we are called to emulate the wisdom of the wise virgins by keeping oil in our lamps—by nurturing our relationship with God, cultivating spiritual disciplines such as prayer, worship, study of God's Word, and fellowship with other believers, and remaining vigilant and watchful for Christ's return.

In these uncertain times, it is more crucial than ever to keep oil in our lamps, to stay spiritually alert and prepared for the Lord's coming. Let us not be caught unawares like the foolish virgins, but let us be found faithful and ready, with our lamps burning brightly and our hearts filled with the oil of His Spirit.

May we heed the exhortation of Jesus to "keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour" (Matthew 25:13,), and may we live each day in anticipation of His glorious return.

(193) Prepareness For Christ's Return:

A Call to Wake Up and Repent

CONTENTS

Introduction

- Be Awake
  - Be Watchful
  - Understanding the Signs of the Times
- Living Wisely in the Present Age
- Live Not Foolishly in this Present Age
- Repent
  - Repent From Lukewarmness
  - Repent From Hypocrisy
  - Repent From Sin
- Intimate Time With Jesus
- Preparing Our Hearts
- Guarding Our Hearts: Staying Alert to the Deceptions of the World
- Preparing Our Minds
- Clothe Ourselves In The Love And Righteousness Of Jesus
- Holiness
- Seek God's Holy Spirit and Be Filled
- Preparing Our Lives By Our Actions: To Love, Serve and Minister To Those In Need
- Blessings vs. Consequences of Preparing or Not Preparing Our Lives by Our Actions: To Love, Serve, and Minister to Those in Need
- Share the Good News of Jesus Christ, Evangelize, Missions, Witness
- Pray
- Pray for All of Disciples Of Jesus Christ, around the world to be established In The Love Of Jesus Christ and to be prepared for His return
- Pray The God Raise Up and Send Workers for The Harvest
- Praying for the Return of Christ
- Preparing To Be The Bride Of Jesus Christ
- The Marriage Supper Of The Lamb.

Introduction

As Christians, we eagerly anticipate the glorious second coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We long for the day when He will return in power and great glory to establish His eternal kingdom, wipe away every tear, and make all things new (Revelation 21:4). This anticipation is a core element of our faith, one that drives us to live with hope and purpose in a world that is often filled with evil, daily trials, suffering and uncertainty.

Yet, as we wait for Christ's return, we must pause and ask ourselves a critical question: *Is the Church truly ready for His return?* Is the Bride of Christ prepared to meet her Savior, or have we, in our complacency, become spiritually lethargic, distracted by the affairs of this world, and compromised in our walk with God, in various ways?

The Bible is quite clear that Christ's return will be sudden and unexpected, and that we must live in constant readiness. Jesus Himself warns us in Matthew 24:44, "*So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."* The apostle Paul reaffirms this in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-6, saying, "*For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night... So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober."* The call to be alert, to be awake spiritually, and to live with a sense of urgency is emphasized throughout the New Testament.

The return of Jesus Christ is not just a distant hope for the future; it is a reality that every believer must prepare for with urgency and devotion. The Bible repeatedly warns that Christ's second coming will happen suddenly and unexpectedly, yet believers are called to live in constant readiness. This call to preparedness is not only about spiritual vigilance but also about a transformative life—one that is aligned with God's will, filled with His Spirit, and dedicated to His mission. The Apostle Peter wrote in *2 Peter 3:11-12*, "Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming." Preparation for Christ's return is a comprehensive process that encompasses personal holiness, spiritual alertness, love, and service. It requires both a heart that yearns for Christ's appearing and a life that actively seeks to live in alignment with His Word.

Be Awake

The call to "be awake" is a call to spiritual vigilance and awareness. In the Scriptures, being spiritually awake means being alert to the reality of God's kingdom and the impending return of Christ. Jesus frequently warned His disciples to remain awake, not only physically but spiritually, because the enemy—Satan—seeks to lull Christians into complacency, distract them with the pleasures and cares of life, and rob them of their eternal perspective.

In *Matthew 24:42*, Jesus said, "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come." The call to be awake is a wake-up call to all believers to avoid the dangers of spiritual apathy and distraction. In *Romans 13:11*, Paul also exhorts believers to wake up, "The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed." Spiritual slumber, or indifference, leaves us vulnerable to sin and deception, whereas spiritual alertness keeps us focused on Christ's return and eager to live according to His will.

Being awake means living with a sense of urgency, knowing that each day brings us closer to the day of Christ**’**s return. It involves regularly assessing our hearts, priorities, and actions to ensure that we are living in readiness for that day.

Be Watchful

To be watchful means to maintain a constant awareness of Christ's return and to live in a state of expectation. This state of watchfulness is a call to actively look for the signs of the times, to seek God**’**s direction, and to be prepared for the moment when Jesus will return. In *Mark 13:33*, Jesus commands, **“**Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.” Watchfulness is more than just looking for external signs; it involves a spiritual alertness to the presence of God, the movement of the Holy Spirit, and the state of our own hearts.

The Bible warns of the dangers of neglecting watchfulness. In *Luke 21:34-36*, Jesus warns that many will be weighed down with the cares of this life and fail to be watchful for His return: **“**Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

Being watchful requires us to be constantly vigilant over our own lives, seeking to remain faithful and prepared. It also means not allowing the distractions and temptations of the world to pull us away from the truth and our mission as Christians. Our watchfulness is fueled by prayer, by studying God's Word, and by a deepening relationship with Christ.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus gave clear instructions about the need to be **watchful** and **prepared** for His second coming. In His teachings, He emphasized that no one knows the exact time of His return, but that we must always be ready, living in a state of alertness and vigilance.

Matthew 24:42-51 (AKJV) *"Watch therefore: for you know not what hour your Lord does come. 43But know this, that if the manager of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. 44Therefore be you also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes. 45Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord has made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? 46Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he comes shall find so doing. 47Truly I say to you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. 48But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delays his coming; 49And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; 50The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looks not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, 51And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

- **Action**: Jesus is teaching us to be spiritually **prepared** at all times. Like a homeowner keeping watch for an intruder, we are to be **alert** to the signs of His return and live our lives in a state of **readiness**. This means living with a sense of urgency in our faith, making sure that we are **following Him faithfully**, **serving and ministering to others**

with the love of Jesus Christ, and **pursuing holiness**. The faithful servant of God is Blessed and is prepared for Christ's return.

- While the evil servant, or false Christian who does not serve, and treats others harshly without love, or engages in relentless worldliness is not prepared for Christ's return and will suffer the eternal consequences along with the hypocrites.

Maintaining a Spirit of Watchfulness and Expectation

Jesus calls His followers to live in a **state of watchfulness**, aware that His return could come at any moment. This means that we do not live in complacency, as though we have all the time in the world, but we live in **constant expectation** of His return, ready for Him to come at any time.

Matthew 24:42-44 *"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."*

- **Action**: We are to live with a **watchful spirit**—staying alert, avoiding distractions, and keeping our hearts and minds fixed on the reality of Christ**'**s return. This means we don**'**t live as if we have endless time to repent, evangelize, or grow in holiness. Instead, we live with a sense of **urgency**, knowing that Christ could return at any moment.

Titus 2:11-13 (AKJV) *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; ."*

- **Action**: As we wait for Jesus **'**return, we are called to live **godly lives** that reflect our **hope** in His coming. Our hope in Christ**'**s return shapes the way we live today, enabling us to say no to the world**'**s temptations and live in a way that honors Him.

Understanding the Signs of the Times

Understanding the signs of the times refers to discerning the spiritual and earthly events that point to Christ**'**s second coming. In *Matthew 24:3-14*, Jesus describes a number of signs—wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, and false prophets—that would precede His return. These signs are not meant to be causes for fear but rather reminders that God**'**s plan is unfolding according to His sovereign will. Jesus warned that these signs would increase in frequency and intensity as His return draws near, like birth pains signaling the arrival of a baby (*Matthew 24:8*).

However, understanding the signs also requires spiritual discernment. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees in *Matthew 16:2-3* for being able to interpret the weather but failing to recognize the signs of the times. In the same way, we must not only observe world events but also read them through the lens of Scripture, understanding how they point to the fulfillment of God's prophetic promises. Believers who are awake and watchful

will have their hearts attuned to God's Word and will understand the times in which they live.

Moreover, *Luke 21:28* encourages us that when these signs begin to unfold, we should not be fearful, but rather, **“**stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” Understanding the times helps us to maintain a hopeful and confident posture, not one of fear or uncertainty.

Living Wisely in the Present Age

In the light of Christ's return, living wisely means making decisions that reflect an eternal perspective. The Apostle Paul exhorts us to **“**be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil” (*Ephesians 5:15-16*). This wisdom comes from aligning our lives with God**’**s will, living according to His Word, and using our time, resources, and talents in ways that glorify Him. In *Colossians 4:5*, Paul tells believers to **“**be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.” Wisdom in this age requires that we do not waste time on meaningless pursuits or selfish ambitions, but rather prioritize what matters most—God**’**s kingdom, His will, and eternal rewards.

Living wisely also means making decisions based on eternal values rather than temporary pleasures. The world often encourages us to focus on success, wealth, and personal fulfillment, but these things are fleeting. Instead, we are to fix our eyes on Christ and live with the understanding that He is coming soon and that we will give an account of our lives. *Matthew 6:19-21* teaches that we are to store up treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy and thieves do not break in and steal.

As believers, we are called to live not as fools, but as wise stewards of the life and resources God has given us, making choices that reflect our hope in Christ**’**s return and our desire to live for His glory. This wisdom enables us to discern the best ways to serve, love, and invest in others, as we await the fulfillment of God**’**s redemptive plan.

The apostle Paul urges us to be **wise** and **aware** of the times in which we live, knowing that the days are **evil** and that we must **redeem the time** by living according to God's will. **Living wisely** means that we intentionally seek to honor God in every aspect of our lives—our time, relationships, and actions—while waiting for Christ**’**s return.

Ephesians 5:14-17 (AKJV) *"Why he says, Awake you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. 15See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17Why be you not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.."*

- **Action**: To be spiritually alert and aware of the times, we must live **intentionally**, making the most of every opportunity to do God**’**s will. This includes being diligent in prayer, studying the Scriptures, and **sharing the gospel** with others. Living wisely means that we aren**’**t caught up in **worldly distractions** but instead live with a sense of **purpose** and **urgency** as we wait for Christ**’**s return.

In conclusion, the preparedness for Christ's return involves a vigilant, watchful, and wise way of living that reflects our deep hope and anticipation of His coming. To be awake and watchful means to live in constant readiness, actively discerning the signs of the times, and making choices that align with God's will and eternal purpose. As we live in the present age, we are called to live wisely, not wasting time on things that don't matter, but living in a way that reflects the eternal truths of God's kingdom. This preparation requires intentionality, a deep connection with God, and a life that actively engages with the world around us in love, service, and the proclamation of the gospel.

Live Not Foolishly in this Present Age

In contrast to living wisely, the Bible warns against living foolishly in the present age. Foolishness, according to Scripture, is not merely a lack of intelligence but a failure to live in accordance with God's wisdom and purpose. Living foolishly means prioritizing temporary, worldly pursuits over eternal values. In *Romans 1:21-22*, Paul speaks of those who "although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened." This kind of foolishness is marked by a rejection of God's truth, an indulgence in sin, and a focus on the fleeting pleasures of this world that will ultimately fade away.

The *Proverbs* are filled with warnings against folly. *Proverbs 14:12* states, "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death." A fool is someone who disregards God's Word and seeks to live by his own understanding or by the world's standards. This kind of life is self-centered, often filled with pride, and short-sighted, focused only on the present moment rather than the eternal reality. In *Luke 12:16-21*, Jesus tells the parable of the rich fool, who builds bigger barns to store his wealth, thinking he can enjoy a comfortable life forever, only to be called to account by God.

Living foolishly in the present age involves giving in to the temptations of the flesh, seeking personal gain, and living without consideration for the things that matter most: God's kingdom, His righteousness, and our eternal destiny. The antidote to this foolishness is the wisdom that comes from God—living with an eternal perspective, seeking first His kingdom, and making decisions that reflect our love for Him and others.

Repent

Repentance is a central theme throughout the Bible and is absolutely essential to being prepared for Christ's return. To repent is to turn away from sin and toward God, to acknowledge our wrongdoing, and to seek His forgiveness. In *Acts 3:19*, Peter calls people to "repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." Repentance is not just a one-time act but an ongoing attitude of humility and submission before God. It is a change of mind that leads to a change of direction. It involves both sorrow for sin and a heartfelt desire to live in obedience to God.

Jesus' message was one of repentance. In *Mark 1:15*, He declared, "The time has come, the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" Repentance opens the door for God's grace to cleanse us from our sin, restore our fellowship with Him, and prepare us for His return. When we repent, we acknowledge that we cannot live apart from God and that we need His mercy and transformation in our lives.

Repentance is not about feeling guilty or condemned but about recognizing our need for God's saving grace and desiring to align our hearts with His will. It is a vital part of staying spiritually awake and being prepared for the day of Christ's return. Without repentance, we risk becoming hardened to sin and unprepared to meet our Savior.

Repent from Lukewarmness

One of the most dangerous spiritual conditions is lukewarmness. In *Revelation 3:15-16*, Jesus speaks to the church of Laodicea, saying, "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth." Lukewarmness is the state of being indifferent or half-hearted in our commitment to Christ. It's the attitude of living with one foot in the world and one foot in the kingdom of God, lacking zeal, passion, and a wholehearted devotion to Christ.

Lukewarm Christians are often more concerned with comfort, status, and worldly success than with living for the glory of God. This indifference makes them unprepared for Christ's return, as they are not truly living with an eternal perspective or with a desire to be fully conformed to His image. Jesus calls the lukewarm to repentance, urging them to become fervent in their love for Him. In *Revelation 3:19*, He says, "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent."

Repentance from lukewarmness involves rekindling our first love for Jesus. It means moving from spiritual apathy to passionate pursuit of God, renewing our commitment to live fully for Him, and embracing the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The church must not be indifferent to Christ's return, but always on fire for Him, living each day in anticipation of that glorious day.

Repent from Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy is another condition that must be repented of as we prepare for Christ's return. To be a hypocrite is to present a false outward appearance of righteousness while harboring sin in the heart. Jesus condemned hypocrisy in the Pharisees, calling them "whitewashed tombs" in *Matthew 23:27-28*, **"**Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean."

Hypocrisy is especially dangerous because it deceives not only others but also ourselves. It leads us to think we are living righteously when, in reality, our hearts are far from God. It also undermines our witness to the world, as the unbelieving world is quick to point out when Christians fail to live according to their professed beliefs. In *Matthew 7:21-23*, Jesus warns that on the day of judgment, many will claim to have done great works in His name but will be rejected because they were never truly known by Him.

To repent from hypocrisy means coming before God with sincerity, confessing our sins, and allowing the Holy Spirit to transform us from the inside out. It involves aligning our actions with our beliefs, making sure that our outward behavior reflects the inward work that God is doing in our lives. True repentance means living with integrity, being transparent before God, and ensuring that our faith is genuine and not just a façade.

Repent from Sin

Sin is the primary obstacle to being prepared for Christ**'**s return. The Bible is clear that sin separates us from God and hinders our relationship with Him. In *Isaiah 59:2*, the prophet declares, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear." Sin is not only an act of rebellion against God but also a spiritual disease that corrupts the soul. If left unchecked, sin leads to death and eternal separation from God (*Romans 6:23*).

To prepare for Christ's return, we must repent from all known sin. Repentance from sin is an acknowledgment of our wrongdoing and a sincere turning away from sinful patterns and behaviors. In *1 John 1:9*, we are assured that "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Repentance from sin opens the door to forgiveness, cleansing, and restoration, allowing us to walk in fellowship with God and be ready to meet Him.

Repentance from sin is not a one-time event but a continual process of sanctification. As we grow in our relationship with God, the Holy Spirit convicts us of areas in our lives that are not pleasing to Him. We must remain sensitive to His leading and be quick to confess and turn from sin whenever it arises. This ongoing repentance is vital to keeping our hearts pure and our lives aligned with God**'**s will as we await the return of Christ.

Intimate Time With Jesus

To be truly prepared for Christ's return, we must cultivate an intimate relationship with Him. This relationship is not built on mere ritual or external actions, but on a deep, personal connection with Jesus that comes through prayer, worship, and His Word. Jesus Himself modeled intimacy with the Father, regularly withdrawing to pray and seek God**'**s will. In *John 15:4-5*, He calls us to abide in Him: **"**Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."

Intimate time with Jesus involves more than just attending church or reading the Bible. It**'**s about spending quality time with Him, listening to His voice, and allowing His presence to shape and transform our lives. Jesus desires a deep, abiding relationship with us—one that involves both love and obedience. In *Revelation 3:20*, He says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." This intimate fellowship is essential to our preparation for His return.

As we spend time with Jesus, we are filled with His love, His wisdom, and His grace, which enables us to live in readiness for His coming. Intimacy with Christ also strengthens our faith and increases our desire to live according to His will, making us more effective in serving Him and sharing His love with the world.

Scriptures: John 15:5-10 AKJV)"I am the vine, you are the branches: He that stays in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. 6If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7If you abide in me, and my words

abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you. 8Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be my disciples. 9As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: continue you in my love. 10If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.."

Intimacy with Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Christian life. It is the deep, personal relationship we cultivate with Him through prayer, study of His Word, and communion with His Spirit. Just as branches draw their sustenance and life from the vine, so too do we find our strength, purpose, and identity in Jesus Christ.

Intimacy with Jesus is loving and obeying Him above all else in thought, word and deed. It is walking and communing with Him as our closest friend, yet also worshipping Him as our Lord and Savior.

In John 15:5, Jesus illustrates the importance of remaining connected to Him as the vine. He invites us into a dynamic relationship where He abides in us and we in Him. This intimate union enables us to bear fruit that glorifies God and blesses others. Apart from Jesus, we are powerless and ineffective, but in Him, we find abundant life and spiritual vitality.

Intimacy with Jesus involves spending time in His presence, listening to His voice, and aligning our hearts with His will. It requires vulnerability and openness, allowing Jesus to search our hearts and transform us from the inside out. As we abide in Him, His love fills us, His truth guides us, and His Spirit empowers us to live for His glory.

Let us prioritize intimacy with Jesus Christ in our daily lives, seeking to know Him more deeply and to walk closely with Him. Psalm 42:1 expresses the longing of our hearts: "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God." May we hunger and thirst for intimacy with Jesus, finding our satisfaction and fulfillment in Him alone.

Preparing Our Hearts

Our hearts are the foundation of our spiritual lives. In *Proverbs 4:23*, we are told, **"**Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." To be prepared for Christ**'**s return, we must first prepare our hearts. This involves examining our motives, desires, and affections to ensure that they align with God's will. Jesus said in *Matthew 22:37*, **"**Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." To prepare our hearts for His return, we must ensure that our love for God is pure, wholehearted, and undivided.

Preparing our hearts involves repentance, removing sin and idolatry, and allowing the Holy Spirit to cleanse and transform us. In *Psalm 51:10*, David prays, **"**Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." This prayer reflects the heart of someone who desires to be fully aligned with God and prepared for His return.

Preparing Our Hearts: Cultivating Love and Holiness

Our hearts are the **core** of who we are—our desires, affections, and motivations. Preparing our hearts for Christ**'**s return involves ensuring that our **love for Jesus** and our

commitment to **holiness** are at the center of our lives. We must examine our hearts regularly, allowing God to purify us and remove any sin or selfish desires that would hinder our readiness for His return.

Matthew 22:37-38 *"Jesus replied: **'**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.**'**"*

- **Action**: We are called to love God with all our hearts. To prepare for Jesus **'**return, we need to examine our hearts regularly. Are we **holding on to sin** or **idolatry**? Do we love Jesus above all things, or are there other affections that compete for our heart? We must allow the Holy Spirit to **search us**, reveal areas that need healing, and help us cultivate a heart that is fully devoted to Him.

1 John 3:2-3 (AKJV) *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure.."*

- **Action**: Our **hope** in Christ**'**s return is meant to awaken us to the utmost importance of Him **purifying** us. The anticipation of His coming should motivate us to live with purity, to turn away from anything that defiles our hearts. This means living in **repentance**, keeping a soft heart before God, and striving for holiness in every aspect of our lives. Our part in this purification and sanctification process is to have a sincere repentance regarding any sinful act that we have done, then Jesus washes and purifies us by His word, grace and His blood shed at the cross.

Guarding Our Hearts: Staying Alert to the Deceptions of the World

The world constantly seeks to draw our attention away from Christ. Whether it**'**s the love of money, the desire for approval, or the temptation to indulge in sin, these distractions can lead us away from preparing for Jesus **'**return. Jesus warns us to **guard our hearts** and be aware of the things that can entangle us. Spending time with Him keeps our hearts aligned with His will and helps us to **resist** the pull of the world.

Proverbs 4:23 *"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."*

1 John 2:15-17 (AKJV) *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God stays for ever. "*

- **Action**: To stay prepared for Jesus' return, we must be **intentional** about what we allow into our hearts and minds. Spending time with Jesus keeps our hearts **focused on His kingdom**, helping us to reject the temptations of the world and live in **obedience to Him**.

