

# **Living by Faith Beginning Your Walk as a New Believer**

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*"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;" Hebrews 12:2*

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*Freely ye have received, freely give* – Matthew 10:8

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## Welcome to the Family

*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*

Galatians 3:26

All of the children of God rejoice with you on your decision to accept Christ. There is no greater decision for us to make in our life than the one that you made to follow Jesus. The memory of that day will bring you joy, encouragement, and contentment in the days ahead.

In this new believer's workbook we will examine once again what salvation is, our sin nature, and why Christ died for us. We will move on to take a look at what it means to be a new creature in Christ and cover some basic Biblical principles that will help you to gain a closer relationship with our Lord and Saviour. There is a 30-day devotional to help you to spend time with God each day. You will need a King James Version Bible to complete the workbook. These can be purchased at discount stores. Alternatively, you can use the King James Bible search available at [ArmorofGodBooks.com](http://ArmorofGodBooks.com) in late 2011. For information on why we believe that the King James Bible is the Word of God please see the Appendix titled: *Why We Use the King James Version*. In addition to the Bible you will need a separate notebook to answer questions.

Every believer remembers some point in their life when they accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Let's take a moment to write that down so that you can always look back at this book and reflect on your special moment.

***Write the date and time you accepted Christ. Include a description of where you were at that time.***

If there was someone that led you to the Lord (shared the Gospel with you) or was with you at that time, now would be a great time to thank God for bringing that person or persons into your life. We will cover the basics of prayer in a future chapter but until that time here is a simple prayer you can use to thank Him for the work that they did for the Lord.

### **A Prayer of Thanks for Those That Shared the Gospel with You:**

Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for sending your Son to die on the cross for me and for providing me with your Word. I want to thank you for bringing (name of people/persons) to share the Gospel with me. Please bless them for being your faithful servant(s). In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

For your own reference to look back on this day, let's take a moment to record your salvation experience.

***When did you start to seek the truth or first hear about your need for salvation?***

***How did you feel when you came to a heart knowledge/realization that you were a sinner in need of Christ? Write your experience when you were under conviction, asked the Lord to forgive you of your sins, and asked Jesus to come into your heart and be your personal Lord and Saviour.***

***How did you feel after you repented of your sin and asked Jesus Christ to be your personal Lord and Saviour?***

As a follower of Christ you will have a strong desire to share your experience with others. The experiences that led to your salvation and drew you to Christ are unique to you. Your salvation experience and the events that led to it are part of your ***Christian Testimony***. A testimony is a public statement of your new found faith and can be used by the Holy Spirit to reach others for Christ. We will talk more about Christian testimony in a future lesson.

Throughout this book, there will be Bible references for you to look up. This can be an important way for you to learn about the Word of God and see how it applies to your life. If you are not familiar with the Bible it may be difficult for you to understand where to turn when looking up Bible references. Let's take a moment to learn how to find a passage of Scripture.

## **Understanding Bible References**

You will hear and see many Bible references as you study and grow as a new Christian. Pastors will have you turn to a portion of the Bible during their sermons. It can be frustrating if you do not understand where to find a reference in the Bible. To make it easy for you we will examine a Scripture reference in detail.

Let's look at the reference: **Galatians 3:26**

The Bible has two main sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. Within these sections are books. To find the Bible reference listed above we turn to the book of Galatians. This is in the New Testament but you can find the page number in the Table of Contents in the front of your Bible if it contains one. Each book can be abbreviated with two or three characters. Galatians is abbreviated to "Gal" so the reference could also appear as Gal 3:26.

Each book in the Bible has chapters. These chapters are numbered sequentially starting with chapter one. The chapter number always follows the name of the book. The number 3 in the reference above indicates the third chapter of Galatians.

The numbers that follow the colon indicate the verse within the chapter. If there is no colon after the number the reference refers to the entire chapter. Bible references can contain a single verse shown by a solitary number, a range of verses using a dash, or an additional verse in the chapter separated using a comma. For our reference, we will turn to the 3rd chapter of Galatians and the 26<sup>th</sup> verse within the chapter.

Look at the following references and determine where to look in the Bible for them.  
Write down the book, chapter and verse of each reference.

**Rom 10:9**

**Mar 3:33-35**

**John 3:7, 13-16**

**2Ti 2**



## The Children of God

*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*

Galatians 3:26

When you accepted Christ as your Saviour you became a child of God. As children of God, we all have three things in common: a realization of our need for Christ, repentance, and calling on Christ to be our Saviour.

Let us take a closer look at this verse to understand its meaning. The verse ends "by faith in Christ Jesus."

***What is faith?***

***What do you think "by faith in Christ Jesus" means?***

Faith is a belief in something you cannot see or touch. Faith to a Christian is a deep belief in God and knowing in your heart that Christ died for you on the cross because you needed Him to take away your sins. One of the most important things to remember when reading the Bible is that God has included many supporting verses to help you understand His Word. When the Bible talks about "faith in Christ Jesus" it is speaking of salvation.

*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: - Romans 5:1*

We are "justified by faith" and are blameless in God's eyes.

*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 2:16*

There are no works that we could have done to cover our sins. Only the sinless blood of Jesus could cover our sins in God's eyes.

*Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: - Romans 3:22*

Being justified by faith means that in God's eyes our sins are covered and we have been forgiven.

Let's go back to our verse in Galatians 3:26:

*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*

The verse begins 'for ye are all.' Does this mean that everyone who reads the verse is a child of God? No, this verse is written for the Christian. Taking a closer look at this verse we see 'for ye are all...by faith in Christ Jesus.' God says that those with faith in Christ Jesus are all children of God not that everyone is a child of God.

This can be a little confusing for some that have been told that everyone is a child of God from the time they are born unto this world. Let us go back to the Bible for a moment and see that there is another father.

*Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.*

*Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.*

*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. - John 8:42-44*

We see in these three verses that God says that if you do not believe in Jesus Christ that you are a child of the devil. It is our sin nature that prevents us from being viewed as acceptable in the eyes of God. It is something we are born with as a spiritual inheritance brought down through the ages from Adam's fall in the garden.

**Read Romans 3:23, Romans 10:9 and 1 John 1:7.**

The Bible tells us that we are all sinners in God's eyes until that sin is washed away by the blood of Jesus through salvation. If a person's sin is not covered by the blood of Jesus Christ in God's eyes than we are sons of the devil destined to spend eternity in hell. We can rest in the peace that our eternal destiny as a child of God will be in heaven.