Preparing Our Minds

Our minds play a critical role in our spiritual readiness. The Bible repeatedly calls us to renew our minds in order to live according to God's will. In *Romans 12:2*, Paul

exhorts believers, **“**Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Our thoughts shape our attitudes, our actions, and ultimately our spiritual condition. To prepare our minds for Christ**’**s return, we must allow God**’**s Word to shape our thinking and focus our minds on things above, not on earthly distractions (*Colossians 3:2*).

Preparing our minds also means being alert and discerning the signs of the times. It involves focusing our thoughts on the eternal realities of God**’**s kingdom rather than the temporary pleasures and concerns of the world. As we meditate on God**’**s Word, our minds are renewed, and we gain the wisdom needed to live in light of Christ**’**s return.

Preparing Our Minds: Being Transformed by God’s Word

Our minds shape how we perceive the world and how we make decisions. To be prepared for Christ**’**s return, we must **renew our minds** according to God**’**s Word. The Bible tells us to avoid being **conformed** to the world but to be **transformed** by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). The Scriptures provide the **truth** that keeps us focused on eternity and equips us to discern the signs of the times.

Romans 12:2 (AKJV) *"And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

- **Action**: We must engage with God**’**s Word daily, allowing it to transform the way we think and live. This means **meditating on Scripture**, **memorizing key verses** about the second coming, and **letting God’s truth** shape our perspective on life. When our minds are aligned with God**’**s Word, we are better equipped to **discern the signs of the times**, resist worldliness, and stay focused on eternal matters.

Colossians 3:2 (AKJV) *"Set your affection (minds) on things above, not on things on the earth. "*

- **Action**: To prepare for Christ**’**s return, we must constantly **refocus our thoughts** on the things above. This means training our minds to **value eternal truths** over the temporary pleasures and distractions of the world. Our thoughts, our goals, and our motivations should be centered on **God’s kingdom**.

Clothe Ourselves in the Love and Righteousness of Jesus

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to "clothe ourselves" in the love and righteousness of Jesus Christ. The imagery of clothing in Scripture often refers to the transformation that takes place when we are made new in Christ, as we take on His character and reflect His nature in our lives. The apostle Paul writes in *Romans 13:14 (AKJV)*, "But put you on the Lord Jesus Christ (clothe yourselves), and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.." This call to "clothe ourselves" is a reminder that our identity is now in Christ. We are no longer defined by our old nature, but by the love and righteousness that Christ has imputed to us.

When we clothe ourselves with Christ**’**s love, we begin to live in a way that reflects His compassion, mercy, and grace. *Ephesians 4:24* states that believers are "to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." The righteousness we clothe ourselves in is not our own but the righteousness of Christ that He freely gives

to us through His sacrifice on the cross. We are justified by faith, not by our works, and our righteous standing before God comes from Christ alone (*Philippians 3:9*).

However, clothing ourselves in the love and righteousness of Jesus also involves living out this new identity. It's not enough to simply acknowledge that Christ's righteousness covers us; we must reflect His love in our interactions with others. *Colossians 3:12-14* calls us to "clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" and to forgive others as Christ has forgiven us. As we put on these attributes, we become living witnesses of Christ's love and righteousness in the world, and we are prepared for His return.

Holiness

Holiness is both a positional and a practical aspect of the Christian life. Positionally, believers are made holy through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who atoned for our sins and set us apart as God's holy people. *1 Peter 1:16* says, "Be holy, because I am holy," quoting God's command from the Old Testament. This call to holiness is not optional for the believer but a command rooted in God's nature. Our holiness is a reflection of His character, and we are called to live in such a way that honors Him in all things.

Practically, holiness involves living a life that is set apart from sin and dedicated to God's purposes. *Hebrews 12:14* reminds us, **"**Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord." Holiness isn't about achieving moral perfection apart from Christ but about seeking to reflect God's purity, righteousness, and love in our daily lives. It's about living with integrity, purity, and a heart that seeks to glorify God in everything we do.

The Apostle Peter wrote in *2 Peter 3:11-12*, **"**Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming."

Holiness requires intentionality. It involves rejecting sin and embracing a life that honors God. In *1 Thessalonians 4:7*, Paul writes, "For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life." Holiness is a work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, who empowers us to live according to God's will. As we pursue holiness, we become more like Christ and prepare ourselves for His return, walking in purity and devotion to Him.

Seek God's Holy Spirit and Be Filled

The Holy Spirit is the key to living a victorious Christian life and being prepared for Christ's return. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come to empower, guide, and equip His followers to live according to God's will. In *John 14:16-17*, *He says, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you. ."* The Holy Spirit not only comforts and convicts us but also enables us to bear fruit for God's kingdom and live a life that is pleasing to Him.

To prepare for Christ's return, we must actively seek the Holy Spirit and be filled with His presence. In *Ephesians 5:18*, Paul exhorts believers, "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit." Being filled with the Holy Spirit means allowing His presence to control and guide every area of our lives. It is a daily submission to the Holy Spirit, asking Him to empower us for godly living, to strengthen us in our weaknesses, and to enable us to live according to God's Word.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit also involves bearing the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (*Galatians 5:22-23*). As we walk in the Spirit, we become more like Christ, reflecting His character to the world around us. The Holy Spirit empowers us to live with eternal purpose, to be witnesses for Christ, and to prepare our hearts for His return.

Matthew 25:1-13 (AKJV) *"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened to ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom comes; go you out to meet him. 7Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8And the foolish said to the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go you rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12But he answered and said, Truly I say to you, I know you not. 13Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man comes.*

- **Action**: The wise virgins who were prepared **symbolize those who stay spiritually alert**, maintaining a strong relationship with Jesus. **Oil** represents the **Holy Spirit**, and the parable reminds us that we must stay filled with the Holy Spirit, continually abiding in Christ, living in holiness, and making time for prayer and worship. Ask God the Father in prayer, in Jesus Name for the Holy Spirit to guide you and fill you. We can't afford to be distracted by the world, as **readiness** requires constant vigilance and an ongoing relationship with Him.

Preparing Our Lives by Our Actions: To Love, Serve, and Minister to Those in Need

One of the clearest ways to prepare for Christ's return is through our actions. Jesus taught that the way we live our lives—especially how we love and serve others—is an indicator of our readiness for His return. In *Matthew 25:31-46*, Jesus tells the parable of the sheep and the goats, in which He commends those who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick, and cared for the needy. He says to them, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Our actions toward others—particularly the marginalized and vulnerable—are a reflection of our love for Christ and a demonstration of our preparedness for His return.

Preparing our lives for Christ's return involves living a life of service. In *Mark 10:45*, Jesus said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his

life as a ransom for many." As followers of Christ, we are called to serve others, following His example of sacrificial love. This service is not limited to physical acts of kindness but extends to sharing the gospel, praying for others, and seeking to meet both the spiritual and practical needs of those around us.

James 2:14-17 warns that faith without works is dead, emphasizing that genuine faith produces actions. To prepare for Christ's return, our lives must reflect the love of Christ in tangible ways. This involves selflessly serving others, loving our neighbors, and actively participating in God's kingdom work. By ministering to those in need—whether through evangelism, discipleship, or acts of charity—we show the world the heart of Christ and demonstrate our readiness for His coming.

Our actions reveal the condition of our hearts and serve as a testimony to the world that we are the hands and feet of Jesus, preparing ourselves and others for His return. As we love, serve, and minister to those in need, we align ourselves with Christ's mission and prepare our hearts for the day when He will come again.

Blessings vs. Consequences of Preparing or Not Preparing Our Lives by Our Actions: To Love, Serve, and Minister to Those in Need

The call to love, serve, and minister to others is not merely an optional aspect of the Christian life—it is a core component of how we prepare for the second coming of Jesus. In **Matthew 25:31-46**, Jesus makes it clear that how we treat those in need—whether we **actively serve** and show compassion or choose to ignore the hurting—has eternal significance. Our **actions** are a reflection of our hearts and a tangible way to demonstrate that we are living in obedience to God's will, and obey His greatest commandment to love Him and to love others.

The way we live **in service to others** directly impacts our preparation for Jesus 'return. **Faith without works is dead** (James 2:26), and it is through our deeds of love, kindness, and mercy that we demonstrate the reality of our faith. As we await the return of our Savior, we must choose to live out His commands, following His example of **selfless service** and **compassion**. In this, we experience profound blessings as we align our hearts with God's kingdom—but we must also recognize the serious consequences of failing to do so.

1. Blessings of Serving and Ministering to Those in Need

When we live our lives with a focus on loving and serving others, especially those in need, we align ourselves with God's will and gain numerous spiritual blessings. These blessings are both **present** (in the joy, fulfillment, and peace we experience) and **eternal** (in the reward we will receive when Jesus returns).

a) Inheriting the Kingdom of God

In **Matthew 25:34**, Jesus says to those who have served the needy: *"Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."* This is a **direct reward** for a life lived in service to others. Those who love and care for the least of these are granted **entrance** into the kingdom of God, a kingdom that was prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Although we are not saved by our good works, but we are only saved through what Jesus Christ alone accomplished at the cross and our faith in Him. Still our good works are the evidence of our sincere faith in

Jesus thereby reaffirms our inheritance into the Kingdom of God, where as the lack of good works indicates that we truly don't have genuine faith nor love God and others and therefore denied an entrance into heaven.

- **Blessing**: **Eternal life** and **joy** in God**'**s presence await those who faithfully serve others in Christ**'**s name. Serving is not only a demonstration of our faith, but it is also a tangible expression of our readiness to be part of God's eternal kingdom.

b) Experiencing the Joy of Jesus

When we serve others, we experience a **deeper fellowship with Christ**. Jesus said, *"Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it to me"* (Matthew 25:40). There is a **spiritual connection** between serving others and serving Jesus. As we minister to those in need, we are ministering to Christ Himself.

- **Blessing**: **Intimacy with Jesus**—In serving others, we experience the joy and fulfillment that come from partnering with God in His mission on earth. Jesus **'** words indicate that there is a **deep spiritual significance** that comes when we serve others as if we are serving Him directly.

c) Store Up Treasures in Heaven

When we serve others, we store up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21). Every act of kindness, every meal given to the hungry, every visit to the sick is an investment in eternity. These acts, done in faith, are never forgotten by God, and they are part of the eternal rewards He will give to His faithful servants when He returns.

- **Blessing**: **Eternal rewards**—Jesus assures that those who invest in His kingdom through acts of service will receive a rich reward. Serving others is an eternal investment, and the blessings are **far greater** than anything we can imagine on earth.

d) Becoming More Like Jesus

Serving others helps us to **grow in Christlikeness**. Jesus modeled selfless service throughout His life, especially in His sacrificial love for the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized. As we follow His example, we are shaped more into His image.

- **Blessing**: **Transformation into Christ's image**—Through serving others, we are **shaped** by God**'**s love and reflect His heart for the world. This transformation prepares us for His return, making us more ready to meet Him with a heart that mirrors His compassion and love.

e) We become the Acceptable Bride of Jesus Christ

When we humble ourselves before God, we begin a process of spiritual transformation that not only deepens our relationship with Him but also unites us with the larger Body of Christ—His Church. This humbling is not simply a matter of acknowledging our imperfections but of intentionally seeking God**'**s presence, asking Him to prepare our hearts, minds, and actions so that they might reflect His love more fully. It is through this intentional surrender and submission to God's will that we start to align ourselves with His purpose for our lives and His Church.

Humility before God is the posture that allows the Holy Spirit to work within us. In our humility, we recognize our dependency on God's grace and invite the Holy Spirit to shape

us into the image of Christ. This is where the transformation happens. As we allow the Spirit to lead us, our thoughts, attitudes, and actions begin to reflect the nature of Jesus—love, compassion, kindness, and truth. Our unity in the Body of Christ is not merely about agreeing on doctrine or sharing religious rituals; it is about allowing the love of Christ to permeate every aspect of our lives so that, together, we reflect His glory to the world.

This unity is essential in the life of the Church. The Body of Christ is meant to be a living testimony of the love and grace of God. When we are united in purpose and action, we become a powerful witness to the world, drawing others to the love of Christ. The apostle Paul often spoke of the Church as a body, with each member playing a crucial role. But it is only when we humble ourselves and seek God's guidance that we can truly function in unity, each contributing our unique gifts and talents for the building up of the whole.

As we walk in humility and allow the Holy Spirit to transform us, we become more than just a group of individuals socializing in a stone building—we become the Bride of Christ, preparing for the glorious day of the marriage supper of the Lamb. This biblical illustration, found in the book of Revelation, speaks of the ultimate union between Christ and His Church, this is a reality that will actually take place. The marriage supper is a celebration of the culmination of God's redemptive plan, where Christ and His Bride are joined in perfect unity.

The process of being made ready for that day is not one of our own striving but of God's grace. As we humble ourselves, the Holy Spirit works in us to purify and sanctify us, clothing us in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This righteousness is not something we can earn or produce on our own; it is a gift that has been given to us through the finished work of Christ on the cross. When we accept Jesus as our Savior, His righteousness is imputed to us, and we are clothed in His purity.

Just as a bride prepares herself for her wedding day, so too are we called to prepare ourselves for the day when we will be united with Christ. But this preparation is not about outward appearances or human effort; it is about allowing the Holy Spirit to purify our hearts and lives, making us reflect the character of Jesus. Through this process, we are made ready to stand before Christ, spotless and blameless, as His beloved Bride.

For the Holy Spirit to do this transformative work in us, we must place our genuine faith in Jesus Christ. We are called to receive and believe His words, to abide in Him properly, and to honor Him, receiving His grace and sanctification that He offers through His atoning sacrifice. This requires that we do not His grace for granted or abuse it by living hypocritically in deliberate sin without repentance. Rather, we must seek to live authentically, rejecting lukewarmness and returning to our first love—Jesus Christ—who is faithful to complete the work He has begun in us.

In the end, this work of transformation is a divine partnership. We humble ourselves and seek God**’**s guidance, but it is ultimately the Holy Spirit who enables us to reflect God**’**s love and to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. It is through His work in us that we become unified in the Body of Christ and prepared for the glorious union with Jesus at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

2. Consequences of Failing to Serve and Minister to Others

While there are incredible blessings for those who live lives of love and service, there are also serious consequences for those who choose **neglect** or **indifference**. The **parable**

of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31-46) clearly highlights the distinction between those who **act in love and mercy** and those who fail to do so.

a) Separation from God

Jesus makes it very clear that those who fail to serve others will experience **separation from God**. In **Matthew 25:41-46**, (AKJV) He says to those who did not serve the needy: *"Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42For I was an hungered, and you gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink: 43I was a stranger, and you took me not in: naked, and you clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and you visited me not. 44Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we you an hungered, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to you? 45Then shall he answer them, saying, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me. 46And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."* This is a **sobering warning** that those who refuse to love, serve, and minister to others will face **eternal punishment**. Their failure to act in love is seen as a rejection of Christ Himself.

- **Consequence**: **Eternal separation from God**—Neglecting to serve others is seen as neglecting Jesus Himself, and this rejection leads to **eternal consequences**. Those who fail to serve others demonstrate that they have not truly embraced Christ**'**s love and, therefore, are not prepared for His return.

b) Living with a Hardened Heart

When we consistently ignore the needs of others and fail to serve, our hearts can become **hardened** and **calloused** to the plight of the poor, the sick, and the oppressed. This spiritual **hardness** makes it more difficult for us to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit and respond to God**'**s will.

- **Consequence**: **Spiritual blindness** and **dullness of heart**—A failure to serve and minister can lead to **spiritual apathy**, where we no longer recognize the importance of loving and serving others as Jesus commanded. Our hearts become insensitive to the needs around us, making it harder to live a life of faith and obedience.

c) Lack of Evidence of True Faith

Jesus **'**words in **Matthew 25** make it clear that those who do not serve others are showing a **lack of genuine faith**. Our faith is **demonstrated** through our actions. If we are unwilling to serve others, it raises serious questions about the authenticity of our faith. A life that does not bear fruit of love and service shows a **heart that is far from God**.

- **Consequence**: **Faith without works is dead** (James 2:26). If we claim to follow Jesus but are unwilling to serve others, we are living in **disobedience** to His commands. This reveals a **false profession of faith** that will not stand when Jesus returns.

d) No Reward in Heaven

While the righteous will inherit the kingdom and receive eternal rewards, those who fail to serve others will have no **eternal reward**. Their lack of action will lead to a **loss of**

treasure in heaven, as their lives are lived solely for themselves, without regard for others.

- **Consequence**: **Loss of eternal reward**—Those who fail to serve others may still be saved, but they will experience **eternal loss** of reward. Their lives will not have been a reflection of the kingdom of God, and they will face the regret of missed opportunities to lay up treasure in heaven (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

Conclusion: Blessings of Loving and Service to God and others vs. The Consequences of Neglect

In preparing for Jesus **'**return, the way we live matters. **Serving others** is not just a noble act; it is a direct reflection of our readiness for Christ's coming, and an indication of our genuine faith in Him.. Jesus clearly taught that **our actions**—specifically, our **love** for the **least of these**—are a tangible sign of our faith and a marker of how prepared we are for His return.

The **blessings** for those who love, serve, and minister to others are eternal. They inherit the kingdom, experience the joy of Christ, and are transformed into His likeness. But for those who neglect to serve, the consequences are severe: eternal separation from God, a hardened heart, a dead faith, and the loss of eternal rewards.

As we wait for Jesus' return, let us be vigilant in preparing our hearts, minds, and actions. May we serve others with the same love and compassion that Jesus showed us, knowing that in doing so, we are preparing our lives for His glorious coming.

Share the Good News of Jesus Christ, Evangelize, Missions, Witness

The call to share the Good News of Jesus Christ is central to the mission of every believer. In *Matthew 28:19-20*, Jesus commissions His disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations," highlighting the responsibility of Christians to spread the gospel message to the world. This great commission is not just a suggestion but a command to evangelize, making it a vital part of preparing for Christ's return. Evangelism involves sharing the message of salvation through Jesus Christ—His life, death, and resurrection—with those who have not yet heard.

In *Romans 10:14-15*, Paul emphasizes the necessity of preaching the gospel, saying, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" Evangelism requires both action and words. As believers, we are called to be living witnesses of Christ**'**s love, truth, and grace, demonstrating His character through our lives while also proclaiming the gospel message through our words.

Missions, both locally and globally, extend this call to share Christ beyond our immediate circle to those in distant lands and cultures. *Acts 1:8* reminds us of the scope of our mission: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." The task of sharing the gospel is immense, but it is made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit, who empowers believers to witness and reach the nations.

As we prepare for Christ's return, evangelism and missions are not just tasks to be completed but a reflection of our readiness and anticipation. The urgency of the gospel is clear, and Jesus calls us to spread it to every corner of the world before He returns, that many may come to faith and be ready to meet Him when He comes again.

Pray

Prayer is one of the most essential practices for preparing for Christ's return. It is through prayer that we maintain our relationship with God, seek His guidance, align our will with His, and express our dependence on Him. Jesus Himself modeled a life of prayer, frequently withdrawing to pray to the Father, and He encouraged His disciples to do the same. In *Luke 18:1*, Jesus tells a parable to the effect that "they should always pray and not give up," emphasizing the necessity of persistence in prayer, especially in times of waiting.

Prayer is a means by which we invite God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. In *Matthew 6:10*, Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." As we pray, we are not only preparing our hearts for His return but also participating in the advancement of His kingdom on earth. Prayer aligns us with God's purposes, helps us endure in faith, and prepares us spiritually for the coming of Christ.

In *1 Thessalonians 5:17*, Paul exhorts believers to "pray without ceasing." Prayer is an ongoing conversation with God, one that keeps our hearts tuned to Him. As we await Christ's return, prayer becomes a vital practice to stay awake, stay alert, and stay faithful to the mission He has entrusted to us. Through prayer, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit, strengthened in our faith, and equipped for the work God has called us to do.

Pray for All Disciples of Jesus Christ, Around the World to Be Established in the Love of Jesus Christ and to Be Prepared for His Return

As we wait for Christ's return, one of our responsibilities as believers is to pray for fellow disciples of Jesus worldwide. In *Colossians 1:9-10*, Paul prays for the believers in Colossae, asking God "to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way." We too are called to intercede for the body of Christ, praying that fellow believers are firmly established in the love of Jesus and prepared for His return.

The global church faces many trials and challenges, and it is vital that we pray for the spiritual growth, endurance, and faithfulness of our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world. The Apostle Paul frequently prayed for the churches he ministered to, asking that they be strengthened in their faith, rooted in love, and equipped to stand firm in the face of persecution (*Ephesians 3:16-17*). As we pray for fellow disciples, we join in God's work of preparing His people to be ready when Jesus comes again.

In *2 Thessalonians 3:5*, Paul prays that "the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance." As we intercede for others, we are praying not only for their spiritual growth but for their steadfastness in the faith. We pray that they, too, would be

faithful witnesses of Christ and eagerly awaiting His return, ready to stand before Him without shame or fear.

Pray That God Raise Up and Send Workers for the Harvest

In *Matthew 9:37-38*, Jesus tells His disciples, *"Then says he to his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; 38Pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.."* The mission of spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth requires workers who are equipped, called, and ready to labor for the Kingdom. The task of evangelism is not for a select few but for all believers, and it requires us to pray for more workers who will respond to God**'**s call.

This prayer is not just about asking God to send missionaries abroad, but also to raise up workers in our local communities, workplaces, and families. Every believer is a worker in the harvest field, and God can use anyone who is willing to go. In *Luke 10:2*, Jesus again urges His followers to pray for more laborers, acknowledging the need for a strong, committed workforce in His kingdom.

As we pray for workers, we are also inviting God to raise up individuals who are passionate about sharing the gospel and discipling others. This prayer is not just about asking God to send people; it is about aligning our hearts with His mission and being willing to step into the work ourselves. God may be calling us to be part of the harvest, whether through local evangelism, supporting missionaries, or living a life that reflects His love in every sphere of influence.

Praying for the Return of Christ

The anticipation of Christ**'**s return should be a central part of every believer's prayer life. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (*Matthew 6:10*). This prayer reflects the longing for Christ**'**s return and the establishment of God**'**s perfect kingdom on earth. As we wait for that glorious day, we should actively pray for Christ**'**s return, longing for His reign of justice, peace, and righteousness.

Praying for the Return of Christ

One of the most effective ways to prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ is through **prayer**, specifically praying for the return of Jesus. The Bible encourages us to long for Christ**'**s return and to **pray** for His kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. This **eager expectation** helps us stay **focused** on the future and live in readiness.

Revelation 22:20 (AKJV) *"He which testifies these things says, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. ."*

- **Action**: **Praying for Jesus 'return** is a way of aligning our hearts with God**'**s purposes and cultivating a sense of anticipation. It reminds us that our hope is not in the world but in the **eternal promise** of Christ**'**s return. Let our prayers reflect our **readiness**, as we eagerly wait for the day when He will make all things new.

In *Revelation 22:20*, the Bible concludes with the words of Jesus: "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." This is the prayer of the early church, a prayer that should resonate in the hearts of believers today. It is a prayer of hope, longing, and readiness for the fulfillment of God**'**s promises. As we pray for the return of Christ, we are declaring our faith in His sovereignty and His ultimate victory over sin and death.

Praying for Christ**'**s return is also a prayer for justice. In *Revelation 6:9-10*, the martyrs cry out to God, asking how long until He brings justice. When we pray for Christ**'**s return, we are expressing our desire for the injustices of this world to be righted, for suffering to end, and for God's kingdom to be fully realized.

Ultimately, praying for the return of Christ is about keeping our eyes fixed on eternity. It is a declaration that our ultimate hope is not in this world but in the return of our Savior. As we pray, we not only prepare our hearts for His coming but also help to align our priorities with His eternal purposes. We are eagerly awaiting the day when He will make all things new, and we will dwell in His presence forever.

Preparing to Be the Bride of Jesus Christ

The imagery of the church as the Bride of Christ is a profound and recurring theme throughout Scripture, symbolizing the intimate and covenantal relationship between Christ and His people. In *Ephesians 5:25-27*, (AKJV) Paul writes, *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. , without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless."* This passage highlights not only the depth of Christ**'**s love for the church but also the responsibility of believers to prepare themselves to be presented to Him as a pure and spotless bride.

The bridegroom, Jesus Christ, has already paid the price for His bride with His own blood, securing the redemption of the church through His sacrificial death. As the bride, we are called to respond to this love with purity, holiness, and faithfulness. Just as a bride prepares for her wedding day by adorning herself, preparing her heart, mind, and actions, so too must we prepare ourselves spiritually for the return of Christ. This preparation is not about external appearances but about inner transformation—a life of sanctification and devotion to the One who loves us deeply.

In *Revelation 19:7-8*, it is written, **"**Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." This fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints. Our preparation for the return of Christ, and for being presented as His bride, is through living lives that reflect His holiness. It involves walking in obedience, living in intimacy with Him, and cultivating a life that honors Him in all things.

In *2 Corinthians 11:2*, Paul expresses his desire for the church: **"**I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him." As the Bride of Christ, we are to remain faithful, keeping ourselves undefiled from the world and devoted to Christ alone. Our personal holiness, repentance

from sin, and dedication to loving Christ with all our heart, soul, and mind are part of our preparation. Through the Holy Spirit, we are empowered to live lives that are worthy of this calling, eagerly anticipating the day when we will be united with our Savior.

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb -Contined…

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb is a momentous event that signifies the ultimate union between Christ and His church. It is described in *Revelation 19:9* as the culmination of the redemptive plan of God, a feast where Christ, the Bridegroom, celebrates the union with His bride, the church. **“**Then the angel said to me, 'Write: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' And he added, 'These are the true words of God.'"

This marriage supper symbolizes not only the completion of God**’**s redemptive work but also the joyous fulfillment of the covenant between Christ and His church. It is a time of celebration, of great rejoicing, and the culmination of our eternal hope. It is the moment when Christ will be united with His bride in perfect love, peace, and harmony—when all things will be made new. The church, purified and adorned in the righteousness of Christ, will finally be presented to Him, and the faithful will rejoice in His presence forever.

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb also marks the final victory over sin, death, and the powers of darkness. In *1 Corinthians 15:54-55*, Paul declares, **“**When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” This victory is celebrated at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, where all things will be made right, and believers will enter into an eternal feast of joy and fellowship with Christ.

It is important to note that the invitation to this great feast is extended to all who have received Christ as their Lord and Savior. In *Revelation 22:17*, the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" The invitation is open to all who will repent, believe in the gospel, and prepare themselves as the bride of Christ. This invitation is one of grace, offering forgiveness and eternal life to all who accept the call.

As we prepare for this glorious event, we must reflect on the words of Jesus in the parable of the ten virgins in *Matthew 25:1-13*. In the parable, five virgins were wise and prepared, while the other five were foolish and unprepared. The wise virgins were ready when the bridegroom came, and they entered the wedding banquet with him. The unprepared virgins were shut out. Jesus concluded the parable by saying, "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."

This parable underscores the importance of being spiritually prepared for the return of Christ and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We must be vigilant, keeping our hearts and lives ready to meet Him at any moment. Our readiness is marked by a life of holiness, intimacy with Christ, and faithful service. As we anticipate this glorious event, we are reminded of the urgency to be prepared—to live in a way that reflects our hope and longing for the coming of our Bridegroom.

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb is the culmination of our deepest desires as the church. It is the day when we will see Christ face to face, when we will be completely united with

Him in a perfect, eternal relationship. Until that day comes, we must live in readiness, longing for the day when the bridegroom calls us home to the eternal feast that awaits us. May we be found faithful, and may our lives reflect the purity, love, and devotion of a bride eagerly awaiting the return of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

(194) Vision / Objectives:

PROVERBS 29:18 Where there is no vision the people perish.

Christians should have vision or godly goals and objectives to strive towards in faith, in order to fulfill what God has called us to do.

Vision and objectives in missions and ministry play a crucial role in guiding the purpose and activities of every believer and follower of Jesus Christ. These principles are deeply rooted in the Bible to learn, emulate and follow in particular, serves as examples along with God’s Holy Spirit being the primary source for giving, shaping the specific vision, callings and objectives of missions and ministry personally to each of us.

God gives each of us general callings in ministry, inviting all believers to love Him and others, to serve Him and share the gospel. In addition, He calls some of us to specific roles or tasks within His Kingdom. To equip us for these purposes, God also provides spiritual gifts and talents, entrusted to us as stewards. These gifts are meant to be used faithfully in fulfilling the unique vision and objectives He has set before us, advancing His will and work in the world.

One key scriptural reference is found in the New Testament, specifically in Matthew 28:19-20, where Jesus issues the Great Commission to his disciples, saying, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." This passage underscores the importance of spreading the teachings of the faith globally and making disciples of all people.

The vision for missions and ministry is not only about spreading the message of salvation but also about embodying the love of Christ through practical acts of service and compassion. In Matthew 25:35-36, Jesus outlines the criteria for inheriting the kingdom, stating, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." This passage underscores the importance of meeting the physical and emotional needs of others as an integral part of fulfilling the mission.

Moreover, the book of Isaiah provides prophetic insight into the transformative nature of God's mission. In Isaiah 6:8, the prophet responds to God's call, saying, "Here I am! Send me." This verse reflects a willingness and readiness to participate in God's mission, echoing the sentiments of individuals and organizations actively engaged in missions and ministry today.

The teachings of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke provide additional insight. In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus reads from the scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue, declaring, "The Spirit of the Lord

is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." This passage encapsulates a mission focused on social justice, compassion, and liberation, aligning with the broader objectives of missions to address the needs of the marginalized and oppressed.

Another significant biblical foundation for mission and ministry vision is found in Acts 1:8, where Jesus tells his disciples, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." This verse emphasizes the empowerment of believers through the Holy Spirit and the call to be witnesses not only in local communities but also in broader geographical regions.

The vision for missions goes beyond geographical expansion; it emphasizes the importance of personal spiritual transformation. At its core, missions is about fostering individual relationships with Jesus Christ through encouragement and discipleship, helping people grow in their faith and become more like Him. As new believers grow in their faith, hearing and receiving the word of God, they will know the truth, they will know God's will and they will learn to seek and to rely on God's Holy Spirit to guide them further into all truth and to be guided and strengthened by God's Holy Spirit every day.

Ephesians 4:11-13 further contributes to the understanding of the objectives of ministry and missions: "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." This passage outlines the various roles within the body of Christ and emphasizes the goal of maturity and unity in faith, pointing to the development of believers as a central objective in missions and ministry.

James 1:27 provides a scriptural foundation for this biblical approach, stating, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world." This verse underscores the importance of addressing social issues and caring for the vulnerable, reflecting a comprehensive vision for missions that involves both spiritual and practical aspects.

Whatever we do, we are called to do it **as unto the Lord Jesus Christ** (Colossians 3:23). This means that every task, every action, whether in our personal lives or in ministry and missions, should be carried out with the heart and mindset of honoring Him. Our work is not simply for ourselves or others but as a reflection of our love and obedience to Christ. As we engage in His work, we are to **demonstrate the same love** that Jesus showed us—selfless, sacrificial, and holy, filled with divine virtues—in everything we do.

We are called to **pray for His wisdom** in every decision we make, leaning not on our own understanding, but trusting in His perfect guidance. Proverbs 3:5-6 instructs us, **"***Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight."* This means we surrender our own plans, asking God to shape our thoughts, actions, and desires according to His will.

In all our endeavors, whether in ministry or daily life, we are to **acknowledge Him and commit our plans to Him** (Proverbs 16:3). This involves more than just asking for His blessing; it means submitting our hearts and intentions to His sovereignty. We pray for His wisdom and discernment, asking Him to reveal His will and give us the courage to follow it. If a plan or direction is not aligned with His purpose, He will gently guide us, redirecting our path and shaping us to walk in the way He desires.

God desires to give us a clear **vision and plan** for fulfilling His calling in ministry and missions. This vision is not just about personal achievement or success, but about partnering with God in His redemptive work in the world. When we **demonstrate the same love** that Christ showed us, we reflect His heart for others—loving the lost, serving the needy, and reaching out with compassion to those in need. In this, we fulfill His calling, not by relying on our own strength or wisdom, but by trusting in His guidance, His timing, and His perfect plan.

As we walk in His calling, we must remember that God**'**s plans are always greater than our own. By committing our paths to Him, we open ourselves to His perfect direction, trusting that He will provide the wisdom, opportunities, and strength we need to accomplish His will. And in everything, we are to love others as Christ loved us—demonstrating His grace, His patience, and His sacrificial love in all that we do. This is the essence of true ministry: loving others as Christ has loved us and doing everything for His glory.

In the end, our calling is to faithfully follow Christ**'**s example, allowing His love to shape our hearts and lives, and to fulfill His mission in the world with His love, wisdom, and strength guiding us every step of the way.

How can our lives be purposeful for God's kingdom ?

Pray first to God and ask Him to give you Wisdom and to further to direct your life each day specifically Where and How to serve.

Make a conscious effort each day to **demonstrate God's Love and Truth** in your words and actions towards the following people, ministries, and/or within various community service organizations...

Here a just a few Examples of where, whom and how we can have vision/objectives to serve and share the love of Jesus Christ in various ways;

- **Needy:**

Vision: Meeting the immediate physical and spiritual needs of individuals facing poverty and hardship.

Objectives:

- Providing emergency assistance, including food and shelter.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Offering spiritual counseling and mentorship.
- Collaborating with local organizations to address impoverished issues.

- Empowering individuals to break the cycle of poverty through skill development.
- Think and pray for the ways that God could use you to fulfill the needs of the less fortunate specifically in areas near you.
- Be sensitive and aware to when God wants to use you individually to help someone in some way. It may be just a one time charitable act or could be more follow up.
- Be open to being a part of a Christian Team emergency relief ministry

- **Homeless:**

Vision: Restoring dignity and offering needed support to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Objectives:

- Providing shelters and basic necessities for the homeless.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Offering counseling and mental health support.
- Facilitating job training and placement programs.
- Advocating for affordable housing and systemic change.
- Provide food, clothing and needed supplies

- **Mentally Handicapped:**

Vision: Creating an inclusive and supportive community that caters to the spiritual and emotional needs of individuals with mental disabilities.

Objectives:Providing accessible worship services and activities.

- Offering pastoral care and counseling for individuals and their families.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Training church members to be inclusive and supportive.
- Collaborating with mental health professionals for comprehensive care.

- **Sick at Home:**

Vision: Bringing comfort and spiritual support to individuals who are sick and confined to their homes.

Objectives:

- Offering prayer and emotional support to the sick and their families.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Providing resources for spiritual reflection and encouragement.
- Personally as a Christian visiting the sick
- Organizing pastoral visits and care teams for the homebound.

- Facilitating virtual or phone-based spiritual activities.

Family / Friends:

Vision: To foster a culture of love, support, and spiritual growth within families and among friends, centered around the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Objectives:

- Strengthening familial bonds through shared spiritual activities.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Providing emotional and spiritual support during challenging times.
- Discipling family members and friends to grow in their faith.
- Creating a safe space for open communication about faith.
- Be Christlike, without hypocrisy, in our daily lives. Live transparently reflecting the love of Jesus Christ, in our words and deeds.

Friends:

Vision: Building authentic relationships with friends and creating opportunities for spiritual conversations and growth.

Objectives:

- Cultivating genuine friendships through shared interests and activities.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Modeling Christian values in daily interactions.
- Engaging in intentional conversations about faith when appropriate.
- Creating a welcoming environment for friends to explore Christianity.

Co-Workers:

Vision: Integrating Christian principles into the workplace, fostering a positive and ethical work environment.

Objectives:

- Demonstrating Christ-like behavior in professional settings.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Providing support and encouragement to co-workers.
- Organizing workplace events that promote unity and spiritual growth.
- Offering prayer and spiritual guidance when requested.

Students:

Vision: Empowering students with a strong moral and spiritual foundation to navigate academic and personal challenges.

Objectives:

- Establishing mentorship programs to guide students in their walk of faith.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Organizing Bible studies or faith-based clubs on campuses.
- Providing resources for spiritual development and coping with academic stress.
- Creating a supportive community for students to share their faith.

Hospital:

Vision: Bringing comfort, hope, and spiritual healing to patients and their families during times of illness.

Objectives:

- Offering prayer and emotional support to patients and their families.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Collaborating with hospital staff to meet the spiritual needs of patients.
- Organizing volunteer teams to provide companionship and assistance.
- Conducting regular worship services and prayer sessions.

Prison:

Vision: Bringing the message of redemption and transformation to incarcerated individuals, fostering hope and rehabilitation.

Objectives:

- Providing spiritual mentorship and counseling to inmates.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Offering resources for education and skill development.
- Organizing worship services and Bible studies within prison facilities.
- Facilitating reintegration programs for released individuals.

Boy/Girl Youth Detention:

Vision: Guiding young individuals in detention towards positive change and spiritual growth.

Objectives:

- Providing mentorship and counseling tailored to youth needs.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.

- Offering educational and vocational training opportunities.
- Organizing recreational and faith-based activities within detention centers.
- Advocating for rehabilitation and community reintegration.

Youth Crisis:

Vision: Offering immediate support and guidance to youth facing crises, both emotional and spiritual.

Objectives:

- Providing crisis intervention and counseling services.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Offering a safe space for youth to express themselves.
- Organizing support groups and mentoring programs.
- Collaborating with mental health professionals to address underlying issues.

Elderly Care Home:

Vision: Creating a community of care and spiritual enrichment for the elderly residing in care homes.

Objectives:

- Providing companionship and emotional support to residents.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Organizing worship services, devotional activities, and Bible studies.
- Facilitating intergenerational activities to connect with youth.
- Addressing the specific spiritual needs of elderly individuals.

Handicapped:

Vision: Ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal access to spiritual resources and support.

Objectives:

- Making churches and ministry activities accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Providing adaptive materials and resources for spiritual growth.
- Organizing inclusive events and activities that cater to diverse needs.
- Fostering a culture of inclusion within faith communities.

Military:

Vision: Supporting military personnel and their families with spiritual resources and care during deployment and beyond.

Objectives:

- Providing chaplaincy services to military personnel.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Offering support to military families during deployments.
- Organizing community events and gatherings for military communities.
- Addressing the unique spiritual challenges faced by those in the military.

Ethnic Groups:

Vision: Fostering unity and understanding among diverse ethnic groups through shared faith and community activities.

Objectives:

- Celebrating cultural diversity within the context of faith communities.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Organizing multicultural events and activities.
- Offering translated resources and services for diverse language groups.
- Promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding.

High Schools:

Vision: Providing spiritual guidance, mentorship, and positive influence within high school settings.

Objectives:

- Establishing Christian clubs and organizations on high school campuses.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Offering mentorship programs for students.
- Providing resources for character development and spiritual growth.
- Organizing events that promote a positive school culture.

Colleges:

Vision: Equipping college students with a strong foundation of faith and values to navigate the challenges of higher education.

Objectives:

- Establishing campus ministries and Christian organizations.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.

- Providing resources for spiritual exploration and growth.
- Offering mentorship programs for college students.
- Addressing the unique spiritual challenges faced by students in higher education.

Street Evangelism:

Vision: Reaching individuals in public spaces with the message of God's love and salvation.

Objectives:

- Engaging in conversations about faith in public areas.
- Sharing the Good News of God’s Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Distributing literature and resources on the streets.
- Offering prayer and spiritual support to those encountered.
- Organizing street events and activities to attract attention.

Children:

Vision: Nurturing the spiritual growth and well-being of children, laying a strong foundation for their faith journey.

Objectives:

- Providing age-appropriate Bible studies and activities.
- Sharing the Good News of God’s Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Offering mentorship and positive role models.
- Creating a safe and inclusive environment for children to explore faith.
- Involving children in age-appropriate service and outreach activities.

Foreign Mission - Country:

Vision: Sharing the Gospel, meeting humanitarian needs, and building sustainable communities in foreign countries.

Objectives:

- Establishing local churches and faith communities.
- Sharing the Good News of God’s Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Providing education, healthcare, and economic support.
- Training and empowering local leaders for long-term impact.
- Building cross-cultural relationships and understanding.

Tourists:

Vision: Offering spiritual guidance and support to tourists, meeting their needs beyond physical comfort.

Objectives:

- Providing hospitality and assistance to tourists in need.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Engaging in conversations about faith and offering spiritual resources.
- Organizing outreach events tailored for tourists to encounter the Christian message.
- Collaborating with local churches to create a network of support.

Corresponding:

Vision: Maintaining connection and providing spiritual support to individuals through correspondence.

Objectives:

- Writing personalized letters and messages of encouragement.
- Sharing the Good News of God's Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Sending resources and materials for spiritual growth.
- Offering virtual or phone-based spiritual counseling.
- Establishing a sense of community and support through correspondence.

In each of these areas, the vision is to bring the Good News of Salvation through Jesus Christ, transformative message of Christ while the objectives aim at addressing the unique needs and challenges of the specific group. The overarching goal is to reflect and demonstrate Christ's love, share the Gospel, and contribute positively to the spiritual, emotional, and practical well-being of individuals and communities.

(195) Missions - Christian Ministry, Evangelism, and Missions:

Matthew 9:37-38:(AKJV) In Matthew 9:37-38, Jesus speaks to His disciples about the need for more laborers in the harvest, stating, "But when he (Jesus) saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. 37Then says he to his disciples, **The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; 38Pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.**" This conveys the urgency of the mission and the need for active participation.

John 4: 35-38 (AKJV) Say not you, There are yet four months, and then comes harvest? behold, I say to you, **Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.** 36And he that reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit to life eternal: that both he that sows and he that reaps may rejoice together. 37And herein is that saying true, One sows, and another reaps. 38I sent you to reap that where on you bestowed no labor: other men labored, and you are entered into their labors.

Every Christian, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, in a sense is or should be a type of a " missionary or evangelist" because we are all called to be ministers to those in our local communities, and country, serving the needs of the people, visiting the sick, elderly, widows, providing food, clothing, shelter to those in need etc. This primarily includes, confessing Jesus publicly, testifying of Jesus and how He alone saved us, about His grace and forgiveness, sharing His Word of truth, Bringing light and hope to a dark, confused world, and most of all for us to demonstrate the same divine love of Jesus Christ, to those around us.

Yet a "missionary" more typically refers to a Christian who is specifically called by God goes to a foreign land—or at least beyond their local community—to proclaim and teach the Word of God, sharing a message of repentance and salvation through Jesus Christ. (All Christians are not specifically called by God to a foreign mission field or project) Missionaries also declare that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. In addition to preaching, they demonstrate Christ's love through acts of service, such as building and infrastructure projects, providing clean water, teaching personal hygiene, nutrition, electricity, food, shelter, clothing, medical supplies and care, and various other assistance. They may also teach practical skills like reading, education, farming, carpentry, and other trades to help improve the lives of the people they serve.