Through your salvation you have gained another family. The family of God is vast and stretches beyond our earthly borders.

***Think about being a child of God. In God's eyes, how do you think you relate to other Christians?***

To understand how we relate to other Christians let us take a look at what God has said. We will turn to the book of Matthew and read the words of Jesus, God the Son.

**Read Matthew 12:46 - 50 and fill in the blanks.**

While he yet talked to the people, \_\_\_\_\_, his mother and his brethren stood \_\_\_\_\_, desiring to \_\_\_\_\_ with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But \_\_\_\_\_ and said unto him that told him, \_\_\_\_\_ is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his \_\_\_\_\_ toward his \_\_\_\_\_, and said, \_\_\_\_\_ my mother and my \_\_\_\_\_! For \_\_\_\_\_ shall do the \_\_\_\_\_ of my \_\_\_\_\_



which is in \_\_\_\_\_, the same \_\_\_\_\_ my  
\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, and mother.

The verses above are very important verses to us. Jesus says that those that do the will of His Father are *his brother or sister*. What is the will of God that this verse speaks of? Can anyone do good works and be considered a brother or sister in Christ?

Take a close look at Verse 49. Who does Jesus point to and refer to as his brothers?

*And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples and said Behold my mother and my brethren!*

Jesus points to his disciples as part of the family of God. Christians are disciples of Christ in our day and age, reaching out to the lost to share the good news of the Gospel of Christ.

In the above verse you will see that Jesus mentions his mother. These verses were in response to Jesus being told that his mother, Mary, and his brothers sent for him. It is important for us to note in these verses that his mother, Mary, was not held in reverence as seen by some religious groups today. Mary gave birth to our Saviour and was chosen by God to be the vessel that carried out God's plan but she is as one of us. She was not born sinless and was in need of Jesus to cover her sins as are we. The Bible tells us that sin is carried down through the man and would not have been given to Jesus through Mary.

*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:* - Romans 5:12

The Bible illustrates again in the book of Mark what Mary's position is to us.

**Read Mark 3: 33 -35 and fill in the blanks.**

And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my \_\_\_\_\_? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, \_\_\_\_\_ my mother and my \_\_\_\_\_! For whosoever shall do the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, the same is my \_\_\_\_\_, and my \_\_\_\_\_, and mother.

It is wonderful to be a child of God. Being a child of an almighty God means that you are under His care. He walks with you through the valleys and rejoices with you from the mountaintops.

**Read Romans 8:16 - 17.**

When you accepted Christ as your Saviour the Holy Spirit came into your heart to be with you always. It is through this that we have assurance of our status with God as His children and heirs.

***What sort of relationship do you hope to have with your new heavenly Father?***

***What sort of relationship do you hope to have with other Christians, your brothers and sisters in Christ?***

You will find that you have a strong desire to spend time with other Christians after salvation. It is good for us to spend time together to be an encouragement to one another. Later in this book we will discuss finding a church.



## **Our Need for Salvation**

*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

Romans 10:9

It is so wonderful that you have accepted Christ as your Savior and can look back on this need for salvation with thanks unto God for the sacrifice He made for us. There will be people that will ask you in the future about salvation and we are directed to spread the news to others so we want to be sure that you have a thorough understanding of salvation and our need for it. In these next chapters, you will see who God is, where sin came from, why we are all sinners, how God views us, and what we need to cover that sin in God's eyes.



## Who is God?

*Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;*

Isaiah 44:24

***What are some of the attributes you think of when someone mentions the name God to you? These may be preconceived views you have had from childhood or new views since salvation.***

There are many attributes that can be used to describe God. Perhaps you answered that He is a loving God or that He is God the Comforter. He is all powerful and all knowing. We are going to take a look at one of the attributes of God now, God the Creator.

Many of us that have attended public schools and several in private schools have been faced with the topic of creation. Public schools present the theory of Darwin where man has evolved from apes. If we are to believe that the Bible is the infallible Word of God and that everything the Bible tells us is truth than we must take a look at what God says about creation.

In the simplest of terms, God is the Creator. He created ***all things***: the earth, the stars, the oceans, the land, plants, animals, and even man. The greatest account of God the Creator is seen in the book of Genesis.

*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. – Genesis 1:1-2*

It is so wonderful to know that if God is capable of creating the heaven and the earth than he is certainly capable of controlling all aspects of our life. He has created all and governs all.

**Read Genesis 1:3 and fill in the blanks.**

And God \_\_\_\_\_, Let there be \_\_\_\_\_: and there was \_\_\_\_\_.

By the simplest of words “let there be light” our God created all the stars including our Sun. What a mighty God we serve! There is no one we would rather have on our side than someone as all powerful as God.

**Read Genesis 1:6 –10.**

***What did God call the firmament?***

***What did God call the dry land?***

***What did God call the waters?***

***What did God think of his creation in Genesis 1:10?***

Only a creator as powerful as God could create such an outstanding place as our earth. As noted previously, God includes supporting verses in the Bible. We can see God's creation of the earth further in scripture as seen in the next two verses:

*Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty...Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever. – Psalms 104: 1, 5*

*Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. – Isaiah 40:28*

**Read Genesis 1:14-16 and Psalm 148:1, 3.**

***What were God's creations in these verses?***

Here we see another attribute of our God, the Provider. Our earth needed the right atmosphere to support life, the right amount of sun for plants and animals alike, it needed a source of water and other minerals. God knew all of this when he created the Earth. He knew what we would need and provided it all for us.

*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. – Philippians 4:19*

God did not stop there. He created so much more.

**Read Genesis 1: 20 – 21, 24 – 25.**

***What key phrase can be seen in the following verses: Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, and 25?***

***When you read the scripture references, what do you think about when you see the phrase: "And God saw that it was good"?***

We see so many things from the words "God saw that it was good". Our God took some time to look back on the work that He had created to ensure that it would be the right environment for us. He knew what we needed and provided it for us. He took the same care when creating man and woman. You can find great encouragement in knowing that God works the same way in our lives as God shows us in His Word:

*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. – Romans 8:28*

**What are some of the attributes we have seen of God through these scripture references?**

Some of the attributes of God that you may have listed are: creator, powerful, provider, and good. Throughout our readings in this book we will see many other attributes of our God.