Although every Christian is called to openly confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior wherever God has them, in their local community or foreign lands. We are to share our personal testimonies of our relationship with Jesus Christ and about all that He has done for us. Proclaiming the Word of God, and demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ to the world, and making disciples.

Mission work is generally divided into two categories:

1. **Short-term mission work**, which involves serving for a few weeks or months in a foreign land; and
2. **Long-term mission work**, which typically involves serving for six months, a year, or longer

Romans 10:13-15 (AKJV) For whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.14How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

It is not necessary for a Christian to attend formal school to qualify for mission work. However, Christian discipleship, personal Bible study, logistics and research into the specific needs of the people they are called to serve can be extremely helpful. What's really most essential is spending intimate time with Jesus, in prayer, worship, meditating

on God’s word, and seeking the divine wisdom of Jesus, and guidance of God’s Holy Spirit. Planning and seeking God’s guidance in prayer for how to best help and reach a particular people group—considering factors such as regional culture, customs, geography, and climate—are all essential for equipping a Christian to be more effective in the mission field.

There are still many unreached people groups throughout the world, however now with technology and the internet more and more people are hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ for the first time. Even if you are unable or not called to be a foreign missionary, still every Christian should try to support various foreign missions projects, Christian missionaries and ministries around the world as the Lord leads.

Christians who already speak the native language or dialect of the people they are called to serve are invaluable. However, those who do not speak the language can learn over time, use human or electronic translators or use basic sign language of sorts. Remember with God all things are possible, it is the Holy Spirit that teaches all truth, we are only the vessels of the love of Jesus Christ, and to use our talents wisely. Learning the culture of a specific people group before going is also highly beneficial.

Every Christian should prayerfully seek where God is leading them to serve, responding willingly and joyfully when He calls. In doing so, they will experience God’s abundant blessings—not only for themselves but also for those they serve.

Missionary work has had a profound impact on both individuals and societies, both physically and spiritually, over the centuries.

As Christians, we have been called by God to bring the love, hope, and salvation of Jesus Christ to those who are often marginalized or overlooked by the broader world. Through various world mission outreaches and projects, Christian missionaries have been instrumental in bringing needed life sustaining provisions, education, healthcare, and spiritual renewal by proclaiming hope in Jesus to regions where these resources were scarce or nonexistent. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we have not only shared His message of eternal life but have also demonstrated His love in tangible ways by meeting the physical needs of people—food, clothing, shelter, clean water, sanitation, needed infrastructure and medical care etc..

In the name of Christ, dedicated missionary servants, historically have laid a foundation for long-term transformation in communities around the world. By building hospitals, schools, orphanages, and clinics, we have helped provide the infrastructure and services necessary to uplift the most vulnerable. We have introduced practices that improve public health, reduce human suffering, and offer opportunities for growth and development. Many of the earliest healthcare and educational institutions in some of the world’s poorest regions were established by missionaries who were driven by the compassion of Christ.

As we serve in His name, we are not only helping to alleviate immediate suffering but also equipping communities with the tools for lasting change. These institutions and services have been a critical lifeline, lifting people out of poverty and bringing them closer to global standards of living. Through these efforts, we, as followers of Christ, are continuing His work on earth—bringing His Kingdom into the lives of those who need it most.

Spiritually, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we have been entrusted with the incredible mission of spreading the Gospel message, a message that brings hope, healing, and transformation to countless individuals. Through the faithful proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ, we have seen multitudes come to faith, experiencing the new birth that only He can offer. By God's grace, people who were once bound by sin, fear, confusion, or despair have encountered the life-changing love, forgiveness, and redemption that is found only in Jesus. Through the Gospel, they have received lasting peace, the true peace only Jesus can give that transcends circumstances, and the gift of eternal salvation.

The most important aspect of being a missionary is bringing and demonstrating the divine love of Jesus Christ to the world. This love is made evident through wholehearted service, instilled and empowered by God**'**s Holy Spirit working spiritually through us to reach the peoples of the world. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to reflect His character, and this means embodying genuine Christlike virtues in everything we do.

We are called to serve with **kindness**, offering a hand to those in need, and speaking words filled with kindness and understanding, not being rude or harsh unjustly. Our service is marked by **compassion**, responding to the pain and suffering of others with hearts full of empathy and the willingness to walk alongside them in their struggles. Actually putting our compassion into action doing our part to help those in need with the resources and talents that God gave us and not just walking by doing nothing. Of course we cannot aid everyone in need, but we should be attentive and willing to serve others as God directs.

As Jesus demonstrated, we should practice **hospitality**, welcoming others—especially strangers—into our lives with open hearts and open homes. We should invite others into the warmth of Christian community, making them feel seen, valued, and loved. In our words and actions, we should offer **encouragement** to those who are weary and **comfort** to those in sorrow, reminding them of their identity in Christ and the hope we have in Him.

We are also called to act with **forgiveness**, extending the same grace that Christ has shown us to those who have wronged us. Just as Jesus forgave His enemies, we are to offer the hope of reconciliation and peace, even in the most challenging relationships.

We should practice **charity**, not only in material help but in the love that seeks the best for others, even when it costs us something. We should be generous with our time, resources, and energy, sharing freely with those in need.

Through **helps** and **visitation**, we are to come alongside the hurting and isolated, offering both practical assistance and the presence of Christ**'**s love. We should offer **empathy**, putting ourselves in the lives of others, loving others as we would want them to love us, seeking to understand their pain and needs with deep, heartfelt care. In all these things, we reflect the heart of Jesus, who came not to be served, but to serve, giving His life for the sake of others.

We are called to serve with **sacrificial love**, putting the needs of others before our own, just as Jesus gave His life for us. This love is not just a feeling, but an active, self-giving commitment to others, even when it costs us personally or materially. We are also called to serve with **humility**, not seeking recognition or status, but embracing the role of a

servant just as Jesus washed His disciples' feet, demonstrating that true greatness is found in serving others.

Our service is should be marked by **patience**, giving others the grace and time they need to grow and change. Like Jesus, who was patient with His disciples and the crowds, we are called to be long-suffering with others, allowing God's timing to unfold in their lives.

We are called to embody **joyful service**, serving with a glad heart ,not grudgingly even in the midst of trials, knowing that our work is not in vain. Like Jesus, who endured the cross for the joy set before Him, we are called to serve others with joy, trusting in God**'**s eternal purposes even when the work is difficult.

In all these things, we are to reflect the heart of Jesus, who came not to be served, but to serve, giving His life for the sake of others. By allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us, we become instruments of His love, demonstrating the power of the Gospel through our actions and offering the world a glimpse of Christ**'**s Kingdom.

By allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us, we demonstrate the love of Christ through our words and actions, showing the world that the Gospel is not just a message but a lived reality—one that transforms not only the lives of those we serve but also our own hearts, as we follow in the footsteps of our Savior.

In our mission work, we may also be called helped establish local churches and raise up indigenous leaders who can carry the torch of Christ**'**s love forward. As missionaries we should support and work alongside local believers, as needed to create vibrant, self-sustaining Christian communities—communities that continue to thrive and grow long after we have departed. As foreign churches become established they become much more than places of worship; they have become beacons of light, offering education, aid, and spiritual support to entire regions, sending out more local missionaries who know their own people, customs, language and logistics. Thereby they are able to reach more people for Christ, who would not otherwise hear the Good News.nAs disciples of Jesus, we know that this is not just the work of individuals, but of the Holy Spirit, who continues to work through the faithful to bring the Kingdom of God to the nations.

The love of Jesus Christ, demonstrated by missionaries through both word and action, has had a profound and lasting impact on the world.

(196) How did Jesus Instruct and commission His disciples to reach the lost of House of Israel?

Matthew 10:5-33 (AKJV) These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter you not: 6But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. 8Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely you have received, freely give. 9Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, 10Nor money for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. 11And into whatever city or town you

shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till you go there. 12And when you come into an house, salute it. 13And if the house be worthy, let your peace come on it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14And whoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when you depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. 15Truly I say to you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.16Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the middle of wolves: be you therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. 17But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will whip you in their synagogues; 18And you shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. 19But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what you shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what you shall speak. 20For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you. 21And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. 22And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endures to the end shall be saved. 23But when they persecute you in this city, flee you into another: for truly I say to you, You shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. 24The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. 25It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? 26Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. 27What I tell you in darkness, that speak you in light: and what you hear in the ear, that preach you on the housetops. 28And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 29Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31Fear you not therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows. 32Whoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33But whoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

The passage from Matthew 10:5-33 is a significant part of Jesus 'instructions to His disciples as He sends them out on their mission. These words not only speak to the specific context of that time but also offer timeless principles for Christians and disciples today in how to reach the world, including both Gentiles and Israel, with the message of the Kingdom of God.

1. The Primacy of the Lost Sheep of Israel

In the beginning of this passage (verses 5-6), Jesus directs His disciples to focus specifically on "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This initial mission emphasizes that the first call of the Gospel was to the Jewish people, the descendants of the patriarchs, to whom God's promises had been made. Jesus was inaugurating the Kingdom of Heaven, and it was essential that Israel hear and recognize their Messiah.

For Christians today, this part of the passage calls attention to the importance of the Jewish people in God's redemptive plan. While the Gospel has now been spread to all nations, Israel's historical and spiritual significance remains vital. Many Christians today

still view evangelism to the Jewish people as a priority. In fact, Jesus' words, though initially given in the context of His earthly ministry, remind us that God's covenant with Israel has not been revoked (Romans 11:1-2). Reaching out to Israel, whether through direct evangelism or through support for Jewish people, is part of fulfilling the broader Great Commission. However, the message of salvation is not confined solely to Israel, and the discipleship of the Gentiles was always part of God's plan, as seen in the final command of Matthew 28:18-20, which extends the call to all nations.

2. Freely You Have Received, Freely Give

In verses 7-8, Jesus encourages His disciples to preach, heal, cleanse, and cast out demons, but also instructs them to do so without payment or material gain. "Freely you have received, freely give" is a profound principle for Christian ministry. The disciples **'** authority to heal and perform miracles was a gift from God, and their mission was not to be motivated by financial gain but by the desire to share the Gospel freely with others.

This principle is essential for modern-day ministry. Too often, the Church has fallen into the trap of seeking financial reward or status through evangelism and ministry. Jesus' command calls us to examine our motivations. Evangelism and discipleship should be driven by a genuine love for people and a desire to see them reconciled to God. This does not mean that ministers or missionaries cannot be supported for their work; rather, it underscores that the Gospel itself is not for sale. It is a message of grace, and those who proclaim it should do so with a heart of generosity, not seeking personal profit.

3. The Challenge of Rejection and Persecution

Jesus prepares His disciples for the inevitable rejection and persecution they would face (verses 16-22). He warns them that they will be like **"**sheep in the midst of wolves" and that they will be hated for His name**'**s sake. This part of the passage highlights a crucial reality for modern Christians: proclaiming the Gospel in a world that is often hostile to the message of Jesus can bring severe opposition. The world may reject the message of salvation, and believers may suffer ridicule, persecution, and even martyrdom.

In our current age, reaching both Gentiles and Israel with the Gospel can still bring significant challenges. In some parts of the world, Christians face imprisonment, violence, and even death for their faith. In more secular societies, the Gospel is often met with indifference, hostility, or misunderstanding. For those who seek to evangelize in Israel or among Jewish people, there may be deep theological and cultural resistance. However, Jesus' words remind us that persecution is not a sign of failure but an expected part of the discipleship journey. The ultimate reward for faithful service is not found in worldly success but in the promise of eternal life and the joy of fulfilling God's mission.

The call to be **"**wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (verse 16) reminds Christians that, while they must remain innocent and loving, they also need to be strategic and discerning. Wisdom in evangelism today requires understanding the cultural, religious, and social dynamics at play in any given situation, while also embodying the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

4. Fear Not: The Assurance of God's Care

In verses 28-31, Jesus tells His disciples not to fear those who can kill the body but cannot harm the soul. Rather, they are to fear God, who has power over both body and soul. This

statement is a reminder that the temporal challenges we face in the world are small compared to the eternal significance of our relationship with God. When reaching out to both Gentiles and Israel, Christians today must hold onto this truth. The threats and challenges of this world can cause fear and doubt, but God's sovereignty and care for His people are more certain than any earthly fear. Jesus reassures His disciples that God cares intimately for them—even down to the number of hairs on their head—and this is a truth that should embolden believers to continue their mission despite opposition.

This is a key encouragement for anyone engaged in the work of evangelism or missions today. Whether we are sharing the Gospel with a neighbor, a colleague, or a people group that has been historically resistant to the message of Christ, we are never alone. God's care and sovereignty are a foundation for courage. He is fully aware of the cost of discipleship, and He will sustain His people.

5. The Call to Public Confession

In verses 32-33, Jesus emphasizes the importance of publicly confessing Him before others. Those who confess Him will be confessed before the Father, but those who deny Him will face denial before the Father in heaven. This is not just a call to boldness in the face of persecution, but also an encouragement to make our faith known to the world, regardless of the cost. This public confession is vital for discipleship today. In an age where Christianity is often marginalized or ridiculed, it is easy for believers to remain silent about their faith, particularly in secular or hostile contexts. However, Jesus makes it clear that to follow Him requires a willingness to openly identify with Him and to stand firm in our allegiance to Him.

For Christians seeking to reach both Israel and the Gentile world, this passage challenges us to be vocal and courageous in sharing the Gospel, not just through our actions but with our words. The message of salvation in Christ is meant to be proclaimed boldly, not hidden. Evangelism today is not just a private affair or a casual conversation; it involves speaking out, both in word and in deed, about the truth of Jesus Christ.

6. Reaching the World Today

The commission given to the disciples in Matthew 10 still echoes through the Church today. While the context of the mission may have shifted—today, Christians are sent to all nations, including both Gentiles and Jews—the core message and principles remain unchanged. As Christians, we are still called to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom, to heal the broken, to cast out demons, and to serve sacrificially. The challenge of rejection, persecution, and even death is still a reality for many around the world, but so too is the promise of God's care, provision, and ultimate victory.

The world today is still filled with people who need the Gospel, and Israel, as a nation, remains important in God's redemptive plan. Whether through direct outreach to Jewish people or through global missions, Christians today must carry forward the work of the disciples—preaching, healing, and serving, while trusting in God's care and provision. As we go, we must not be afraid to boldly proclaim the message of Christ, knowing that the ultimate victory belongs to Him, and that He will be with us until the very end of the age.

Matthew 10:16-19 AKJV) ”Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the middle of wolves: be you therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. 17But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will whip you in their synagogues; 18And you shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. 19But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what you shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what you shall speak.”

The character trait of Jesus as a Missionary is evident in His purposeful engagement with people beyond His immediate surroundings. He not only modeled the importance of missions but also entrusted His followers with a mission to share the good news of salvation to the world.

Luke 19:10: Jesus declares His mission, saying, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." This succinctly captures the heart of Jesus' mission—to reach out to those who were spiritually lost and in need of salvation.

John 20:21:(AKJV) After His resurrection, Jesus commissions His disciples, saying, "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be to you: as my Father has sent me, even so send I you. 22And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and says to them, Receive you the Holy Ghost: 23Whose soever sins you remit, they are remitted to them; and whose soever sins you retain, they are retained.”

Luke 14:21-24 (AKJV) So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, **Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.** 22And the servant said, Lord, it is done as you have commanded, and yet there is room. 23**And the lord said to the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled**. 24For I say to you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper..

This explicit connection between the sending of Jesus by the Father and the sending of the disciples underscores the continuation of the mission beyond Jesus' earthly ministry.

Acts 1:8:(AKJV) Jesus outlines the scope of the disciples' mission, saying, "But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come on you: and you shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth.." This geographical progression from local to global illustrates the expansive nature of the mission.

Matthew 28:18-20: The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 includes the mandate for making disciples but also emphasizes the global aspect of the mission, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." This commission extends the reach of the Gospel to every corner of the world.

Mark 16:15: In Mark 16:15, Jesus instructs His disciples, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation." This universal command emphasizes the inclusivity of the mission, reaching out to everyone and not confined by geographical or cultural boundaries.

Acts 13:47: In Acts 13:47, Paul and Barnabas quote Isaiah, affirming the global reach of God's salvation, "For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'" This reinforces the understanding that the mission of God extends beyond specific groups or nations.

Romans 10:14-15 (AKJV)**:** In Romans 10:14-15, Paul emphasizes the essential role of messengers in the mission, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" This passage emphasizes the importance of intentional sending and sharing the message.

Matthew 24:14: In Matthew 24:14, Jesus speaks about the global proclamation of the gospel as a precursor to the end times, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." This underscores the significance of the mission in the larger redemptive plan of God.

Matthew 10:5-7: In Matthew 10:5-7, Jesus instructs His disciples during a specific mission, saying, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" This initially targeted mission to the people of Israel highlights the strategic and purposeful nature of missions, starting with a specific group before extending to others.

Acts 16:9-10: In Acts 16:9-10, Paul receives a vision guiding him to go to Macedonia. This divine direction demonstrates the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding and orchestrating specific missions. It emphasizes the importance of sensitivity to God's leading in the mission field.

Mark 13:10: In Mark 13:10, Jesus speaks about the global proclamation of the gospel during times of persecution, "And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations." This acknowledgment by Jesus underscores the endurance of the mission even in challenging circumstances, reinforcing the priority of global proclamation.

1 Corinthians 9:22b-23: Paul's perspective on missions is evident in 1 Corinthians 9:22b-23, where he says, "I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings." This reflects an adaptable and inclusive approach to missions, emphasizing the desire to reach diverse audiences.

(197) General List Of Ministries, Evangelism, Missions:

Here are some of the needed positions / ministries that we can aspire to serve others within the church and other essential ministries sometimes organized within the church to also serve others outside the church more effectively as a team effort...

CHURCH STAFF / ADMINISTRATION

SERVICE TO THE CHURCH

Pastor
Assistant Pastor/s
Elders

Deacons
Administration

Administrator

Secretary

Assistant Secretaries

Finances
Legal
Logistics
Church Planting

Church Bulletin Folders/Stuff
Art/Graphics

Computer / Website / Internet
Church Newsletter

Public Relations

Christian Resource Materials

Facilitator

Charity/Special Project Fundraising

Maintenance

Technical

FOR CHURCH MINISTRIES

Prayer Intercessory Ministry
Sunday School Teachers
Clean up
Ushers

Communion
Greeters

Hospitality

Discipleship Teachers

Christian Teachers

New Believers Counselor

New Believers Follow-Up

Baptizers

Volunteer Ministry Follow-Up
Counselors
Youth Director/ Assistant

Youth Ministry
Sunday Worship Team

Special Music

• Other Christian Musicians, Singers, Dancers

Drama
Children's Ministry
Singles

Marriage Counselor
Group Leader
Women's Ministry

Men's Ministry

Visitation Ministry

• Sick

• Widows

• Orphans,

• Prisoners

• Elderly

• Youth Detention

Hospital Ministry

Handicapped Ministry
Food / Clothing for Needy Ministry
Homeless Ministry
Elderly Ministry
Substance Abuse Ministry

• Drug

• Alcohol

Addiction Ministry

Suicide Crisis

Abuse Ministry
Sign Language for Deaf
Foreign Language Translators
Marriage Counselor

Home Bible Study
Home Fellowship

Friendship / Fellowship Ministry
Missions Team
Christian TV/ Radio/ Media
Computer / Website / Internet

Computer Data Entry
Home Visitation
Helps
Church Bulletin Folders/Stuff
Bible School Teacher
Christian Apologetics

- End Times
- Cults

Set Up Team
Construction
Art / Graphics

Communication
Information Tables

Staging
Technical Team

- Sound Person
- Lighting Person
- Videographer
- Photographer
- Staging

Cooks
Food Prep
Food Servers
Special Events
Christian College
Logistics
Transportation

Christian Resources;

- Bible
- Books
- Teaching, Discipleship Materials
- Films
- Videos
- CD’s

- Materials
- Christian Tracts

Security Team

Parking Team

Information Tables

Child Care after church

Christian Camp

Christian Writing

Divorce Recovery

EVANGELISM / SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY

Evangelism Team

Administrators Planning Logistics Permitting

Prayer Intercessory Ministry

Elderly Ministry

Visitation Ministry

- Sick
- Widows
- Orphans,
- Prisoners
- Elderly
- Youth Detention

Prison Ministry

Prison Children's Ministry
Hospital Ministry

Orphans Ministry

Widows Ministry
Handicapped Ministry

Mentally Challenged Ministry
Troubled Youth Ministry

Youth Detention Homes

Hospitality
Food / Clothing for Needy – Collection Ministry

Food / Clothing for Needy – Distribution Ministry
Homeless Ministry

Victims Ministry
Transportation

Bible / Christian Tract Distribution
Foreign Language Translators

Helps

Work Place

Tourists

Youth

College

High School

Military

Jewish Ministry

Street Witnessing

Christmas Ministry Outreach

Thanksgiving Outreach

Outreaches / Christian Speakers

Evangelism Christian Musicians, Singers, Dancers, Hula

Technical Evangelism Team

Substance Abuse Ministries

- Drug
- Alcohol

Addiction Ministry

Suicide Crisis

Abuse Ministry
Gang Outreach Ministry
Sign Language

Testimonies

Disaster / Emergency Relief Aid Team
Hurricane Relief Team
Emergency Communication Team
Human Trafficking

Organ Trafficking

Youth Crisis, Runaways

Habitat For Humanity

Christian Resources

- Bibles
- Books
- Films
- Videos
- CD’s
- Tracts
- Materials

Sports / Surfing / Canoe

Beatification and Remodeling Projects

Environmental

Self Sufficiency / Sustainability

Agriculture

Rescue Team

Migrant Outreach
Workplace Outreach

Construction Projects

Needy Children Outreach

FOREIGN MISSIONS / MINISTRIES / SERVICE

Prayer Intercessory Ministry

Foreign Missions Planning/ Logistics / Targets

Short Term Missions

Long Term Missions

Street Witnessing

New Believers Counselor
Counselor
Discipleship Teacher
Baptizers

Bible Studies

Home Fellowships

Church Planting

Building Projects

Disaster / Emergency Relief Aid Team

Emergency Shelter

Hospitality

Visitation Ministry

- Sick
- Widows
- Orphans,
- Prisoners
- Elderly
- Youth Detention

Prison Ministry
Hospital Ministry
Handicapped Ministry
Troubled Youth Ministry
Food / Clothing for Needy Ministry

Shoes
Homeless Ministry
Elderly Ministry

Disability Ministry
Drug / Alcohol Ministry
Sign Language for Deaf

Literacy Outreach

Agriculture Projects

Aquaculture

Husbandry

Sanitation
Water Desalination

Solar

Livestock

Renewable Energy Resources

Air Cargo

Self Sufficiency / Sustainability

Lighting
Water Well Projects

Hippo Water Roller

Christmas Child Ministry

Habitat For Humanity

Foreign Aid / Needed Supplies, Tools etc.