These scripture references have shown us that God is the Creator of all things. He can see what we will need and provide it for us before we are even aware of the need. Our God is so powerful that He created the earth and heavens without any form. He merely willed them to be and they were created. When God does something it is never done poorly. We can find great encouragement in God's Word as we see His mighty hand at work in our lives, the lives of others, and before we existed.

Let us take a look at some other verses in God's Word that support the creation account shown in the book of Genesis showing us that God is the Creator of ALL things.

All scripture has been given to us by God through the hands of the writers of each book of the Bible. The Bible is God's Word. You can see more accounts of God the Creator below:

***Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.*** – Nememiah 9:6

***Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; -*** Isaiah 44:24

***And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:***  
– Ephesians 3:9

***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:*** – Colossians 1:16

Now that we know who God is, let us take a look at the early days of man in Adam's time.



## The Fall of Man

*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

Genesis 2:7

The creation account continues in the book of Genesis where we see that God created man and woman. Turn to chapter 2 in the book of Genesis and we will continue our study.

**Read Genesis 2:8-9.**

***What place did God create for man to reside in?***

***What type of environment did God supply man?***

***How did God provide for man?***

After God finished creating man he created a garden known as the Garden of Eden. This garden was a beautiful place to live and provided man with his need of food. He placed man in the garden to care for it but man was given one law by which he had to follow as an act of obedience to God.

**Read Genesis 2:16 – 17.**

***What was the one law given to man by God that he was supposed to follow?***

God allowed man to eat of any tree in the garden except for one: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

***What did God say would happen to man if he ate of the tree?***

***What do you think God meant would happen?***

Let's take a look at these verses a little more closely to understand what God is saying in the book of Genesis.

*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. – Genesis 2: 16 - 17*

Can you imagine how beautiful the garden was during the days of Adam? Have you ever been to an apple orchard and seen the apples hanging along the rows of trees?

It is difficult to resist the desire to grab a large apple and eat the fruit right there in the orchard. You can just imagine the sweet wonderful taste. Maybe you think of making an apple pie or dipping the apple in caramel. With so many trees in an apple orchard, we have no need to pick fruit from them all.

Man had many trees to choose from in the garden and could have easily obeyed God's ONE commandment without question. At first in obedience, he listened to God when God said not to eat of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

We see in the scripture reference that there was a penalty for eating of the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God says that man will *surely die*. If God says there is a consequence, it will happen! It is not a possibility but a definite result.

### **Read Genesis 2: 18 -23.**

God created man in His image and since God desires fellowship with us it is not surprising that He would see the need for fellowship with others in Adam. In Genesis 2:19 – 20, God created all the animals to live in the garden with Adam but God did not stop there. He saw that Adam was in need of a help meet and caused Adam to go into a deep sleep to remove one of his ribs and create woman, Eve, as seen in Genesis 2: 21 – 23.

### **Read Genesis 2: 25 and fill in the blanks.**

And they were both \_\_\_\_\_, the man and his wife, and were \_\_\_\_\_  
ashamed

### ***What do you think the scripture means when God's Word tells us that the man and his wife were NOT ashamed?***

Adam and Eve did not feel any guilt or shame. There was no concept of sin because they were obedient to God by not eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But Satan is cunning. He is the great deceiver. He began his deception when talking with Eve in the garden in the form of a serpent.

### **Read Genesis 3:1 and fill in the blanks.**

Now the \_\_\_\_\_ was more subtil than \_\_\_\_\_ beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

"Hath God said" are three words that you ought to pay attention to. Those three words and the concept of questioning whether God truly means what His word says lead to compromise. Compromise can get you into trouble, friend, as we see further in the text.

### **Read Genesis 3: 2 – 3.**

Woman replied to the serpent that God did say that they are not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. At that time woman did not question God's command. She obeyed Him completely. The serpent continued his deception.

### **Read Genesis 3: 4 – 5 and fill in the blanks.**



*And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall \_\_\_\_\_ surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

The serpent changed God's commandment by adding one word. The word was NOT. We see in many of the new Bible translations that claim to be easier to read that there are words omitted, changed or added. This can change God's Word making it the word of man and could cause you to stumble in your Christian walk. Be wary of these translations.

We see from the verses to follow that compromising and disobeying God's Word can cause great sorrow, guilt and shame. Let's take a look at how woman and man responded to the serpent's deception. It is very similar to the way people fall into sin today.

*And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. - Genesis 3:6*

Many people today will rationalize, or make excuses for sin to say that God really doesn't mean what He says in the Bible. They often will say that 'times have changed' and use that as their reasoning. We see from this verse that rationalizing disobedience began way back in the garden.

***What rationalizations did woman use to convince herself that the serpent was right and it was okay to disobey God?***

***Why do you think woman gave man the fruit to eat when she knew she was disobeying God?***

***Did man willfully eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?***

The serpent was cunning. He knew that he need only make one of them, in this case it was woman, believe that God did not mean what He said, that God was holding back goodness from them, to cause woman to sin and disobey God. We see in the verse that Adam made the decision to eat of the fruit. He chose to disobey God. When we disobey God we know what we have done is wrong.

We are warned in the Bible to be wary when choosing our friends. In Genesis 3:6, we saw how easily woman had been convinced to sin by just a few words in conversation from the serpent.

*The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them. – Proverbs 12:26*

**Read Genesis 3: 7 – 8 and fill in the blanks.**

*And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife \_\_\_\_\_ themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.*

### **Read Genesis 3: 9-10.**

Earlier we had read how Adam and his wife were naked in the garden and unashamed because they had no concept of sin. In Genesis 3: 7-8 we can see that they were ashamed and felt guilt after disobeying God. They were so filled with shame that they hid their bodies with fig leaves and further hid from God when He came to walk with them in the garden.

There are always consequences to sin! Let's reflect back on man and woman's disobedience for a moment.

***Who do you think was most responsible for this sin that was committed and why?***

***Take a moment to think about the concept of sin. In your opinion, are there varying degrees of sin? Is telling a little white lie as the serpent did okay in the eyes of God?***

### **Read Genesis 3: 11 – 24.**

We can see from the text in Genesis 3:14-24 that all three were guilty in the eyes of God. God cursed the serpent for the part that he played in the deception of man and woman. Although the serpent did not eat of the fruit he was still held accountable for encouraging them to sin against God. This is important for us to remember when we discuss Christian living further in our studies.