Medical Team

Dental Team

Special Christian Music, Dance, Drama Outreach
Jewish Ministry

Foreign Language Translators

Foreign Language Christian Resources;

Bibles, Books, Films, Tracts, Materials
Human Trafficking Rescue

Christian TV/ Radio/ Media

Computer / Website / Internet

Support

Fund Raising

Communication

Correspondence

Youth

Sports

Occupational Training

Ground Transportation

Packing / Shipping

(198) Discipleship:

CONTENTS:

Disciple in Biblical Context

- Discipleship - How Do We Make Disciples Of Jesus Christ ?
- Who is a disciple of Christ?or what does it mean to be a"Disciple" of Jesus Christ ?
- Why should we be discipled ?
- Why should we be a disciple of Jesus Christ ?

Matthew 28:18 (AKJV) "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. 19Go you therefore, (Make disciples) and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (Holy Spirit) 20Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and, see, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.

HOW DO WE MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST ?

The way that we should make Disciples is the way Jesus Christ made disciples**.**

1) We should spend quality time with small core groups of Christians, Two or more, or for instance 3-12 individuals, like Jesus did, primarily.

While it's biblical to preach and evangelize the multitudes, to declare the importance to come to Jesus Christ and to teach and preach, verse by verse, and certain main topics of Christianity, True Discipleship, can more fully and readily takes place by Jesus Christ, as we continue to learn of and receive God's Word, in smaller core groups, and on an individual basis.

And although we need to learn from mature Christian Pastors and Teachers, it can't be emphasized enough that we are only to be disciples of Jesus Christ, in other words, don't follow some teacher who is drawing your attention away from Jesus Christ onto himself, even though he may even teach biblical scriptures about Jesus. True Christian Pastors and Teachers will always direct you to Jesus Christ to be your Lord & Savior, and everything they teach will disciple you follow Jesus Christ, and to follow the truth of Gospel of Christ, as found in all the fullness of scriptures in the Bible.

As God instructs us, all of us as Christians should make disciples by teaching other Christians to observe and obey all that Jesus Christ commanded in His Word.

2) Concentrate in sharing God's Word between each other, demonstrate a genuine Love towards each other, serve each others needs and allow Jesus Christ to teach each other, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Becoming and continuing as a " DISCIPLE " of Jesus Christ, is a life long commitment, of being a LEARNER and FOLLOWER of Jesus Christ, to continue learn of Jesus Christ, to abide in God's Word, and Love, and to obey the commandments of Jesus Christ. Mainly to Love God with all our Heart, with all our mind, and with all our strength, and to Love our neighbor as ourselves. As a Disciple of Jesus Christ, It is essential for any Christian, to continue in God's Word, and learn what Jesus instructed us " TO DO " and what Jesus instructed us " NOT TO DO " in His Word, and by so doing we will know the Truth, and Truth shall set as free. So how is possible for us, to do all the things that Jesus instructs, to Love others, and to overcome sin and temptation etc...? Well with man it is impossible, but WITH God all things are possible. God will send us the HELPER, His Holy Spirit, not just to be with us, but to dwell within those, who ask God.

As we live our lives as true Disciples of Christ, and demonstrate His Love towards others, we should always be pointing the Way to Jesus Christ, sharing His Word, but it still remains that Jesus Christ is really THE TEACHER; So all Glory goes to God, because we cannot do anything apart from God, it is His work within us, and it is His Grace that forgives us when we fall short.

John 8:31,32 (AKJV)“ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; 32And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

God does not want us to hide the Truth that we learn, but rather He instructs us to share His Light, Love and Truth with others, and to go into all the world and make Disciples.

After learning and applying the truths of Jesus Christ within our own lives, it is essential that we individually teach (DISCIPLE) others all about the ways of God, His love and salvation.

Jesus Christ commissioned His disciples to go into all the world and to preach the Good News.

As Christians, we should begin instructing others about Jesus Christ, within our local communities and then as God would direct each person to various parts of the world.

There is a cost of discipleship, really not of earthy money, but rather of our time and denying one's self of various things and even sometimes of friends and family, so that we can more effectively learn and share with others about God, and His salvation and love.

When we make disciples, we should teach the word of God in a way that is easily understood, and always demonstrate God's love to those whom we are teaching.

As disciples of Jesus Christ we can be used by God in a special way, and thereby, many others we also have eternal life and gain eternal riches beyond compare.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Matthew 28:18 (AKJV) “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. 19Go you therefore, (Make disciples) and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and, see, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.

Who is a "disciple" of Jesus Christ, or what does it mean to be a"Disciple" of Jesus Christ ?

- The Christian who Loves as Jesus has loved us is a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

John 13:34,35 (AKJV) - “A new commandment I give to you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35**By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another**. “

Becoming a Christian and being a disciple of Jesus Christ is first " TO BELIEVE “" and " TO REPENT (Turn from sin, evil)" when you hear God's Word, and Believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, by Faith; Believing that Jesus Christ alone, saves you from the penalty (spiritual death, separation from God, Hell) of your sins, by His atoning blood, when He gave His life at the Cross, as the perfect sacrifice before God the

Father. Thereby giving you His Grace, His Forgiveness, and you're Born Again with New Life, in Christ, and become a Christian.

When anyone becomes a new Christian, you are not a fully discipled Christian.

Being a DISCIPLE of Jesus Christ, is the life long process of the believer of Jesus Christ, learning and continuing in God's Word, following Jesus Christ, by obeying all that He commanded us and demonstrating His Love towards others, bearing much spiritual fruit.

Who is a "disciple" of Jesus Christ, or what does it mean to be a"Disciple" of Jesus Christ ?

" Disciple " Defined: - A Disciple is a Learner and Follower of Jesus Christ.

The word **"disciple"** comes from the Greek word - Mathetes which lit., a learner (from Manthano, to learn, from a root ' math '), **(Indicating thought accompanied by endeavor).**

Hence the word "disciple" means or denotes one who is a **learner or student of the teachings of Jesus Christ.**

We are called by Jesus Christ to become and make " Disciples " of others.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them , saying

" All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth ,

Matthew 28:18-20 (AKJV)

" And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. 19Go you therefore, and teach all nations, (Make Disciples Of All Nations) baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and, see, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.

Becoming a Disciple - The Process of Discipleship

(This is not all inclusive or necessarily in order)

As God draws you near to Him, Hear, Learn, and become aware who Jesus Christ is (The Son of God and the only way to be reconciled to God) Learn all that Jesus has done for us and about vHis great unmerited love and forgiveness.

Acknowledge Your Need for Salvation Recognize your need for Jesus and His saving grace, accepting that you cannot achieve righteousness on your own.

Believe In Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour

Repentance
Turn away from sin and seek forgiveness. Repentance is a heartfelt decision to change your direction toward God.

Have Faith in Jesus Place your trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, believing in His death and resurrection for your salvation.

Baptism
Publicly declare your faith through baptism, symbolizing your commitment to following Jesus and identifying with His death and resurrection.

Building a Personal Relationship with Jesus Cultivate an intimate relationship with Jesus through prayer, worship, and daily conversations, inviting Him into every aspect of your life.

Hear and Learn God's Word:

Faith comes by hearing God's Word, and this is essential for being a disciple of Jesus

Attend a Biblical based Christian Church, Fellowship, Bible Studies

Continuing in God's Word Regularly read, study, and meditate on the Bible to understand God's character, His will for your life, and how to apply His teachings daily.

Prayer Establish a consistent prayer life to communicate with God, seek guidance, and deepen your relationship with Him.

Love for God

Our love for God with all of our heart, mind and strength is foundational. It involves worship, obedience, and seeking to align our hearts with His will.

Learning to Love Others as Jesus Christ Love Us:

Love as Action, Love is not just a feeling; it's demonstrated through actions. Serving others, showing kindness, and being present are ways to express love.

Dying to our old sinful ways, continuing to Repent

Abiding in Jesus Stay connected to Jesus, drawing strength and guidance from Him through prayer, worship, and a life of obedience.

Living Out Your Faith Apply biblical principles in your daily life, demonstrating Christ's love and values in your actions and interactions.

Regarding God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit Above All Place God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit at the center of your life, prioritizing their guidance and wisdom over worldly influences and self.

Not regarding or adoring anyone or even our own self interest above our regard, worship, obedience and love for God Develop a deep understanding of God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, prioritizing God's will, guidance and wisdom above all else.

Fellowship with Believers Engage with a community of believers through church activities, small groups, or Bible studies for mutual support and spiritual growth.

Seeking and receiving God's Holy Spirit;

Follow the guidance and truth of Jesus and God's Holy Spirit

Service to Others
Actively serve others in love, following Jesus 'example. Look for opportunities to meet needs within your community.

Feed the hungry, Clothe and provide shelter the needy, visit the sick, those in prison, visit widows, help those in need etc.

Living a Life of Worship
Worship God in all aspects of your life, recognizing that your actions, work, and relationships can reflect your devotion to Him.

Sharing the Gospel
Be a witness for Christ by sharing the good news with others. Look for opportunities to share your faith story and invite others to know Jesus.

Continuous Growth
Commit to lifelong learning and spiritual growth through reading books, attending seminars, and engaging in teachings that deepen your faith.

Be Thankful to God

Practicing Gratitude
Develop a heart of gratitude by regularly reflecting on God**'**s blessings and faithfulness in your life, acknowledging His goodness.

Engaging in Spiritual Disciplines
Practice spiritual disciplines like fasting, solitude, and silence to deepen your relationship with God and grow in your faith.

Accountability
Find a mentor or accountability partner to help you stay committed to your spiritual journey and encourage your growth in Christ.

Overcoming Trials with Faith
Learn to trust God in difficult times, seeing trials as opportunities for growth and deeper reliance on His strength.

Discipleship and Mentoring
Be a disciple and make disciples. Invest in the lives of others, helping them grow in their faith and understanding of Jesus.

John 13:34 (AKJV)" A new commandment I give to you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another."

Romans 10:15 (AKJV) " And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

Moreover the title "disciple" refers to a person who follows the teachings of Jesus Christ and who desires to persevere to learn, and to do, the will of God, in spite of the individual's sin nature or failures because that individual understands that their sins are covered and forgiven by the grace of God and they further believe and trust God to help them to overcome as they learn His ways.

Jesus Christ was not just another spiritual teacher, rather He is ' The Teacher '. far surpassing any other teacher in wisdom, truth and Love. Only through Jesus Christ can anyone be made righteous and grow in God's Love and wisdom.

God always intends every disciple to become a ' participant ' in doing that which he learns, and not just an observer, even though we will do some observing.

As a disciple or student of Jesus Christ, one must be willing to choose to learn and follow the same ways that Jesus Christ demonstrated throughout His life. A disciple purposes to Love others as Jesus Christ loves us. A person must go beyond just learning about Jesus Christ just ' intellectually '; Rather a person must be open in their mind and heart and want to sincerely know and follow and obey Jesus Christ. A person needs to desire to receive Him into their heart by the Holy Spirit, and ask Jesus to be the Lord and Savior of their life. Only then will Jesus Christ begin to teach that person the height and depth of His divine spiritual Wisdom.

No one can grow up into spiritual maturity just by intense study about Jesus Christ or even the Bible, without truly accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Lord, and Savior,in an intimate way, because we also need God's Holy Spirit to give us the insight and understanding of His Word. That is why many religious scholars have so many contradictions and errors in their beliefs because they are leaning on their own understanding and assumptions rather than truly seeking Jesus Christ to show them the truth and the way by His Spirit.

God will never force His principles on anyone. Instead He offers us a totally new life, full of blessings and to be set free from our old life which was full of darkness because of evil.

Who is a "disciple" of Jesus Christ, or what does it mean to be a"Disciple" of Jesus Christ ?

Jesus wants to teach us the truth and lead us away from all confusion and lies and to be delivered from depression and anxiety, so that we can be at rest.

Jesus Christ wants to reveal to anyone the truth if they just humble themselves and sincerely ask God in prayer to show them the way and have the patience for Him to do so, in His own wise way and time.

Every disciple of Jesus Christ has the opportunity to learn and grow in God's Love, Wisdom and Joy, without cost and receive an abundant life now and further Eternal Life with God in His Kingdom.

- **A disciple of Jesus Christ is not just a hearer of His word but a doer.** James 1:22
- **A disciple perseveres to learn -**

Seek and you shall find; Knock and the door will open" Matthew 7:7

- **A disciple of Jesus Christ, continues to abide in His word...** "If you abide in my word you are truly my disciple and you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free" John 8:31,32

- **A disciple of Jesus Christ is a person who desires to Love God with all your heart, mind, and strength... And to love one another as Jesus Christ loved us...** Matthew 22:37-40 John 15:9-12
- **A disciple of Jesus Christ is a person who chooses to follow Jesus Christ and be an imitator of His way in their daily life.** Mark 8:34
- **A disciple of Jesus Christ chooses willingly to obey His commandments.** John 14:21,23 1 John 5:2,3

Who Cannot Be A Disciple Of Jesus Christ?:

Luke 14:26-33 (AKJV) If any man come to me, and hate (To regard less than Christ) not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27And whoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28For which of you, intending to build a tower, sits not down first, and counts the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29Lest haply, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31Or what king, going to make war against another king, sits not down first, and consults whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that comes against him with twenty thousand? 32Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an ambassador, and desires conditions of peace. 33So likewise, whoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he has, he cannot be my disciple.

Matthew 10:1 (AKJV) And when he had called to him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease

John 8:31,32 (AKJV)“ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; 32And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Jesus calls believers in Him to become disciples and learn, instruct and apply His teachings to others; This is a fundamental aspect of His ministry, and He instructs and encourages His followers to do the same.

Matthew 4:19: In Matthew 4:19, Jesus calls His first disciples, saying, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." This not only establishes the doctrine of discipleship but also underscores the transformative aspect—disciples are made, not just recruited.

Matthew 28:19-20: The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 encapsulates the mandate for making disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." This charge involves not only evangelism but the ongoing process of teaching and mentoring, encompassing the entire journey of discipleship.

Luke 6:40: In Luke 6:40, Jesus articulates the goal of discipleship, "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher." This emphasizes the transformative nature of discipleship—followers becoming like their Master through the process of training and learning.

John 15:8: In John 15:8, Jesus speaks about bearing much fruit, stating, "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." The evidence of being a disciple is seen in the fruitfulness of a transformed life, reflecting the values and character of Jesus.

2 Timothy 2:2: In 2 Timothy 2:2, the apostle Paul instructs Timothy, "and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." This passage illustrates the generational aspect of discipleship, highlighting the responsibility to pass on the teachings of Christ to others who can, in turn, disciple others.

Acts 14:21-22: In Acts 14:21-22, after Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel in Derbe and made many disciples, they returned to encourage and strengthen them. This exemplifies the ongoing relationship and investment in the lives of disciples beyond the initial stages.

The specific calling of being and making disciples is foundational in Jesus' ministry, emphasizing not just a one-time decision but a lifelong process of transformation and growth. Discipleship involves not only learning from Jesus's example through His Word, moreover through the leading of God's Holy Spirit and by other Christians but actively engaging in the process of guiding and nurturing others in their walk of faith.

John 13:34-35: Jesus emphasizes the importance of love in discipleship, saying, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." This underscores the relational aspect of discipleship, highlighting that genuine discipleship is characterized by love for one another.

Matthew 10:24-25: In Matthew 10:24-25, Jesus acknowledges the shared identity of discipleship, "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master." This reinforces the idea that discipleship involves aligning one's life with the teachings and example of the Master.

Philippians 3:17: In Philippians 3:17, Paul urges believers to imitate him as he imitates Christ, "Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us." This extends the concept of discipleship to the broader Christian community, encouraging believers to follow the examples set by those who are mature in their faith.

1 Corinthians 11:1: Paul sets himself as an example of a disciple in 1 Corinthians 11:1, saying, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." Here, the call to discipleship involves following the example of those who are themselves following Christ, creating a chain of influence and growth.

Colossians 1:28-29: In Colossians 1:28-29, Paul expresses his goal in discipleship, "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me." This reveals the labor and commitment involved in the process of making disciples mature in their faith.

Discipleship in the Christian context encompasses not only learning the teachings of Jesus but embodying His character, receiving, growing in and sharing His Love, His Truth, and Way ; Then replicating the process in the lives of others. It is a transformative spiritual daily walk that involves a continuous fruitful ministry of being disciples and making disciples.

WHY SHOULD WE BE DISCIPLED

Why should we be discipled ? and Why should we be a disciple of Jesus Christ ?

1) So we will know the truth

When we are continued to be properly discipled and receive God's Holy Spirit and His word...we gain understanding and godly wisdom.

- When we are discipled we learn the truth about all of the following...
- We'll learn, Who God really is;
- We'll learn about, Why we need Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior;
- We'll learn about, What is God's plan and will that is essential and beneficial for our lives;
- We'll learn about, How much God truly loves us, and what He has already done for us, and continues to do for us and to further know and become partakers of His divine promises and so forth;
- We'll learn about, How to be set free from spiritual bondage, and penalty of our sins and How to overcome temptation and sin;
- We'll learn about, What is God's Will, His commandments, and what is sin and evil;
- We'll learn about, Why we need God's Helper, the Holy Spirit, and How to receive God's Holy Spirit;
- We'll learn about, How we can fully Love God and others, as Jesus Christ first Loved us;
- We'll learn about, How to be equipped to share the Good News of Salvation through Jesus Christ with with all nations of the world;
- We'll learn about, How we can be able to minister to the needs of others and bear good spiritual fruit;
- We'll learn about, How to beware of false teachers, and false doctrines, and How to avoid spiritual hindrances.
- We'll learn about, How we can receive Eternal Life with God

2) So we will be set free

- When we are discipled and learn and believe His truth, we are then set free continually from many spiritual bondages. such as: We are set free from sin, when we hear God's truth and believe and confess our sins, and repent, and receive the grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ.
- John 8:31,32 - Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
- John 15:3 “ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you ".
- We are also set free from confusion, doubt, lies, pride and every evil way as we continue to be discipled by God's word of truth and the Holy Spirit.

3) So we can be empowered by God's Holy Spirit to attain all of His will and plan for our lives.

4) So we will grow up into the maturity of the nature of Jesus Christ and bear spiritual fruit in our life...John 15:16

- Such as God's love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...Galatians 5:22,23

5) So we will be equipped and able to do God's word, good works and be a witness and receive divine guidance for our daily situations.

6) So we will be protected from all evil and from the works of satanic powers.

7) So that we may be partakers of God's precious promises and so our joy may be full.

8) So we can Love God and others, as Jesus Christ first Loved us.

9) So we can as Christians can clearly give an answer to all those whom we are witnessing to , and testifying about the Hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

(199) How Do We Make Disciples For Christ?

Making Disciples For Christ, Is preparing our own hearts, minds and daily lives in alignment with God’s Word first, then allowing God’s Holy Spirit to work through us to help disciple others. To God be all Glory, because we can do nothing of our own accord.

The way that we should make Disciples is the way Jesus Christ made disciples**.**

1) Prpclaim God’s Word, declaring people to repent, and believe in and follow Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. While it's biblical to preach and evangelize the multitudes, to declare the importance to come to Jesus Christ and to teach and preach, verse by verse, and certain main topics of Christianity, True Discipleship,

can more fully and readily takes place by Jesus Christ, as we continue to learn of and receive God's Word, in smaller core groups, and on an individual basis. We should spend quality time with small core groups of Christians, Two or more, or for instance 3-12 individuals, like Jesus did, primarily.

And although we need to learn from mature Christian Pastors and Teachers, it can't be emphasized enough that we are only to be disciples of Jesus Christ, personally, in other words, don't follow some teacher who is drawing your attention away from Jesus Christ onto himself, even though he may even teach biblical scriptures about Jesus. True Christian Pastors and Teachers will always direct you to Jesus Christ to be your Lord & Savior, and everything they teach will disciple you follow Jesus Christ, and to follow the truth of Gospel of Christ, as found in all the fullness of scriptures in the Bible.

As God instructs us, all of us as Christians should make disciples by teaching other Christians to observe and obey all that Jesus Christ commanded in His Word.

2) Concentrate in sharing God's Word between each other, demonstrate a genuine Love towards each other, serve each others needs and allow Jesus Christ to teach each other, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Becoming and continuing as a " DISCIPLE " of Jesus Christ, is a life long commitment, of being a LEARNER and FOLLOWER of Jesus Christ, to continue learn of Jesus Christ, to abide in God's Word, and Love, and to obey the commandments of Jesus Christ. Mainly to Love God with all our Heart, with all our mind, and with all our strength, and to Love our neighbor as ourselves. As a Disciple of Jesus Christ, It is essential for any Christian, to continue in God's Word, and learn what Jesus instructed us " TO DO " and what Jesus instructed us " NOT TO DO " in His Word, and by so doing we will know the Truth, and Truth shall set as free. So how is possible for us, to do all the things that Jesus instructs, to Love others, and to overcome sin and temptation etc...? Well with man it is impossible, but WITH God all things are possible. God will send us the HELPER, His Holy Spirit, not just to be with us, but to dwell within those, who ask God.

As we live our lives as true Disciples of Christ, and demonstrate His Love towards others, we should always be pointing the Way to Jesus Christ, sharing His Word, but it still remains that Jesus Christ is really THE TEACHER; So all Glory goes to God, because we cannot do anything apart from God, it is His work within us, and it is His Grace that forgives us when we fall short.

John 8:31,32 (AKJV)“ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; 32And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

God does not want us to hide the Truth that we learn, but rather He instructs us to share His Light, Love and Truth with others, and to go into all the world and make Disciples.

After learning and applying the truths of Jesus Christ within our own lives, it is essential that we individually teach (DISCIPLE) others all about the ways of God, His love and salvation.

Jesus Christ commissioned His disciples to go into all the world and to preach the Good News.

As Christians, we should begin instructing others about Jesus Christ, within our local communities and then as God would direct each person to various parts of the world.

There is a cost of discipleship, really not of earthy money, but rather of our time and denying one's self of various things and even sometimes of friends and family, so that we can more effectively learn and share with others about God, and His salvation and love.

When we make disciples, we should teach the word of God in a way that is easily understood, and always demonstrate God's love to those whom we are teaching.

As disciples of Jesus Christ we can be used by God in a special way, and thereby, many others we also have eternal life and gain eternal riches beyond compare.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Matthew 28:18 (AKJV) **"**And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. 19Go you therefore, (Make disciples) and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and, see, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.

Matthew 10:1 (AKJV) And when he had called to him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease

John 8:31,32 (AKJV)" Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; 32And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Jesus calls believers in Him to become disciples and learn, instruct and apply His teachings to others; This is a fundamental aspect of His ministry, and He instructs and encourages His followers to do the same.

Matthew 4:19: In Matthew 4:19, Jesus calls His first disciples, saying, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." This not only establishes the concept of discipleship but also underscores the transformative aspect—disciples are made, not just recruited.

Matthew 28:19-20: The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 encapsulates the mandate for making disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." This charge involves not only evangelism but the ongoing process of teaching and mentoring, encompassing the entire journey of discipleship.

Luke 6:40: In Luke 6:40, Jesus articulates the goal of discipleship, "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher." This emphasizes the transformative nature of discipleship—followers becoming like their Master through the process of training and learning.

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(200) Good Works:

Text: Ephesians 2:10 (AKJV): "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them."

Introduction: Good Works as a Fruit of Salvation In Ephesians 2:10, the Apostle Paul reveals that believers are God's "workmanship," created in Christ for the purpose of doing good works. This verse highlights a fundamental truth: good works are not the means by which we are saved, but rather the evidence and fruit of our salvation. These good works, which God has "before ordained," reflect the transforming power of Christ in the life of the believer. They are the natural outflow of a heart that has been made new in Jesus.

This commentary will explore the biblical understanding of good works, relating to our purpose as followers of Jesus Christ, and how we can develop fruitful works as part of our spiritual walk with God. Good works are not optional; they are central to the believer's life and serve as a witness to the world of God's grace and power. By examining the nature of good works in Scripture, we will discover how they are to be pursued, and how they contribute to the glory of God and the advancement of His Kingdom.

1. The Biblical Foundation of Good Works Good works are deeply rooted in God's purpose for His people. From the Old Testament to the New, Scripture emphasizes that good works are not only the response to God's love but also a means of fulfilling God's plan for His creation. In both the Old and New Testaments, good works are shown to be the proper response to God**'**s grace and the result of His transforming power in the life of a believer.

1.1 Good Works in the Old Testament In the Old Testament, God's people are repeatedly called to act justly, show mercy, and walk humbly before God. These acts of obedience were seen as fulfilling God's righteous standards and demonstrating His character to the world.

Micah 6:8 (AKJV): "He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"

This verse reveals that good works, including justice, mercy, and humility, are at the heart of God's commandments for His people. Such actions reflect God's own nature and serve as a witness to the world of His goodness.

1.2 Good Works in the Life of Jesus Jesus, as the perfect revelation of God's will, demonstrated a life of good works. His ministry was marked by acts of compassion, healing, and service. Jesus **'**good works were not done to earn favor with God, but as a demonstration of the love, grace, and truth that He embodied.

Matthew 5:14-16 (AKJV): "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light to all that are in the house. 1**6Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."**

In these verses, Jesus encourages His disciples, of which we are also, to allow our good works to shine before others, not for personal recognition, but for the glory of God. His own life was a perfect model of this, as He healed the sick, comforted the brokenhearted, and served others selflessly.

John 9:4 (AKJV): "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night comes, when no man can work. "

Jesus' entire life was dedicated to doing the work of God, showing that good works are part of God's mission for the world. As His followers, Christians are called to continue this mission.

1.3 Good Works in the New Testament In the New Testament, good works are frequently discussed as the result of the believer's faith in Jesus Christ. Paul emphasizes that while salvation is a gift from God, it is meant to produce a life of good works that reflects the believer's new identity in Christ.

Ephesians 2:8-10 (AKJV): "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them."

Paul clearly teaches that salvation is not a result of good works but a gift from God. However, once saved, believers are created in Christ to walk in good works. These works are part of God's eternal plan for His people and are a way for believers to participate in His Kingdom mission.

Titus 3:8 (AKJV): "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that you affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men."

Here, Paul encourages believers to be diligent in maintaining good works. Not only are good works beneficial for others, but they are also pleasing to God and a testimony of His grace.

2. The Purpose of Good Works Good works serve several important purposes in the life of a believer. They are not just about moral behavior or social good; they are a means by which believers fulfill their calling in Christ.

2.1 A Testimony to the Glory of God The primary purpose of good works is to bring glory to God. Jesus teaches in Matthew 5:16 that believers' good works should cause others to glorify God, showing that our actions are a reflection of His love, goodness, and grace.

2.2 Serving and Providing Others Needs In Tangible Ways:

Good works are a powerful tool for evangelism. They demonstrate the love and truth of the gospel in tangible ways. When Christians engage in good works, they provide an opportunity for others to see the reality of God's love at work in the world.

Matthew 25:35-40 (AKJV): "For I was an hungered, and you gave me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: 36Naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me. 37Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we you an hungered, and fed you? or thirsty, and gave you drink? 38When saw we you a stranger, and took you in? or naked, and clothed you? 39Or when saw we you sick, or in prison, and came to you? 40And the King shall answer and say to them, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it to me.."

Jesus teaches that when believers perform acts of kindness and service to others, it is as if they are doing it for Him. This highlights the importance of good works in revealing God's love to the world.

2.3 Demonstrating the Fruit of the Spirit Good works are the natural outcome of the Holy Spirit's work in the life of the disciple of jesus. As we walk in the Spirit, our lives will bear the fruit of good works, such as love, joy, peace, and kindness.

Galatians 5:22-23 (AKJV): "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The Holy Spirit empowers us to live lives marked by good works. These works demonstrate the transformative power of the gospel and reflect God's character to the world.

3. The Role of Good Works in Christian Life Good works are not just actions; they are a lifestyle that reflects the character of God. Christians are called to live lives of service, generosity, and justice, reflecting God's love and mercy to the world.

3.1 Good Works as Evidence of True Faith James teaches that faith without works is dead. True faith in Christ will inevitably produce good works. These works are not a means of salvation but are evidence of the faith that saves.

James 2:14-17 (AKJV): "What does it profit, my brothers, though a man say he has faith, and have not works? can faith save him? 15If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16And one of you say to them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful to the body; what does it profit? 17Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone."

Good works are the evidence of a living, active faith that transforms the believer's heart and actions.

3.2 Good Works as Part of the Believer's Calling Every Christian has a unique calling to do good works. Whether in their family, work, or community, believers are called to reflect Christ through their actions.

1 Peter 2:9 (AKJV): "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light;."

Believers are chosen to live in a way that reflects God**'**s glory, demonstrating His goodness and mercy through their actions.

Conclusion: Walking in Good Works for God's Glory Good works are not an optional part of the Christian life; they are a central aspect of the believer's calling. As God**'**s workmanship, we are created in Christ for the purpose of doing good works. These works are a response to God**'**s grace, a demonstration of faith, and a witness to the world of God**'**s love.

By walking in good works, we as Christians fulfill our calling to reflect the character of God, to serve others, and to bring glory to His name. May we, empowered by the Holy Spirit, be faithful to walk in the good works that God has prepared for us, living lives that testify to His grace and truth.

(201) Walk in the Light of Jesus Christ,

Not in compromise:

Not By doing evil, deliberately sinning or partaking in the darkness of the world

1.1 Jesus Christ as the Light of the World

- **John 8:12-20** (AKJV) – **"Then spoke Jesus again to them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.** ***1****3The Pharisees therefore said to him, You bore record of yourself; your record is not true. 14Jesus answered and said to them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know from where I came, and where I go; but you cannot tell from where I come, and where I go. 15You judge after the flesh; I judge no man. 16And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. 17It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. 18I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me bears witness of me. 19Then said they to him, Where is your Father? Jesus answered, You neither know me, nor my Father: if you had known me, you should have known my Father also. 20These words spoke Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.'"*
    - Jesus **'**identity as the "Light of the world" is central to the Gospel message. He came into the world to dispel the darkness of sin and death. Jesus' light is not merely symbolic but is a transformative power that brings salvation, truth, and life to those who follow Him. When Jesus says that those who follow Him "will not walk in darkness," He is emphasizing that His followers

are called to live differently from the world around them. The light of Christ reveals the truth and exposes the darkness of sin, guiding believers in the way of righteousness.

- **John 1:4-5** (AKJV)– **"***In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5And the light shines in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not..*"
    - The light of Christ is not merely a beacon or symbol but is intrinsically tied to His very being. The life that Christ offers is also the light that dispels spiritual darkness. This light is stronger than the darkness of sin, evil, and death. No matter how dark the world may seem, the light of Christ is unconquerable, and His followers are invited to walk in that light.

1.2 Walking in Darkness: A Symbol of Sin and Spiritual Death

- **Ephesians 5:8** (AKJV) – **"***For you were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light: 9(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) .*"
    - Before coming to faith in Christ, all people were "in darkness," trapped in sin, ignorance, and separation from God. Walking in darkness is not just a matter of physical location, but a metaphor for living in sin and rebellion against God. It refers to living apart from God's truth, wisdom, and righteousness. But in Christ, believers are transformed from darkness to light, and are called to live according to this new identity. This transformation involves a change in behavior, thinking, and priorities, so that believers reflect the light of Christ in their lives.
- **1 John 1:5-7** –(AKJV) **"***This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleans us from all sin..*"
    - John makes it clear that walking in darkness while claiming to be in fellowship with God is a contradiction. Light and darkness are incompatible, just as truth and falsehood cannot coexist. A true believer cannot walk in sin and deception and claim to have fellowship with God. Walking in the light involves living according to the truth of God's Word, pursuing holiness, and avoiding compromise with evil. Fellowship with God requires walking in His light, not participating in the darkness of sin.

2. The Dangers of Compromise and Walking in Darkness

2.1 Compromise with Darkness is a Threat to Spiritual Integrity

- **2 Corinthians 6:14-16** (AKJV)– **"***Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness? 15And what concord has Christ with Belial? or what part has he that believes with an infidel? 16And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? for you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. "*

- Paul warns against compromising with the world**’**s system, which is rooted in darkness. To be **“**unequally yoked” means to align oneself with those who do not share the same faith and values. This passage isn**’**t just about marriage but about any form of partnership or agreement that could lead a believer to participate in darkness. The contrast between light and darkness is stark, and any attempt to blend the two only results in spiritual harm. Righteousness has no fellowship with lawlessness, and Christ has no accord with Belial (a name for Satan). Compromising with sin or evil can lead to spiritual defeat and loss of integrity.

2.2 Walking in Darkness Leads to Deception and Confusion

- **1 John 2:9-11** –(AKJV) **“***He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now. 10He that loves his brother stays in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. 11But he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not where he goes, because that darkness has blinded his eyes..”*
  - Walking in darkness leads to spiritual blindness. John connects hatred with walking in darkness, emphasizing that sin, especially relational sin, distorts one**’**s ability to see clearly. The more a person allows darkness (sin) to reign in their life, the more they lose their ability to discern truth, and the more they stumble in their spiritual walk. This deception is dangerous because it blinds individuals to their own sin and the truth of God**’**s Word.
- **James 1:14-15** (AKJV)– **“***But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.”*
  - Compromise with darkness can lead to temptation, and unchecked temptation eventually leads to sin. The progression from desire to sin to spiritual death highlights the danger of dabbling in darkness, even in small ways. Sin always has consequences, and walking in darkness opens the door for these destructive consequences to unfold.

2.3 Walking in Darkness Is a Breach of Fellowship with God

- **Isaiah 59:2** (AKJV)– **“***But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. .”*
  - Walking in sin and darkness creates a barrier between believers and God. The intimacy and fellowship that believers enjoy with God are disrupted by sin. When we choose darkness over light, we create distance in our relationship with God, and our prayers are hindered. This separation is not because God moves away from us, but because our sinful choices distance us from His presence. Walking in the light, on the other hand, draws us closer to God and keeps the channels of communication open.

3. How to Walk in the Light of Jesus Christ

3.1 Reject Compromise and Sin

- **Romans 13:12-14** (AKJV) – **“***The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14But put you on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.”*
    - Walking in the light means rejecting all forms of darkness—sin, immorality, selfishness, and worldliness. Paul urges believers to cast off the works of darkness, to actively turn away from the things that lead to spiritual blindness. This requires intentional action, such as putting on the "armor of light" (the righteousness of Christ) and making no provision for sinful desires. The more we yield to Jesus, the more His light shines in and through us.

3.2 Live According to God’s Word

- **Psalm 119:105** (AKJV)– **“***Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path”*
    - The Word of God is a key tool in walking in the light. It guides believers in every aspect of life, exposing sin and showing the right path to walk. By meditating on Scripture, we align our lives with God**’**s truth, and His Word illuminates our way, helping us avoid the darkness of sin and error.

3.3 Walk in the Love of Christ

- **John 12:46** (AKJV)– **“***I am come a light into the world, that whoever believes on me should not abide in darkness. ”*
    - Jesus, as the Light of the World, demonstrated God**’**s love in His life, death, and resurrection. To walk in the light of Christ is to live a life of love, as He loved us. This means loving others sacrificially, living in humility, and forgiving as Christ forgave. Love is the defining mark of the believer who walks in the light, and it stands in direct contrast to the hatred and division that characterize darkness.

4. Conclusion: Walking in the Light

To walk in the light of Jesus Christ is to live a life marked by truth, righteousness, and love. It is to follow Him with an undivided heart, rejecting the darkness of sin, compromise, and evil. As disciples and followers of Christ, we are called to reflect His light in every area of our lives—our thoughts, words, actions, and relationships. By doing so, we not only draw closer to God but also become witnesses to the world, showing them the way out of darkness and into the light of Jesus Christ.

May we commit ourselves to walk in His light, casting off the works of darkness, and allowing His truth to guide us in all things.

(202) Do Not Love God and Others in Falsehood or in Vain

The command to love God and others is paramount to our Christian faith, but it is equally crucial that this love is genuine, sincere, and rooted in truth. To love in falsehood

means to offer a love that is superficial, lacking of God's Spirit, truth, and His will, deceptive, or driven by self-interest, rather than the selfless, authentic love that God calls us to demonstrate.

1. Loving God in Falsehood

Loving God in falsehood can manifest in several ways:

- **Superficial Worship**: Outwardly following religious rituals or traditions without a true heart of devotion. Jesus warns against this type of worship in **Matthew 15:8-9**, saying: **"***These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules."* This type of love is empty because it lacks sincerity and does not come from a genuine desire to know and follow God.

- **Self-Deception**: Claiming to love God while living in disobedience to His commands. Jesus emphasizes in **John 14:15**, *"If you love me, keep my commandments."* A love for God that ignores His truth is not love at all. It is a form of deception that tries to justify sin or rebellion, thinking that God will overlook disobedience.

- **Hypocrisy**: Acting one way in public while harboring a different attitude in private. This is an outward display of affection for God, but inwardly, the heart is not aligned with His will. Jesus warns the Pharisees in **Matthew 23:27-28**: **"***Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean."* True love for God involves honesty and alignment between our external actions and internal attitudes.

2. Loving Others in Falsehood

Loving others in falsehood is equally damaging, as it distorts what true love should be. It can look like:

- **Pretended Love**: Showing kindness or affection for someone while having insincere motives. This type of false love might be motivated by a desire for personal gain or to appear righteous in the eyes of others. **1 Corinthians 13:3** reminds us: **"***If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."* Love must be motivated by genuine care for others, not a hidden agenda.

- **Unforgiveness and Resentment**: Loving others while holding grudges or harboring bitterness. Jesus taught in **Matthew 6:14-15**, **"***For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."* True love for others involves a heart of forgiveness and reconciliation, not holding on to past wrongs.

- **Empty Words and Actions**: Telling someone you love them while not backing it up with meaningful actions. **1 John 3:18** reminds us: **"***Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."* Loving others in truth means demonstrating that love through tangible acts of kindness, care, and support.

3. The Dangers of False Love

- **Misleading Others**: Loving in falsehood can lead others astray. If they see us acting one way but living another, it may cause confusion or even lead them to believe that false love is acceptable. In **Matthew 7:16**, Jesus teaches: **"***By their fruit, you will recognize them."* Our love must reflect the truth of who God is, so others can clearly see His character through us.

- **Loss of Genuine Fellowship**: False love creates distance in relationships. Whether it's our relationship with God or with others, when love is insincere, it breaks down trust and deepens feelings of emptiness and loneliness. Genuine love builds true, lasting fellowship—both with God and with one another.

- **Unfulfilled Spiritual Life**: Loving God and others in falsehood leads to a disconnected spiritual life. **Romans 12:9** calls us to love genuinely: **"***Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good."* Without sincerity, our worship and service to God lose their depth and significance. We may be busy doing "good" things, but they won**'**t bear the lasting fruit that comes from a heart truly aligned with God's will.

- **Erosion of Personal Integrity:** Living in false love compromises our integrity. When we act in a way that contradicts our true feelings or beliefs, we create a disconnect between who we are and how we present ourselves to the world. This hypocrisy damages our own sense of self-worth and undermines our witness to others. Proverbs 12:22 reminds us, **"**The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy." False love, rooted in deception, distances us from the truth, both in our relationship with God and with others.

- **Spiritual Consequences:** Having false, lukewarm love, especially when it goes unrepented and a person chooses to remain hypocritical, rejecting Jesus, this goes against God's will and is considered sin. If left unaddressed, this can lead to severe spiritual consequences, including the possibility of not being saved or receiving eternal life in heaven with God In Revelation 2:4-5, Jesus warns the church of Ephesus, **"**Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first." If false love is allowed to persist, it can lead to a hardened heart and spiritual death, making repentance and realignment with God**'**s truth essential for salvation and eternal life.

- **A Call to Authentic Love:** Ultimately, the danger of false love serves as a call to return to the authentic, sacrificial love that Christ demonstrated. John 15:13 tells

us, **“**Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one**’**s life for one**’**s friends.” This is the standard of love that we are called to embrace in all of our relationships—one that is sincere, true, and rooted in God**’**s will. Only by embodying this kind of love can we reflect God**’**s nature, fulfill His purpose in our lives, and live in the fullness of the salvation He offers.

4. The Call to Love in Truth

To love God and others in truth means that our love must be:

- **Rooted in God's Truth**: The foundation of our love must be God's Word. **John 8:32** states: **“***Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”* True love is anchored in the truth of who God is, who we are, and how He has called us to live.

- **Sincere and Selfless**: Our love should not be for personal gain or appearance, but from a heart that genuinely cares for the well-being of others. **1 Corinthians 13:4-7** describes love as patient, kind, and selfless, not seeking its own.