Adam and Eve both suffered consequences of which man and woman still experience today.

*Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. – Genesis 3:16*

The consequences that women bear for the fall in the garden are that childbearing will be difficult and that the husband is to rule over the home. This is still true today. As we noted when God says something will happen it does.

*And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. – Genesis 3:17 - 19*

Although man was not persuaded by the serpent to eat of the fruit he willingly ate of the fruit when it was given to him by woman. He knew he was disobeying God. He suffered consequences for his actions. We see that man will have to work hard all of his days to sustain himself and his family.

Before Adam and Eve disobeyed God they had all the food they could eat, enjoyed a relaxing walk with God on occasion, and delighted in all that God had created from

the trees to the animals. They soon discovered that life would be more difficult as they were sent out of the garden to work the land.

The greatest consequence of Adam and Eve's actions in the garden is that God views all men and women as sinners in His eyes. In Genesis 3:20 God tells us that Adam called his wife Eve as she is the mother of *all living*. That is to say that we are all descended from Adam and Eve. Because of their sin in the garden we are born with sin. The Bible tells us that everyone is a sinner in God's eyes.

We can see this in the book of Romans in chapters 3 and 5:

*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:* – Romans 5:12

*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;* - Romans 3:23

In the next chapter, we will take a look at how our sin is covered in God's eyes.



## **Blood Atonement for Sin**

*And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

Hebrews 9:22

*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

Romans 5:8

God is very specific about what we must do to cover our sinful nature in His eyes just as He was very specific about what Adam and Eve were instructed not to do in the garden. Let us look to God's Word to see what He has to say about the forgiveness of sin.

The dictionary explains the word 'remission' as a release from a debt or forgiveness. There is no forgiveness without blood atonement.

In the Old Testament, there are many accounts that tell of how there was atonement for sin. It is amazing to see the lengths that man had to go through to please God and cover sin. The Israelites during the time of Moses and Aaron were under the law. Let's learn about what the Israelites had to do for their sins by turning to the book of Leviticus.

### **Read Leviticus 4:1 - 2.**

In the beginning of Leviticus 4, we see that the Lord spoke to Moses specifically about sin and what the Israelites had to do to atone for that sin. There were precise methods that God required and specific items He required for a sin offering. These sacrificial offerings always required blood to cover sin.

The first set of instructions for atoning for sin was given if the priest commits a sin but as we will see in the latter half of the chapter the same principles applied to the people as well.

### **Read Leviticus 4:3 and fill in the blanks.**

If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ unto the LORD for a sin offering.

The bullock required for the offering had to be completely without any blemishes. It had to be a perfect bullock. When God the Son came to earth in the flesh he was perfect. No other man or woman has ever been perfect.

***Can you remember the verse that showed us that all are sinners? To make it easy for you the reference is Romans 3:23. Write the verse in your notebook.***

We know that sin is carried through the blood by man, not woman, as seen in our previous verse:

*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned – Romans 5:12*

Because sin is passed down through the bloodstream from man, God used woman as the vessel to bring His Son, Jesus Christ to us. Even though women are born with a sin they do not transfer that sin to the child. It comes from the father as a spiritual inheritance. Just as the spiritual rebirth (being born again) comes from God, the Father of rebirth.

Let's turn to the New Testament and the book of Luke to read about the angel Gabriel's discussion with Mary.

**Read Luke 1:26 – 37.**

We can see that Mary's baby was to be brought forth by the Holy Spirit. She had not known a man. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ tells us that no sin from the fall of Adam was present in God the Son.

***At first, Mary was frightened by the angel Gabriel. He told her not to fear. He anticipated her second response. How did the angel reassure Mary about the birth of Christ?***

Earlier in the chapter *Who is God?*, we learned about all the wonderful things that God created by merely speaking that it was so. While a virgin birth may be difficult for us to comprehend it is only possible because God created the baby in Mary's womb. We are reminded, as Mary was reminded by the angel Gabriel, that nothing is impossible for our God.

*For with God nothing shall be impossible. – Luke 1:37*

Let's go back to the book of Leviticus and see what other requirements the Israelites had to atone for sin.

**Read Leviticus 4:4 – 7.**

***What is the central theme of these verses?***

The blood of a bullock or young bullock was required to make atonement for sin. The priest would perform all the necessary steps in a specific order required by God to make the atonement for sin.

**Read Leviticus 4:8 – 12 and Hebrews 13:11 – 13.**

We see in Hebrews 13:12 that the arduous tasks and sacrifice of animals are no longer necessary to cover the sins of man in God's eyes. The only thing that will cover the sins of man is the blood that Christ shed for us on Calvary.

*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. – Romans 5:8 – 9*

*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 cleanseth us from all sin. – 1 John 1:7*

### **Read Leviticus 4:13 – 35.**

These verses show the various commands that were given for different situations of sin. Look at the last few words of the following verses and fill in the blanks: Leviticus 4:26, 31, and 35.

*“and it \_\_\_\_\_ be \_\_\_\_\_ him”*

When all of God's requirements had been met they would be forgiven of their sin.

Whew! Can you imagine how exhausting the life of a priest must have been during those times?

If the Israelites had never been given those commands by God we would not have had the account of their atonement for sin to show us that there is one perfect way through God the Son to receive forgiveness in the Father's eyes. We can also see that we have no need to go to someone else to perform any tasks for us to come to the Father asking for forgiveness. For this reason, it is important for us to consider both the Old and New Testament when reading God's Word today.

Let's move to the New Testament and see what God has to say about the covering of our sins today. In the book of Romans we see that God addresses the following of the law in chapter 3 verses 19 and 20:

*Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. – Romans 3:19 – 20*

God tells us that we cannot be justified, forgiven our sins, through performing any works outlined in the law as given in the Old Testament. He continues in Romans by telling us how we can have righteousness in the eyes of God today.

*But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is **by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe**: for there is no difference: - Romans 3:21 - 22*

It is through faith in Christ that our sins are covered in the eyes of God. We saw in Leviticus that a blood sacrifice was required to cover our sins and that in the New

Testament we have seen that the blood of Jesus was shed to be a remission for our sins today. This is shown again in Romans 3:24 – 25.

*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; - Romans 3:24 – 25*

**Read Acts 20:28 and fill in the blanks.**

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, which he hath \_\_\_\_\_ with his own \_\_\_\_\_.