- **Empowered by the Holy Spirit**: We cannot love in the way God intends apart from the help of the Holy Spirit. It is He who enables us to love authentically and transform our hearts to reflect Christ's love. **Romans 5:5** says: **“***God**’**s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”*

Conclusion: The Importance of Loving in Truth, and not Falsehood

Loving God and others in **truth** means aligning our hearts, actions, and words with the authentic love that God has shown us. It requires **honesty**, **integrity**, and **selflessness**, ensuring that our love is not rooted in falsehood or pretense. Loving in truth is not just about following rules or performing duties—it is about embodying the love of Christ in everything we do.

When we love in truth, we reflect the character of God and bear witness to the power of His transforming love in our lives. Our relationships, both with God and with others, become deeper, more meaningful, and truly fulfilling. Therefore, let us strive to love not in falsehood but in the truth of God's Word and the genuine love He has poured into our hearts.

(203) Trying to Love Others in Sinful Ways Contrary to God’s Word is Not of God’s Spirit nor Truth:

While we are called to love others as Christ loves us, it**’**s crucial to recognize that **love** that contradicts God**’**s Word or is based on sinful behaviors is not true love. It is important to understand that **love in sinful ways**—whether it**’**s in the form of enabling destructive behaviors, justifying sin, or promoting what is contrary to God**’**s moral standards—**is not of God’s Spirit nor aligned with His truth**.

1. A Love That Enables Sin is Not God's Love

One of the most subtle forms of sinful love is the kind that enables or endorses **sinful behaviors**. For example, when we **"**love" others by overlooking their destructive choices, excusing their sinful actions, or condoning behaviors that go against God**'**s Word, we are not truly loving them as God intends. This can manifest in relationships where people tolerate or encourage sin for the sake of peace, comfort, or avoiding conflict.

Key Points:

- **God's Love Confronts Sin**: True love, empowered by the Holy Spirit, will never tolerate sin or leave others in a harmful state. It seeks to **bring truth, healing, and restoration**. In **Ephesians 4:15**, Paul writes: **"***Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ."* True love speaks the truth about sin, leading others to repentance and restoration in Christ.

- **Sin Leads to Destruction**: When we tolerate sin under the guise of love, we**'**re not helping others, but enabling them to walk in ways that will ultimately hurt them. **Romans 6:23** reminds us: **"***For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* To love someone is to desire their ultimate well-being, which includes helping them avoid the consequences of sin.

2. Sinful Love is Rooted in Deception, Not Truth

Any form of love that is rooted in **deception**—whether it**'**s pretending that sin doesn**'**t matter or misrepresenting God**'**s Word—is contrary to God**'**s Spirit and His truth. God**'**s love is founded on **truth**. If the love we show is not aligned with **the truth of Scripture**, it is not God**'**s love. In fact, it becomes a distortion of His love and a way of leading others astray.

Key Points:

- **Love Without Truth is Not Genuine**: True love requires both **Spirit and Truth**, as we discussed earlier. Without the truth of God**'**s Word, our love becomes a **counterfeit**. **2 John 1:6** says: **"***And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands."* A love that contradicts God**'**s Word, even in the name of tolerance or acceptance, is not real love. It is a **deception** that misleads others and prevents them from knowing the truth that leads to freedom in Christ.

- **Love That Avoids Confronting Sin Is a Lie**: Jesus, in His love, did not hesitate to speak hard truths when necessary. **Matthew 16:23** records how Jesus confronted Peter**'**s sinful thinking, saying: **"***Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."* While this was a hard rebuke, it was done in love because it was intended to **protect** Peter and lead him to understand God's will.

3. Sinful Love Promotes Selfishness, Not Sacrifice

A significant aspect of God**’**s love is that it is self-sacrificial. **John 15:13** states: **“***Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one**’**s life for one**’**s friends.”* True love reflects **God's sacrificial nature**, which always seeks the highest good of others—even at a personal cost. **Sinful love**, however, is often **self-serving** or based on what benefits the one showing love. It may be driven by emotions, desires, or selfish motives, rather than being grounded in **God’s will** and sacrificial service.

Key Points:

- **Self-Serving Love is Not True Love**: Love that seeks to **gratify our own desires** or fulfill personal needs, at the expense of others **’**well-being, is not love according to God**’**s Spirit. True love is sacrificial, always willing to **put others before ourselves** in order to see them grow in faith and holiness. Sinful love often looks for **quick fixes or rewards**, rather than seeking the eternal good of the person being loved.

- **Love is About Leading to Christ, Not Enabling Sinful Desires**: True love helps others align with **God’s purposes**, even when that means challenging them or calling them to repentance. It is not about keeping people comfortable in their sin, but about helping them **know and follow Christ** in truth. **Romans 12:9** says: **“***Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.”*

4. The Example of Christ’s Love: Not Sinful, But Pure and Redemptive

Jesus is the ultimate example of what true love looks like. His love is **redemptive**, not enabling sin but calling people to repentance and transformation. **John 8:11** gives us a powerful example when Jesus encounters the woman caught in adultery. He says: **“***Then neither do I condemn you... Go now and leave your life of sin.”* He did not condone her sin, but He offered **forgiveness** and the **power to change** through His love. His love was not about allowing her to continue in sin but about offering a path of **restoration** and **freedom**.

- **Love that Confronts Sin**: Jesus **’**love **confronts sin** but also provides a way out of it. In **John 4**, when Jesus speaks to the Samaritan woman at the well, He reveals the truth about her life, but He does so with compassion and offers her the **living water** that satisfies the deepest needs of her soul (John 4:10-14). His love does not enable her sin but invites her to leave it behind and experience transformation.

Conclusion: True Love is Always Aligned with God’s Spirit and Truth

Trying to love others in sinful ways—whether through enabling destructive behaviors, tolerating sin, or deceiving others with falsehood—is not the **love of God**. True love, as defined by Scripture, is always grounded in **God’s truth** and **empowered by His Spirit**. It does not ignore sin or permit it to continue, but it **confronts it** in a spirit of grace, leading people toward **healing, restoration**, and ultimately, a deeper relationship with God.

When we love according to **God's Spirit and Truth**, our love will always **seek the best for others**, calling them to righteousness and walking alongside them in their journey of faith. True love leads others to God, helps them grow in Christ, and encourages holiness—not in a spirit of condemnation, but with compassion and a desire to see them **transformed** by His power.

(204) Any Form of Earthly Love Apart from God's Kind of Love is All in Vain

The Bible is clear that **true love**—the kind of love that brings lasting fulfillment, eternal significance, and truly reflects the heart of God—is rooted in **God's love**, not in human strength, self-interest, or earthly desires. Any form of **earthly love** that is **apart from God's love** is ultimately **vain** and cannot accomplish what true love is meant to achieve.

1. Earthly Love Without God's Love is Empty and Superficial

The world offers many kinds of love: romantic love, familial love, friendship, and affection. While these forms of love are important and can be deeply meaningful, **apart from God's love**, they are often tainted by **selfishness**, **pride**, and **temporary satisfaction**. Without the foundation of **God's love**, these relationships are **fragile** and can often fall short of their intended purpose, leaving people feeling empty or unfulfilled.

Key Points:

- **Self-Centered Love**: Much of earthly love is rooted in **personal gain**. People often seek relationships to fulfill their own needs, desires, or sense of worth. This love is conditional—it depends on whether the other person meets their expectations or makes them feel good. When the conditions aren't met, the love fades or turns into something negative.
    - **Example**: A romantic relationship that is based solely on **attraction or convenience** may fall apart when external circumstances change or when one person's desires are no longer met.
- **Vain Love**: **1 Corinthians 13:1-3** reminds us that even acts of generosity, sacrifice, and kindness done without God's love are **meaningless**: **"***If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing."* Any form of earthly love, no matter how grand or self-sacrificial it may appear, is **empty** without God's love.

2. Earthly Love Without God's Love Leads to Self-Destruction

The pursuit of **earthly love** without God's guidance can lead to **destructive patterns**—relationships built on lust, manipulation, or dependency rather than the true, selfless love that God demonstrates. Without the **wisdom** and **strength** that comes from God's love, earthly love can devolve into **selfishness, control, and harm**.

Key Points:

- **Love Without God's Truth Leads to Sinful Desires**: Earthly love that seeks to satisfy **sinful** desires—such as lust, pride, or greed—leads to destruction. The Apostle James writes in **James 4:1-3**: **"***What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don***'***t they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have... When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."* Earthly love driven by selfish desire can lead to broken relationships, heartache, and separation from God.

- ***Unholy Attachments****: Without God***'***s love, people can form unhealthy attachments—relationships based on* ***neediness****,* ***dependence****,* ***lust*** *or* ***control****. This leads to* ***unhealthy cycles*** *that harm not only the individuals involved but others around them. For example, codependent relationships or abusive partnerships are often rooted in* ***earthly love*** *that seeks to control or manipulate rather than selflessly serve.*

3. Earthly Love is Temporary, But God's Love is Eternal

Earthly love is **temporary**—it can fade with time, change with circumstances, and be swayed by emotions. God**'**s love, on the other hand, is **unconditional**, **unfailing**, and **eternal**. As **1 John 4:16** teaches: **"***So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love. Whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in them."* The love of God is the **ultimate and perfect love** that gives lasting meaning and purpose to all our relationships.

Key Points:

- **Fading Earthly Love**: Human love is subject to the **ups and downs of life**—feelings change, circumstances shift, and people are imperfect. Relationships that are built on **shifting foundations** may not last through trials or hardship. In **Matthew 7:24-27**, Jesus describes the wise man who builds his house on the rock—this represents **God's truth and love**, which is stable and eternal, unlike the house built on sand (representing earthly love and things that are temporary).

- **God's Love is the Source of True Fulfillment**: Only **God's love** can fill the deepest needs of our hearts, because it is **perfect** and **constant**. **Romans 8:38-39** assures us: **"***For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* This love is unbreakable and unchangeable, offering eternal peace and joy.

4. God's Love is the Only Love That Truly Transforms

Earthly love may bring temporary pleasure or comfort, but only **God's love** has the **power to transform lives**. **Romans 5:5** tells us: **"***God**'**s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."* This transformation is not just about **feeling loved**—it is about **being changed** into the image of Christ, **healed** from the brokenness of sin, and **empowered** to love others the way God loves us.

Key Points:

- **Transformational nature of God's Love and His Holy Spirit**: God**'**s love is **redemptive,** because of the life that Jesus Christ gave at the cross for our sins. It doesn**'**t just offer a temporary fix but **transforms our hearts** and leads us to become more like Christ. In **2 Corinthians 5:17**, Paul writes: **"***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"* Only God**'**s love can truly change us from the inside out, making us vessels of His love for others.

- **Empowered to Love Others**: When we experience God**'**s love in our lives, we are empowered to love others in the same way. **1 John 4:19** says, **"***We love because he first loved us."* True, selfless love for others comes from receiving God**'**s perfect love and allowing it to flow through us.

Conclusion: Earthly Love Apart from God's Love is All in Vain

Any form of **earthly love**—whether it**'**s romantic love, familial love, or even friendship—**that is apart from God's kind of love is limited, and lacking and in some instances ultimately in vain**. Though these relationships are important and meaningful, they are **temporary**, **often self-centered**, and **unfruitful** without being God's intended divine love that has been rooted and established by **God's Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ**. **True love**—the kind that is not shallow or sinful; True love- that gives forgiveness, grace, transformation, compassion, and further brings reconciliation to God, godly peace, joy, fulfillment, and has lasting significance, eternal life—can only be found when it is **empowered and directed by God's Spirit** and aligned with the **truth of Jesus Christ, found in His word, the Bible**. We are to love God in willful obedience to His word in the manner and ways that God instructs and not just in any haphazard ways that we think are good or right. Moreover we are to love others as Jesus Christ loved us. It is imperative that we humble ourselves and continue sincerely in His word, for Jesus is way, the truth and the life.

Therefore, we must seek God's wisdom and His perspective on how to love others, and as we are loved by Jesus Christ, we begin to understand **God's perfect love**. When we experience God**'**s divine steadfast love, it not only fills us but enables us to **love others** in a way that transcends human limitations, bringing glory to God and transforming lives for His kingdom. **Without God's love, all earthly love is fleeting and in vain**, but with God**'**s love, it becomes **eternal, spiritually fruitful and full of purpose**.

(205) Love in Spirit and Truth:

Embracing Authentic and Genuine Love

The phrase "Love in Spirit and Truth" is derived from the words of Jesus in John 4:24: *"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."* Jesus speaks these words to the Samaritan woman at the well, emphasizing the nature of true worship and how it must transcend physical locations or rituals.

Meaning of the Phrase To love in spirit and truth involves a deeper, sincere relationship with God that is rooted in the inner workings of the Holy Spirit and guided by the truth of His Word. True love—whether in worship, relationships, or service—requires more than just human feelings, emotions and outward actions. It is not merely a superficial or ritualistic display of affection but must come from a heart and mind that are in alignment with God's truth, as revealed through Scripture in the Bible. This type of love involves the total engagement of one**'**s spirit (the inner being) and truth (the revelation of God**'**s Word).

In worship, for example, loving in spirit and truth means that one**'**s worship is not limited to external rituals or traditions but is a heartfelt, personal connection with God that is guided by the Holy Spirit and grounded in the truth of His Word. Worship in spirit emphasizes an internal, authentic engagement with God, while worship in truth emphasizes a right understanding and adherence to God's revealed will.

Applying This to Our Lives

1. **Authenticity in Relationship with God**: True love for God cannot be reduced to routine or external observances.Just as in any relationship, God desires genuine intimacy and authenticity. This means that our love for Him is not about checking off religious duties, but about cultivating a sincere, heartfelt connection through the Holy Spirit, who guides and empowers us to understand and embrace God**'**s truth.

2. **The Role of the Holy Spirit**: As disciples, we cannot love God as He intends without the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit leads us into all truth (John 16:13) and helps us love God in a way that pleases Him. This love is not based on human emotion or effort alone, but on the Spirit**'**s transformative work within us.

3. **Living According to God's Truth**: Loving in truth means that we must align our lives with the Word of God. This requires not just an intellectual understanding of the Bible but also a commitment to living according to its teachings. It means allowing God's truth to shape our values, actions, and attitudes. True love for God manifests in obedience to His commands and living out His truth in our daily lives.

4. **Love for Others**: To love others in spirit and truth is to demonstrate the same authentic love that we have for God. This means loving others not based on convenience, preference, or superficial feelings, but out of a deep commitment to God's will and truth. True love for others cannot be reduced to lustful infatuations or immoral sexual behavior. To love others in spirit and truth is to love others with genuine concern and intent for the present and eternal welfare of another's life and

demonstrated in accordance to God’s word and will. It is a love that is guided by the Holy Spirit and grounded in the teachings of Scripture, empowering us to love in a selfless, sacrificial way.

5. **Spiritual Fruit**: Just as Zechariah 4:6 reminds us that our human efforts alone cannot bring about spiritual transformation, loving in spirit and truth requires dependence on God**’**s Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers us to bear fruit in our relationships, in our ministries, and in our lives that reflect God**’**s love, justice, and mercy. It is God who makes our efforts effective and meaningful.

Conclusion

To "love in spirit and truth" is to engage in a love that is both deeply spiritual and firmly rooted in the truth of God's Word. This love is not dependent on human strength or resources but is made possible through the Holy Spirit, who enables us to love God and others in a way that is authentic, transformative, and pleasing to God. It is a call to live lives that reflect both the power of God's Spirit and the truth of His revelation, seeking not just to worship Him with our lips but to love Him with our hearts, minds, and actions.

Scripture: John 4:23-24 "But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

In His conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus speaks of worshiping God in spirit and truth, highlighting the importance of authenticity and genuineness in our relationship with Him. This principle extends beyond worship to encompass every aspect of our lives, including our expression of love toward others.

To love in spirit and truth is to love with sincerity, integrity, and purity of heart. It is to love from a place of genuine affection and devotion, empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit. Such love transcends mere outward expressions or religious rituals; it flows from the depths of our being, reflecting the character and nature of God Himself.

Loving in spirit involves engaging our innermost being—the core of our thoughts, emotions, and desires—in our expression of love. It requires us to cultivate a heart that is receptive to the leading and prompting of the Holy Spirit, allowing His love to flow through us and touch the lives of others. It is a love that is not bound by external circumstances or conditions but is freely given and received.

Loving in truth entails aligning our love with the principles and values of God's Word. It requires us to live with integrity and honesty, being true to ourselves and to others in our expressions of love. It is a love that seeks the highest good of others, guided by the moral and ethical standards revealed in Scripture.

Together, loving in spirit and truth forms the foundation of authentic and genuine love—a love that reflects the heart of God and bears witness to His presence in our lives. It is a love that transcends human limitations and encompasses all aspects of our being, bringing healing, reconciliation, and transformation to the world around us.

As followers of Christ, let us strive to love in spirit and truth, seeking to embody the love of Christ in all that we do. May our love be marked by sincerity, integrity, and purity of heart, drawing others into a deeper relationship with God and bringing glory to His name.

Following and Obeying the Moral Standard of Jesus:

A Life Empowered by God

Living by the Moral Standard of Jesus

Obeying the moral standard of Jesus is not about trying harder in our own strength. It**'**s about surrendering to the transforming work of **God in us and through us** by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus calls us to a higher, heart-level righteousness—not as a burden, but as the natural result of a new life rooted in Him. His teachings, especially in the **Sermon on the Mount**, reflect the true heart of God and the life we are empowered to live as His disciples.

(206) The Greater Moral Standard of Jesus

Under the New Covenant, Jesus raises the standard—not by adding rules, but by going deeper into the heart behind them. We are not left alone to fulfill this calling. God gives us the **Holy Spirit**, who empowers us to live out this new life from the inside out.

1. The Command to Love

- **Old Covenant**: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18)
- **Jesus' Standard**: "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44)
- **What it means for us**: God enables us to love not just those who love us, but also our enemies. This supernatural love is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).While the Old Covenant calls for love of neighbor, Jesus goes beyond that and commands love even for enemies. This radical love is not just about treating people kindly but also forgiving and praying for those who wrong us, reflecting the love God has shown us.

1. The Command to Love - Continued…

- **Old Covenant**: *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself"* – **Leviticus 19:18**
- **Jesus 'Standard**: *"But I say to you,* ***love your enemies*** *and pray for those who persecute you"* – **Matthew 5:44** *"A new commandment I give to you,* ***that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.*** *By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."* – **John 13:34–35**

What It Means for Us:

Jesus raises the bar by not only calling us to love those who are difficult or hostile toward us, but also commanding us to **love one another as He loved us**—sacrificially, humbly, and sometimes unconditionally, or unmerited. This kind of love:

- **Forgives those who hurt us** (Matthew 18:21–22)
- **Serves others with humility** (John 13:12–15)
- **Lays down its life for others** (John 15:13)
- **Is empowered by the Holy Spirit** (Romans 5:5; Galatians 5:22)

How God Works This in Us:

This radical, Christlike love is **not something we can manufacture on our own**. It flows from:

- A **transformed heart** made new by the Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26–27)
- The **abiding presence of Christ** (John 15:4–5)
- A deep awareness of the **love we've received from God** (1 John 4:19)

As we walk by the Spirit, God enables us to reflect the love of Jesus even in the most difficult relationships. This love becomes the **defining mark** of a true disciple and a powerful witness to the world.

2. Righteousness Exceeding the Pharisees

- **Old Covenant**: Observance of external laws
- **Jesus' Standard**: "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees…" (Matthew 5:20)
- **What it means for us**: True righteousness only comes from Jesus abiding in us. It is His righteousness that flows from a transformed heart. God gives us new desires and new motives through the Spirit (Romans 8:4).The Pharisees were known for their meticulous observance of the law, but Jesus emphasizes that external actions alone aren't enough. True righteousness involves the heart and intentions. For instance, Jesus equates hatred with murder and lust with adultery (Matthew 5:21-28), showing that the inner life is just as important as outward behavior.

3. The Command Against Anger

- **Old Covenant**: "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13)
- **Jesus' Standard**: "Everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment" (Matthew 5:22)
- **What it means for us**: The Spirit leads us to peace and reconciliation, freeing us from bitterness and hostility.Jesus not only forbids murder but also condemns unjust anger, showing that the root of sin lies in the heart, not just in outward actions. This greater moral standard calls for reconciliation and forgiveness before offering gifts unto God (Matthew 5:23-24).

4. The Command on Adultery

- **Old Covenant**: "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14)
- **Jesus' Standard**: "Anyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent…" (Matthew 5:28)
- **What it means for us**: God renews our minds and purifies our desires, leading us into deeper holiness and integrity.Jesus teaches that sin begins in the heart. The Old Covenant law focused on the physical act of adultery, but Jesus calls us to purity of thought and desire. Lust, even without action, is sinful. It is not a sin to be

tempted or to have sinful thoughts that creep in. However to act more in our thought life to lust with intent is wrong and a sin.

5. Forgiveness and Reconciliation

- **Old Covenant**: "Do not bear a grudge…" (Leviticus 19:18)
- **Jesus' Standard**: "Forgive seventy-seven times" (Matthew 18:22)
- **What it means for us**: Forgiveness becomes possible because we have been forgiven much. The Spirit teaches us to extend mercy just as we**'**ve received it.Jesus calls His followers to forgive endlessly and unmerited. It**'**s not just about not seeking revenge; it**'**s about showing love to those who wrong us and offering reconciliation even when it's difficult.