God tells us that we were bought for a price. That price was the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What an incredible sacrifice He made to cover our sins in the eyes of God! This gift is given freely to all if we choose to accept it through repentance and a prayer of salvation. Let's take a look at the road to salvation now.



## The Romans Road

*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Romans 10:13

Each one of us has a different path we followed to seek God and come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour. There are five points to remember about salvation that apply to everyone:

Love: God loves every one of us

Sin: We are all sinners in God's eyes

Repentance: We all must repent of that sin

Confession: We must confess that Jesus is Lord

Believe: We must believe with our heart that Jesus is God and died for our sins

We are going to take a look at some key verses in Scripture for what is known as the Romans Road. These scripture verses are often used when talking to others about your salvation to share the good news of the Gospel message with them.

***When you think about God's love toward us, what comes to mind?***

Perhaps you think about God's blessings such as food, clothing, and water. Another might consider his patience. There is one selfless act of love that goes beyond our own comprehension. It is shown for us in the book of John.

**Read John 3:16 and write the verse in your notebook.**

God loved you so much that He gave you Jesus Christ so that you could have everlasting life in Heaven. What a big sacrifice God the Father made for us! Could you imagine giving your child to a world filled with sin? It was an even bigger sacrifice that God made because Jesus is God in the flesh.

The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ and the Father are one. Jesus is God the Son.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. – John 1: 1, 14*

*I and my Father are one. – John 10:30 (Jesus speaking to the Jews)*



*Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? – John 14:9*

In the verses above we see beyond a shadow of doubt that Jesus is God in the flesh.

We've taken a long look at sin in the previous chapters. This is where our Romans Road begins. Our first verse of the Romans Road to salvation is Romans 3:10.

**In order to help you remember the verses, look up Romans 3:10 and write the verse in your notebook.**

**Look up Romans 3:23 and write the verse in your notebook.**

**Look up Romans 5:12 and write the verse in your notebook.**

We have examined how sin entered into the world and how we are all sinners in the eyes of God. The three verses above explain those concepts in short detail. Memorize those verses and their references in case someone comes to you to ask you about salvation. They are the first three steps in Romans Road.

***We see in Romans 5:12 that the penalty for sin is death. What must occur for us to have everlasting life, a life in heaven?***

In John chapter 3, Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews and a Pharisee (a religious leader during that time), comes to Jesus marveling at the miracles that Jesus has performed and stating that Jesus must come from God. Jesus tells Nicodemus what must occur in order for us to go to Heaven.

*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. – John 3:3*

Jesus is making it very clear that this is the only way to get to Heaven. He affirms it again in John 3:7.

*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. – John 3:7*

Our works cannot get us into Heaven. Religion cannot get us into Heaven. Salvation can only come one way.

***What do you think it means to be born-again?***

Nicodemus does not understand what Jesus means when he says that you must be born again so he asks for clarification.

*Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? – John 3:4*

*Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. – John 3:5 – 7*

In this explanation, Jesus is instructing that to be born again is to be born of the Spirit. To have the Holy Spirit living within our hearts is to have repented of our sin and asked the Lord Jesus Christ to save us. We will look at those verses in the next few pages. For now we will continue to look at John chapter 3.

As you've seen through the previous chapters, it is important that when you look at Bible verses you consider what God has said about the subject in other areas of the Bible so that we can be certain that we are interpreting His Word correctly.

God makes it very clear that we must believe in Jesus to have eternal life.

*That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.* – John 3:15

This is a wonderful verse. It tells us that “whosoever” believeth in him should not perish. This verse does NOT say:

*“Only the man with money that believeth in him”*

*“Only the man that does good deeds”*

*“Only the man who has not lied”*

*“Only the man who has never sinned”*

We are reminded along the next step of Romans Road that the penalty of sin is death and that the gift of life was given to us by God through Jesus Christ.

**Look up Romans 6:23 and write the verse in your notebook.**

When discussing the Romans Road of salvation with someone you will come along the next two verses, Romans 5:8-9, that explain that we are justified by the blood of Christ. You can reread the chapters The Fall of Man and Blood Atonement for Sin again to help you understand our need for Christ to die on the cross for us.

**Look up Romans 5:8-9 and write the verses in your notebook.**

We continue our journey along the Romans Road to the part where we must do something to be saved. We must repent of our sin, ask for forgiveness and ask the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.

When Jesus was speaking to the people he told them that the time for repentance was now. We never know how much time we have been given and waiting could be too late.

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

*And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.* – Mark 1:15 (Words of Jesus)

*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* – Luke 13:3

To repent means to feel sorrow or remorse for your sin. When you repent of your sins there is such a great sorrow that you understand that God sent Jesus to die for your sins. There is a heaviness of heart that in the case of salvation will bring you to a point where you will choose to either accept or reject Christ. God gives us the free will to choose.

**Look up Romans 10:9 – 10 and write the verses in your notebook.**

When a person goes to God with a repentant heart asking forgiveness for their sinful nature, God listens. In Romans 10:9-10, we see that confession must also be made that Jesus Christ is Lord. This is open to any and all who are truly repentant.

**Look at Romans 10:13 and write the verse in your notebook.**

What a glorious day it will be for the person who accepts Christ as their Saviour! As a review, here are the verses from Romans Road of salvation to help you when you talk to others about salvation. Memorize the verses.

Romans 3:23

Romans 5:12

Romans 6:23

Romans 5:8-9

Romans 10:9-10

Romans 10:13



## Assurance of Salvation

*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

1 John 5:13

There may come a point in time when you will question whether you are truly saved. If this occurs try not to be alarmed. It is good for us to take stock of our lives on occasion because it helps us to grow in our walk with Christ.

How can you know for sure that you have been saved? God's Word is filled with guidance for every aspect of our lives including the assurance of salvation. He has placed many verses in the Bible to help the believer to know for sure whether they have been saved. Many of the verses we will be looking at are from the book of 1 John. Although we will not go into each verse in the book of 1 John, it is highly recommended that you read all five chapters.

When Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus about salvation, he made it very clear that without salvation we will not spend eternity in heaven.

*...Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. – John 3:3*  
(Words of Jesus)

We are also warned that there will be some who profess to be believers that have not truly accepted the Lord as their Saviour.

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

The importance of knowing for certain that you have been saved cannot be understated. We do not know how many days, hours, or minutes God has granted us here to have an opportunity to make a choice.

Salvation does not come from good works so we must be careful not to base our assurance on what we may or may not be doing, thinking or feeling. We must go to Scripture and see what God says.

First, we will take a look at how a Christian views sin after salvation.

**Read 1 John 1:5 – 10 and 1 John 2:1 – 2.**

***What do you think it means when it says if we walk in the light?***

***What do you think darkness refers to in these verses?***

***Since salvation what is your attitude concerning sin?***

***Do you commit sin with or without any guilt or shame?***

***Do you take steps to avoid sin or live by the world's views?***

As you read your Bible you will find that there are several references to light and darkness. You may also find other contrasts such as the wise and the foolish. To say that God is light is to say that He is all good. Darkness often refers to things that are bad such as sin, Satan, and living a carnal (non-spiritual) life.

In 1 John 1:5 – 10 we see the contrast between the saved and lost man/woman. We know from Romans 3:23 that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. There has only been one perfect person in this world and that was Jesus Christ. He had no sin in him nor did he commit any sins. He was God in the flesh, God the Son, and there was no darkness in him as shown in 1 John 1:5.

We are told that if we profess to be born-again (having fellowship with Christ) and we live in sin (walk in darkness) that we are lying. What about the man or woman that denies sin and continues to commit sin? The Bible says:

*If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. – 1 John 1:10*

Does this mean that all Christians will never commit sin? No, we are all imperfect and are subject to the temptations of sin. But our attitude towards sin will be different. Let's take a look at this a little more closely.

*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. – 1 John 2:1 – 2*

God addresses those that are saved in these verses, his children. He has provided us with His Word, the Bible, to help us to learn how to avoid sin. If we spend time in Scripture we will have a stronger basis to help us to stay away from sinful behavior. If we commit a sin, we can go to the Father asking forgiveness in Jesus' name. We have no need to go through any man or woman to seek forgiveness. It is only through Jesus that we can receive forgiveness for sin.

*If ye 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 seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more;*

*but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. – John 14: 15 – 20 (Words of Jesus Christ)*

When you are saved God will never leave you. He sends the Holy Spirit to live inside you. The Holy Spirit is God. He is there to comfort you, guide you, and even give you wisdom to discern the truth. He can also convict you of sin. You cannot escape Him if you commit sin. You will feel the same guilt and shame that Adam and Eve felt in the garden when they knew that God was near after they ate of the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. We see in Ezekiel 36:26 – 27 that the Holy Spirit will help you to live righteously.

*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. – Ezekiel 36:26 – 27*

**Read Hebrews 12:5 – 13.**

***In Hebrews 12:6 – 7, what does the Bible say that the Lord will do for his children who are living in sin?***

***If you continually commit sin and live in the flesh without God's correction, what does the Bible say that you are in Hebrews 12:8?***

***What should be our response if we receive correction from the Lord?***

***What is the end result of God's chastening of His children as seen in Hebrews 12:11?***

The Bible tells us plainly that any saved man or woman that continues to sin will receive chastisement from the Lord. God knows what will make one of His children listen to correction. What works for you may be different from another. When God gets your attention over sin we are to respond by asking forgiveness and following the direction of God to live righteously. We gain direction through the leading of the Holy Spirit and seeking wisdom through God's Word and prayer.

When we receive chastening from the Lord we need to understand that it is for our good as seen in Hebrews 12:11. If a man or woman continually commits sin without chastening the Bible clearly states that they are not God's children, not saved.

If a child of God continues to sin ignoring the chastening of the Lord there can be grievous consequences to that sin. The Bible says that God could remove you from this world to prevent your continuing to live in sin.

*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. – 1 Corinthians 3:16 – 17*

God is very patient but as you can see from 1 Corinthians 3:16 – 17 there is a time in which the patience of God will be tried. If you receive chastening of the Lord it would be within your best interest to ask for God's forgiveness and actively seek His direction to live your life righteously in God's eyes.

Next, we'll take a look at how a Christian views other Christians.

**Read 1 John 2:9 – 11.**

***In these verses, who is referred to as our 'brother'?***

***What is your view of other Christians?***

***Do you have a desire to be around Christians or do you prefer to stay away from them?***

***How do you feel when you are around Christians?***

In our earlier studies we saw in Matthew 12:46 – 50 that Jesus referred to his disciples as being the same as his mother and brothers. We learned how after being saved you are a part of the family of God, you are his child. When we see verses referring to our relationship with a brother, it refers to our relationship with other Christians.

*He that loveth his brother abideth in the light... – 1 John 2:10*

When we are saved there is a genuine love and caring for other Christians. You have a kinship to them that is similar to what you may feel for your natural family. There will be a desire to spend time with other Christians, help a brother or sister in need, and be an encouragement to others.

If you have an aversion towards being around Christians, is there some sin in your life that is keeping you from a genuine desire to be around believers or do you truly dislike Christians? What does the Bible say about people who profess to be believers but hate Christians?

We saw in 1 John 2:9 that if someone professes to be a believer but hates Christians that they are not saved. Our salvation is so important that God wants to make sure that we will know for sure whether we are saved or not. He tells us in two other places in the book of 1 John that if we hate Christians that we are not his children.

*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. – 1 John 3:14*

*If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. – 1 John 4:20 – 21*

What about the believer who has allowed sin to come between themselves and fellowship with Christians? A believer that is living in sin may feel that same guilt and shame that Adam and Eve felt and shy away from spending time with the brethren. This does not mean that a believer can lose their salvation. Salvation is eternal and the Bible shows us that nothing can take that away from us:

*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to*

*pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. – John 10:27-30*  
(Words of Jesus)

If sin is keeping you from other believers, you need to repent of that sin seeking forgiveness from the Father so that He can help you to walk uprightly again. Don't allow sin to keep you from others of like faith.

Taking a closer look at the Bible we see that as Christians will not only have a genuine love for other believers but that they are commanded to love one another.

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

*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 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. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. – 1 John 4: 7 -12*

The love of God towards us was so great that he sent Jesus to die on the cross for us. Our own love for God can be seen in our actions towards believers. This can be seen by people who have not accepted Christ as their Saviour and can be a great testimony of our faith.

After salvation you will find that the love of God extends into other aspects of our life. You will desire to spend more time with him in prayer and learning His Word. You may have a longing for the things of God that you did not possess prior to salvation.