6. The Call to Humility

- **Old Standard / Covenant**: Focus on sacrifice and law. Old standard, Sack cloth and ashes; etc… Trying to be first.
- **Jesus' Standard**: "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (Matthew 20:26) Jesus calls His followers to a radical humility that seeks to serve others rather than elevate oneself. This goes beyond the external observance of rituals and laws and speaks to the heart**'**s attitude toward others.
- **What it means for us**: The Spirit forms in us the mindset of Christ—humble, others-focused, and servant-hearted (Philippians 2:5-8).

The Joy of Obeying Jesus by the Power of the Spirit

Living by Jesus **'**moral standard is not a legalistic burden—it is **the fruit of grace**. As we abide in Christ, the Spirit produces in us a life that reflects Him.

7. Radical Generosity and Selflessness

- **Old Covenant**: "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15)
- **Jesus' Standard**: "Give to the one who begs from you…**"** (Matthew 5:42)
- **What it means for us**: God gives us generous hearts, willing to give freely, trusting Him as our provider.Jesus teaches a radical generosity that goes beyond simply not stealing. He calls us to give freely and without expectation of return, even when it involves personal sacrifice. He teaches not only to give to those who can repay but to extend grace to those who cannot.

8. The Call to Pure Worship

- **Old Covenant**: Worship through rituals and sacrifices
- **Jesus' Standard**: "True worshipers will worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24)
- **What it means for us**: Worship becomes a lifestyle of love, truth, and devotion—led by the Spirit in every moment.While the Old Covenant had a system of physical rituals, Jesus calls for worship that is in spirit and truth—heartfelt, genuine, and not

just outward performance. This elevates worship to an attitude of devotion that is not confined to a temple or ritual but is in every aspect of a believer's life.

9. Non-Retaliation and Turning the Other Cheek

- **Old Covenant**: "Eye for an eye" (Exodus 21:24)
- **Jesus' Standard**: "Turn the other cheek" (Matthew 5:39)
- Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord. (Romans 12:19)
- **What it means for us**: We respond to evil not with vengeance, but with grace—empowered to break the cycle of hate. While the Old Covenant law aimed for justice, Jesus calls His followers to break the cycle of violence and retaliation. His command to "turn the other cheek" goes beyond the law of vengeance and calls for peaceful, non-retaliatory responses, showing love even in the face of insult or harm.

10. Seeking First the Kingdom of God

- **Old Covenant**: Earthly kingdom and blessings
- **Jesus' Standard**: "Seek first the kingdom of God…" (Matthew 6:33)
- **What it means for us**: The Spirit aligns our hearts with God's purposes and provides all we need as we pursue Him first.Jesus calls His followers to prioritize the spiritual kingdom of God over material concerns. This standard shifts the focus from seeking earthly success and security to seeking God's will and righteousness, trusting that God will provide for our needs

11. The Second Greatest Commandment: Love Your Neighbor

- **Old Covenant**: "Love your neighbor" (Leviticus 19:18)
- **Jesus' Standard**: "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12)
- **What it means for us**: God empowers us to live proactively in love, seeking the good of others in word and deed.While the Old Covenant commands love for others, Jesus frames it in the positive, "do to others as you wish them to do to you." This elevates the call to love others beyond simply refraining from harm and into actively seeking their well-being and treating them with kindness and respect.

12. Servant Leadership

- **Old Covenant**: Leadership through position
- **Jesus' Standard**: "The greatest among you will be your servant" (Matthew 20:26-27)
- **What it means for us**: Through Christ's example and the Spirit's power, we lead by serving and laying down our lives.Jesus completely flips the conventional view of leadership. Instead of seeking status and power, He calls His followers to serve others humbly. True greatness in the Kingdom of God is defined by self-sacrifice and service to others, not by position or wealth.

13. The Call to Be Peacemakers

- **Old Covenant**: Justice through judgment

- **Jesus' Standard**: "Blessed are the peacemakers…" (Matthew 5:9)
- **What it means for us**: God makes us agents of reconciliation—in homes, communities, and the world.Jesus calls His followers to actively work toward peace, not just avoid conflict. Being a peacemaker involves reconciliation, healing broken relationships, and seeking peace in the world—both personally and globally.

14. The Call to Bear Fruit

- **Old Covenant**: Ritual obedience
- **Jesus' Standard**: "Bear much fruit… prove to be my disciples" (John 15:8)
- **What it means for us**: The Spirit cultivates fruit in our lives—love, joy, peace, and more—that reveal Christ in us.Under the New Covenant, the outward signs of obedience are not the end goal; true discipleship is marked by the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and the transformation of a person's life. Bearing fruit includes love, joy, peace, kindness, and other virtues that reflect the character of Christ.

15. The Great Commission: Making Disciples

- **Old Covenant**: Covenant limited to Israel
- **Jesus' Standard**: "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19)
- **What it means for us**: The Spirit empowers us to carry the Gospel to the world with boldness and compassion.Jesus expands the mission to include all nations and not just ethnic Israel. The New Covenant calls believers to actively spread the Gospel, baptizing and teaching others to obey everything He commanded, which transcends ethnic and national boundaries.

16. The Standard of Humility and Childlike Faith

- **Old Covenant**: Identity through national and religious rituals
- **Jesus' Standard**: "Humble yourself like this child…" (Matthew 18:4)
- **What it means for us**: God leads us to deep dependence and simplicity of faith, trusting Him fully.Jesus calls for humility and a childlike faith, emphasizing that spiritual maturity is not about intellectual pride or self-sufficiency but trusting in God with simplicity, humility, and dependence on Him. This stands in contrast to the pride and self-righteousness often seen in the Pharisees.

17. The Denial of Self and Taking Up the Cross

- **Old Covenant**: External sacrifices
- **Jesus' Standard**: "Deny yourself… take up your cross…" (Matthew 16:24)
- **What it means for us**: The Spirit gives strength to die to self and live fully for Christ, no matter the cost.esus calls for a radical denial of self—renouncing one's own desires, ambitions, and even safety for the sake of following Him. The call to "take up the cross" implies a willingness to suffer and die for the sake of the Kingdom, a much higher standard of devotion than simply following rules.

18. The Call to Absolute Allegiance to Christ

- **Old Covenant**: National and familial identity

- **Jesus' Standard**: "Hate even your own life…" (Luke 14:26)
- **What it means for us**: The Spirit teaches us that Jesus is our highest love, above all else.While this statement seems stark, Jesus is emphasizing the absolute allegiance to Him that is required of His followers. This doesn't mean literal hatred but a comparison that shows Christ's claim on a believer's life is even greater than familial ties. A disciple's loyalty must be first and foremost to Christ.

19. The Call to Integrity in Speech

Old Covenant: "You shall not bear false witness" (Exodus 20:16) **Jesus' Standard**: "Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more comes from evil" (Matthew 5:37) **What it means for us**: The Spirit leads us to speak with honesty, clarity, and truth—reflecting the character of God in all our words. Our speech becomes an expression of integrity, marked by consistency and trustworthiness. This kind of truthful communication shows the world that Christ is forming us from the inside out (Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 4:6).

20. The Call to Faith Over Worry

Old Covenant: Focus on material provision through obedience **Jesus' Standard**: **"**Do not be anxious about your life…" (Matthew 6:25–34) **What it means for us**: Trusting God becomes possible as the Spirit builds faith in us. He helps us release control and walk in peace, knowing our Father cares for us deeply. This faith frees us from the bondage of fear and reorients our focus from earthly needs to the presence and provision of our Heavenly Father (Philippians 4:6–7; 1 Peter 5:7).

21. The Call to Secret Devotion

Old Covenant: Public fasting, prayer, and giving **Jesus' Standard**: **"**Do not practice your righteousness before others…" (Matthew 6:1) **What it means for us**: The Spirit cultivates a heart that seeks God's approval over man's. He teaches us to give, pray, and fast in secret, desiring intimacy with the Father above recognition from people. Our private devotion becomes a sacred offering, flowing from love rather than legalism (Matthew 6:3–6; Hebrews 11:6).

22. The Standard of Mercy Over Judgment

Old Covenant: Emphasis on justice **Jesus' Standard**: **"**Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matthew 7:1) **What it means for us**: The Spirit softens our hearts to be merciful rather than condemning, helping us to see others through the lens of grace. Instead of harsh judgment, we offer understanding, forgiveness, and humility—just as God has shown us mercy (Luke 6:36; James 2:13).

23. The Call to Enduring Obedience

Old Covenant: Blessings followed immediate obedience **Jesus' Standard**: **"**The one who hears my words and does them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24) **What it means for us**: Through trials and storms, the Spirit gives us endurance to continue living out Jesus' words, building our lives on His unshakable truth. Obedience becomes our joyful response to grace, rooted in relationship and empowered by the Spirit (Romans 8:13–14; James 1:22–25).

24. The Call to Deny Earthly Riches for Heavenly Treasure

Old Covenant: Earthly prosperity was often seen as a sign of blessing **Jesus' Standard**: **“**Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth…” (Matthew 6:19–21) **What it means for us**: The Spirit reorders our priorities and affections, helping us to value eternal treasure over temporary wealth. We are freed from greed and empowered to live with generosity, investing in things of eternal significance (Colossians 3:1–2; 1 Timothy 6:17–19).

25. The Call to Bold Confession of Christ

Old Covenant: Identity was primarily national and religious **Jesus' Standard**: **“**Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father…” (Matthew 10:32) **What it means for us**: The Holy Spirit gives us courage and conviction to publicly live for Christ and declare Him, even in the face of opposition. Our witness becomes a reflection of God**’**s power working in and through us (Acts 1:8; Romans 1:16).

26. The Call to Spiritual Maturity

Old Covenant: The law governed external behavior **Jesus' Standard**: **“**Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16) **What it means for us**: The Spirit equips us with discernment and wisdom to navigate a broken world with both truth and love, growing in Christlike maturity. As we are transformed, we respond to evil with goodness, and represent Christ with both boldness and humility (Ephesians 4:13–15; Hebrews 5:14).

27. The Call to Rejoice in Suffering

Old Covenant: Suffering often linked with sin or judgment **Jesus' Standard**: **“**Blessed are those who are persecuted… Rejoice and be glad…” (Matthew 5:10–12) **What it means for us**: God gives us joy even in suffering. The Spirit strengthens our faith and gives us a heavenly perspective when we face trials for Christ**’**s sake. In suffering, we are refined, comforted, and conformed to Jesus (Romans 5:3–5; 1 Peter 4:12–14).

28. The Call to Serve the Least

Old Covenant: Often prioritized leaders and elders **Jesus' Standard**: **“**As you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40) **What it means for us**: The Spirit compels us to serve the poor, the weak, the marginalized—not for recognition but because we see Christ in them. This servant-hearted posture reflects the humility of Jesus and brings the kingdom of God to earth (Philippians 2:3–5; James 1:27).

29. The Call to Watchfulness and Readiness

Old Covenant: Focused on ceremonial readiness for holy days **Jesus' Standard**: **“**Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming…” (Matthew 24:44) **What it means for us**: The Spirit keeps our hearts alert, helping us to live each day in faithful anticipation of Christ**’**s return. Our choices, relationships, and mission are shaped by the reality that Jesus could return at any moment (1 Thessalonians 5:6; Titus 2:11–13).

30. The Call to Rest in Him

Old Covenant: Observing the Sabbath as a legal requirement **Jesus' Standard**: **“**Come to me… and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28–30) **What it means for us**: In Christ, we find rest not through rituals, but by abiding in Him. The Spirit gives us peace and freedom

from striving. We rest from self-effort and instead trust in the finished work of Christ, walking in rhythm with His grace (Hebrews 4:9–11; John 15:4–5).

The New Covenant's Call to Holiness

Jesus **'**moral standard is not a burden, but a **gift of grace**. It reflects God**'**s character and draws us deeper into intimacy with Him. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are changed from the inside out—becoming the very image-bearers of Christ in this world.

Key Verses Reflecting the Greater Standard:

- **Matthew 5:17-20** – Jesus fulfills the law and calls us to surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees.
- **Matthew 5:48" –** Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
- **Luke 6:46" –** Why do you call me **'**Lord, Lord, **'**and not do what I tell you?"
- **John 14:15" –** If you love me, you will keep my commandments."
- **Philippians 2:13" –** For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

Summary

The moral standard of Jesus is a call to radical, Spirit-filled living. It is not about checking boxes but about becoming like Him—**through God working in us**. His commands are not burdensome but life-giving. As we walk by the Spirit, we are empowered to love, forgive, serve, and live with joy, reflecting the heart of Jesus to a watching world.

(207) Walk in the Love, Grace and Righteousness of Jesus Christ:

1.1 **Jesus Christ as the Example of Love and Righteousness**

John 13:34-35 (AKJV**)** – **"***A new commandment I give to you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another"*

Jesus Christ, in His earthly ministry, demonstrated the perfect embodiment of love and righteousness. His command to love one another as He has loved us is not merely a suggestion, but a clear mandate for His followers. Christ's love is not based on superficial feelings but on sacrificial action. He loved us when we were unlovable, and this love, which is rooted in righteousness, sets the standard for how we are to live. Love, in the biblical sense, is inseparable from righteousness, and both are demonstrated perfectly in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

1 John 4:9-10 (AKJV) – **"***In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*

The love of Jesus Christ is not just a feeling but a powerful act of redemption. God**'**s love was demonstrated in the sending of His Son, who willingly became the atoning sacrifice for our sins. This sacrifice is the ultimate act of love—righteous and just, yet filled with mercy and grace. Christ's love is unearned, unmerited, and even at times unconditional. It is this same love that believers are called to walk in—demonstrating righteousness through the same selfless love Christ showed us.

1.2 **The Call to Walk in Christ's Love, Grace and Righteousness**

Ephesians 5:1-2 (AKJV) – **"***Be you therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling smell."*

The Christian call to walk in love is not meant to be an abstract concept but a purposeful way of living. As we go about our daily lives, let us reflect this love in both our words and actions. Paul exhorts believers to follow God**'**s example as dear children, imitating the love Christ has shown us. This is a love that is sacrificial, humble, and purposed in bringing glory to God. Walking in Christ**'**s love involves laying down our own desires, preferences, and sometimes even our rights, for the benefit of others, as He did for us.

Walking in righteousness involves living in such a way that reflects God**'**s holiness in our daily lives. It is not merely about avoiding sin, but actively pursuing a life that is pleasing to God. The righteousness of Jesus Christ is given to believers through His sacrifice, but they are also called to live out that righteousness in their actions, attitudes, and relationships.

Romans 6:13 (AKJV) – **"***Neither yield you your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin: but yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. "*

We are called to yield ourselves to God and live righteously. Christ**'**s love encourages us to turn from sin and to live according to the truth of God**'**s Word. This act of submission is both an expression of love for God and a pursuit of personal righteousness.

2. The Dangers of Not Walking in Love, Grace and Righteousness

2.1 **Walking in Selfishness and Sin, and Abusing the Grace of Jesus**

Galatians 5:19-21 (AKJV) – **"***Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, jealousies, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21Contentions, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."*

When Christians fail to walk in the love and righteousness of Jesus Christ, they open themselves to the works of the flesh—acts that are the antithesis of Christ**'**s love. These behaviors destroy relationships, corrupt personal integrity, and result in separation from God. Selfishness, sin, and rebellion keep individuals from walking in the abundant life

Christ has given them. Such actions not only harm others but also hinder spiritual growth and fellowship with God.

2.2 **The Deception of Walking in Darkness**

1 John 2:9-11 (AKJV) – **"***He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now. 10He that loves his brother stays in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. 11But he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not where he goes, because that darkness has blinded his eyes..*"

John warns that walking in hatred or unforgiveness is a form of walking in darkness, even if someone claims to be in the light. Hatred, jealousy, bitterness, and unforgiveness are signs of a heart that has not fully embraced the love and righteousness of Christ. The darkness of these emotions blinds the individual to truth, preventing them from walking in the fullness of God's will. This internal conflict leads to confusion, spiritual blindness, and a lack of direction in life.

2.3 **The Danger of Compromise with the World**

James 4:4 (AKJV) – **"***You adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*"

James highlights that when believers compromise their relationship with God by aligning with worldly values and behaviors, they are placing themselves in opposition to God. The world**'**s system promotes selfishness, pride, and unrighteousness, which stand in stark contrast to the love and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Friendship with the world leads to spiritual dissonance, making it difficult for disciples to live out the love and righteousness that are central to their identity in Christ.

3. How to Walk in the Love, Grace and Righteousness of Jesus Christ

3.1 **Embrace Christ's Sacrificial Love**

John 15:12-13 (AKJV) – **"***This is my commandment, That you love one another, as I have loved you. 13Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*"

The foundation of walking in love and righteousness is embracing the sacrificial love of Christ. His love was demonstrated by laying down His life for us. To walk in His love means to put others before ourselves, to sacrifice for their well-being, and to love without expecting anything in return. This type of love transcends emotions and becomes a choice to seek the good of others.

3.2 **Live by the Spirit, Not the Flesh**

Galatians 5:22-23 (AKJV) – **"***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law*"

To walk in the love and righteousness of Jesus, believers must live by the power of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit reflects Christ**'**s character in our lives. As we yield to the Holy Spirit, He produces in us a heart of love, kindness, patience, and goodness. These qualities are the direct result of walking in the Spirit, and they enable believers to live righteously in a world filled with temptation.

3.3 **Put on the Armor of Righteousness**

Ephesians 6:14 (AKJV) – **"***Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;"*

The believer**'**s righteousness of Jesus is a protective armor that guards their heart against the attacks of the enemy. By living in obedience to God**'**s Word and upholding His righteous standards, Christians not only reflect the character of Christ but also protect themselves from spiritual harm. Walking in righteousness involves daily decisions to live according to God**'**s truth, to uphold integrity, and to reject the ways of the world.

4. **Walking daily in the Grace and Righteousness of Jesus Christ:**

The Grace of Jesus Christ is a surpassing precious gift beyound comparison.

Walking and living daily in God's grace through Jesus Christ means recognizing that every step, every breath, every opportunity to love, serve, and grow flows from His unmerited favor. As disciples of Jesus, we are not just called to follow His teachings, but to walk with Him personally, letting His grace transform us moment by moment. It means we live each day not relying on our own strength or perfection, but trusting in the unearned favor and mercy that God freely gives us through His Son. *2 Corinthians 12:9* reminds us of this powerful truth: *"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."* God's grace meets us in our failures, lifts us in our struggles, and empowers us to keep moving forward. Through Jesus, we are forgiven, renewed, and equipped to live in a way that honors Him—not because we are perfect, but because He is.

When we walk in grace, we live with a constant awareness of God's presence and His love for us. It changes how we respond to trials, how we treat others, and how we view ourselves. *Romans 5:1-2* says, *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand..."* We don't just receive grace once—we stand in it daily. It covers us, teaches us, and transforms us. Walking in God's grace means living with a thankful heart, depending on Him moment by moment, and extending that same grace to others as we grow in the image of Christ.

Even so, as we walk through each and every day, we must remember that our righteousness is not based on our own efforts, works, or good deeds. It is solely and fully rooted in our faith in Jesus Christ and what He has already accomplished for us through His life, death, and resurrection. *Isaiah 64:6* reminds us that *"all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags"*—meaning that, on our own, even our best attempts at goodness fall short of God's holy standard. But through Christ, we are made righteous—not because of what we've done, but because of what He has done.

Romans 3:22 declares, *"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe."* Our right standing with God comes by grace through faith. It is a gift, not something we earn. Each day we live, we are to walk in humble confidence—not boasting in ourselves, but resting in the finished work of Christ. This truth frees us from striving and fills us with gratitude, knowing that our identity, acceptance, and righteousness are secure in Him. As we continue to trust in Jesus, His righteousness covers us, transforms us, and empowers us to live in a way that reflects His love and truth.

Conclusion: Living a Life of Love, Abiding Properly in The Grace Of Jesus and His Righteousness

To walk in the love and righteousness of Jesus Christ is to live in a way that reflects His character in every part of our lives. It means embracing His sacrificial love, pursuing holiness, and aligning our actions with the truth of God's Word. As believers, we are called to reflect Christ's love in all our relationships and to live righteously in a world that desperately needs His light. This life is not about outward appearances or self-righteousness, but about an internal transformation that leads to outward actions that glorify God.

However, we also acknowledge that we will not always live perfectly. In our human weakness, we may fall into sin. In those moments, we are deeply thankful that we live under the grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. His grace is abundant, and His forgiveness is available to all who truly repent. The key is that we do not take His grace for granted, but humbly return to Him with a repentant heart. We must never allow sin to reign in our lives or willfully continue in sin, hardening our hearts, or abusing God's grace.

Living under grace does not mean living carelessly. It means continually surrendering to God, recognizing our need for His mercy, and striving to walk in righteousness. As we repent and turn away from sin, we are reminded of God's immeasurable grace that covers us. This grace empowers us to overcome sin and live in the freedom that Christ has purchased for us.

Let us commit each day to walk in the love and righteousness of Jesus, always grateful for His grace and forgiveness. May we never take His mercy lightly, but always strive to honor Him, knowing that as long as we remain humble, repentant, and open to His transforming power, we live under the protection and abundance of His grace,and abide in Him and His Love Forever…All Glory To God in the Highest.