## **New Creature**

*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:  
old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

2 Corinthian 5:17



## Our Two Natures

*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.*

1 Corinthians 2:14

Since accepting Christ as your Saviour you have no need to look back at your past with any regrets. All sins you have committed have been forgiven and covered by the blood of Christ. It is important for us to understand and discern how God views man before and after salvation.

The old nature of man is something with which we are born with. It is the sinful nature that we inherited from Adam's fall in the garden. The new nature of man is only possible through salvation in Christ Jesus. We can see the contrast of these two natures in many places in God's Word.

**Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21.**

***In 2 Corinthians 5:14 - 15, who died for all and who all was dead? Why?***

***Who are we to live our lives for as seen in 2 Corinthians 5:15?***

***Read 2 Corinthians 5:16, what does the Bible mean when it says that we know no man after the flesh?***

***What does "the flesh" signify?***

***What do we know about all men since being saved?***

***What are we considered after salvation?***

***What do you think it means that old things are passed away and all things become new?***

This passage of Scripture is an excellent representation of the change that occurs due to salvation. In 2 Corinthians 5:14, we are reminded that Christ died for everyone because we are all sinners in the eyes of God due to the fall of man as noted in Romans 3:10, 23.

Prior to salvation we are spiritually dead, destined to spend an eternity in hell unless we repent of our sin and accept Jesus as our Saviour. One of the ways that our sinful nature is referred to in the Bible is 'the flesh'.

In 2 Corinthians 5:16, the Bible says that “henceforth know we no man after the flesh”. Since the flesh refers to the state of man before salvation we know that this verse is telling us that after salvation we do not see others in the same way as we used to. The verse goes on to tell us that after salvation we know Christ and, therefore, recognize everyone’s need for Him. It is how we view all of mankind after salvation. We are all sinners in need of Christ.

*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. – 2 Corinthians 5:17*

The Bible tells us that after salvation, we are a new creature. Old things are passed away and all things become new. Does this mean there will be instant change in a person after salvation? No. But there will be a change in the way that we view things as noted in the Assurance of Salvation chapter. Change in a person after salvation is often a process that occurs over time as God works in their heart.

As we have mentioned before it is always good to look for supporting evidence in the Bible. God’s Word clarifies what some of the works of ‘the flesh’ are to show us that it is referring to a sinful nature.

**Read Galatians 5:16-26.**

***What is the Spirit?***

***What does it mean to ‘Walk in the Spirit’?***

***Can we walk in the Spirit and live in the flesh at the same time?***

The Bible is very clear about the meaning of ‘the flesh’ as God’s Word shows us some of the works of the flesh. Not everyone with a sinful nature has committed *all* of these sins. There may be some sins that have had a greater hold on your life and some that may be listed in other places of the Bible that could be a problem for you.

*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, 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. – Galatians 5:19-21*

God’s Word draws a contrast between the flesh and the Spirit. After salvation we have the Spirit of God living within us. The Spirit and the flesh are in direct opposition. We are justified by Christ’s death on the cross which wipes away our sin in God’s eyes when we go to Him with a repentant heart asking for forgiveness and asking Jesus to be our Saviour.

The Spirit and the flesh cannot both have control of our lives. If someone is lost, without Christ, they will be living in the flesh and cannot ‘inherit the kingdom of God’ (go to heaven). The Spirit is the reigning nature in a born-again believer’s life but a child of God can wrestle with the flesh because that sinful nature works against the Spirit.

*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. – Galatians 5:17*

The Holy Spirit will convict you of any sins that you are allowing in your life but your sinful nature will struggle against it. This is why it is so important that we 'walk in the Spirit' in order to live our lives for Christ. We will discuss more about resisting temptations in the next chapter.

The two natures of man are represented in other ways within the Bible to help us further see the contrast.

**Read 1 Corinthians 2:9 – 16.**

***What were we given so that we would understand God's Word?***

***What directs our speech and teaches us to discern spiritual matters?***

***What terms represent the two natures of man in these verses?***

God has provided a way for us to understand His Word and to discern spiritual matters to direct our lives. The Holy Spirit teaches us to understand that which we read or hear. We are able to know what is from God and what is not through the Spirit.

These verses represent our two natures as 'the natural man' and 'the spiritual man'. In 1 Corinthians 2:14, we see that the natural man considers spiritual matters to be foolish because he does not understand them. He would prefer the wisdom of men to the wisdom of God.

The spiritual man judges all things to discern whether they are from God or from man. This does not mean that the spiritual man judges other people. God is the one who judges individual men. It means that the spiritual man has a desire to know what God says and to receive instruction from the Lord.

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. – Proverbs 9:10*

*Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. – Proverbs 3:13*

**Read Romans 8:1 – 14.**

***What is used to represent the two natures of man in these passages?***

***After salvation what will you have as shown in Romans 8:6?***

***If a person is without Christ, or in the flesh, can they please God without repentance and salvation?***

Through our faith in Jesus we are free from the law of sin and death. We are seen righteous in the eyes of God. If the Spirit of God lives within us, we are the children of God as seen in Romans 8:14. We see the two natures of man represented once

again as the flesh and the Spirit but God shows us another side of those two natures: the carnal mind and the spiritual mind.

To be carnally minded is to be living in the flesh and to be without Christ. A carnally minded man cannot please God. The only way for this to happen is through Jesus who came to set us free from the law of sin and. A saved person has life eternal and has the peace of God. God can take away any fears or doubt in our lives. He comforts us during times of trouble and brings peace into our lives that the carnally minded person cannot understand.

*...God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. – Psalms 46:1-3*

Did you know that Jesus is also known as the Prince of Peace? It is only through him that we can have the peace of God. Anything can happen around us but we know that God is always in control.

*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. – Isaiah 9:6*

**Read Ephesians 4:17-32.**

***Is it okay to be a Christian and enjoy the sins or moral views of the world?***

***What does God instruct those with Christ to do?***

***What does God use to represent the two natures of man in these passages?***

***What are some of the things that God tells believers they should do?***

In Ephesians 4:17 – 19 God tells us that we are not to be allowing sin in our life as the man without Christ. We see that sin alienates man from God and creates an illusion that sin is okay as seen by the references to ‘vanity of their mind’ and ‘blindness of their heart’.

All children of God are taught by Him to discern what is right or true from what is not. We saw this in 1 Corinthians 2:9-16. We are told that if we have accepted Christ and know the truth then we are to turn away from our former way of living, represented as former conversation, and live for Christ. We are to allow the Spirit to work in our lives and follow God’s direction.

*That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. – Ephesians 4:22-24*

Here we see that the two natures are represented as ‘the old man’ and ‘the new man’. Knowing how to change the way we live can be confusing to a new Christian. We cannot simply mentally will a change in our lives to make it possible. If that were

the case, we would have no need for God in our lives. We would have had no need for Christ to die on the cross for us. God can help us through his instruction and our prayer. Here he gives us some instruction on some things that we can do to put away the former way of living.

We are told to be honest and truthful with everyone. As toddlers children are told by their parents not to tell a lie but often children will do so anyway. Now here our Heavenly Father tells us to be honest with others. We cannot do as the toddlers do and tell lies when they are convenient. If you are struggling with being truthful take it to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to help you.

*Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.* – Ephesians 4:25

Next we are told that anger may come in our lives but we are not to use that as an excuse to sin. We live in a very angry world where we are confronted with opposition in our homes, our work, our schools, or even out in the community. God tells us not to let the sun go down upon our wrath. Holding on to anger can turn into bitterness and effect many aspects of our lives. It can also give the devil a foothold in your life to tempt you into sin.

*Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil.* - Ephesians 4:26 – 27

We are God's but if we allow sin in our lives the devil can try to convince us that sins are okay. The world has been trying to tell us that immorality is okay and that many sins are really okay because 'times of changed'. We need to keep our eyes on Christ and not 'give place to the devil'.

God continues tell us that we are not to steal from anyone. We know that God will provide for all of our needs. Sometimes God uses us to bless others with our excess.

*Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.* – Ephesians 4:28

The Lord tells us to 'let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth'. Often people get themselves into trouble by the things they say. Our communication can lead to sin. If we allow our communication to be corrupt, filled with profanity, or sinful in nature, then others will not see Christ in us.

*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.* – Ephesians 4:29

Sin in the life of a believer grieves the Holy Spirit which lives inside of you. God will let you know that you are doing something displeasing to him. He has left us His Word as a guide to us to help us to understand what is from Him and what is not. In the end of this passage of Scripture we are given direction on how we should act and reminded that it is through Christ that we have been justified to God. We need to consider these things when we interact with others so that they too can see the love of God through Christ in us.

*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. – Ephesians 4:31-32*

**Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-16.**

***What is 'manifestation of the truth'?***

***What does it mean 'if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost'?***

***God shows us many contrasts in how we may experience trials in life and what the outcome of those trials are to the believer and the lost. What is the overall theme of these contrasts in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9?***

***How are the two natures of man represented in these passages?***

In our previous Scripture reading we know some of the things we are not supposed to do as born-again believers. 2 Corinthians 4 also shows us that believers are to walk honestly in the sight of God. By keeping God's Word as truth in our lives, believing that what God says is real, and following his direction in obedience of that truth those that are lost can see Christ in us. They will not be able to put their finger on it but they will know there is something different. This can often be our first form of witness to others about the gospel of Christ. It is the 'manifestation of the truth' in our lives.

What happens if we choose not to follow God's direction and live in disobedience through sin? We have already seen that there are consequences to our actions in the Assurance of Salvation chapter. There is one consequence shown in 2 Corinthians 4 that should be of great concern to us.

*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath 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 unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord;... - 2 Corinthians 4:3-5*

If we do not allow the manifestation of the truth in our lives by not living for Christ, then those who are lost cannot see our faith in Jesus. They cannot see that we have repented of our sin, have everlasting life through Christ, and have a personal relationship with God. We are commanded to spread the gospel of Christ to others. Ask yourself this question, would you want your lost friend to spend eternity in heaven or in eternal torment in hell?

Some ways that others can see Christ in you is in how you handle the trials that come into your life.

A believer may be troubled but not distressed because they can rest on the assurance that God is in control of our lives. The child of God may be perplexed but not in despair. Trials or persecution may come but we are not forsaken by God. We may be cast down through trials from this world but not destroyed. We have victory and life through Jesus Christ. God does not bring bad things into our lives but he may allow trials for our benefit.

*For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. – 2 Corinthians 4:15*

The outward man represented the physical body and the sinful nature in 2 Corinthians and the inward man represents the spiritual nature of man. Prior to salvation the outward and inward man are in agreement with the flesh. When we were saved the inward man was replaced by the Spirit of God making the two natures separate. We have strength through Christ and a peace through difficult times that we did not experience before. The Bible tells us that the inward man is renewed each day. We cannot be separated from the love of Christ regardless of what happens in our lives. He gives us victory and strength.

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor 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. – Romans 8:35, 38-39*

Although we have two natures that can be in opposition of each other, we have been given so many things through our salvation. We have seen that we can have peace, joy, strength, wisdom and more. The world is filled with so many temptations to sin and be out of the will of God which can seem overwhelming to a new Christian. In our next chapter, we will look at some of the things that God has given us to resist temptation and live for Christ.





## Resisting Temptations

*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:  
the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Matthew 26:41 (Words of Jesus)

A common misconception about salvation is that once you are saved that you will *never* be tempted to sin. The world in which we live is filled with temptations to sin. There are billboards that glorify gambling, drunkenness, lust, and sexual sins. Movies and television shows glorify sins and make light of them in an effort to create comedy. Even children's cartoons are not devoid of the indoctrination of sin. With sin facing us in all directions, how do we resist the temptation to sin and live for Christ?

Let's take a look at how the devil tried to tempt God in the wilderness and see how He handled that situation. Our Lord Jesus is the best role model that we could possibly have. When God came to us in the flesh, as Jesus Christ, He was the only sinless person to ever exist. He was not born with the sin passed down from Adam nor did he ever commit a sin. If Jesus had not been perfect, his blood could not have redeemed us in the eyes of God.

**Read Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13.**

***Before Jesus went into the wilderness, what was inside Him?***

***What brought Jesus into the wilderness and how long did he stay there?***

***What did the devil first use to tempt our Lord Jesus?***

***What was Jesus' response to the temptation?***

Looking at God's Word we see that immediately after Jesus was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit that he was led into the wilderness. The Spirit living within Christ sent him there to be tempted of Satan. Why would God the Holy Spirit send Jesus, God the Son, to be tempted by the devil?

The Word of God always gives us supporting information to help us to understand. In the book of Deuteronomy we see that the Israelites were sent into the wilderness for 40 years to serve a purpose. Jesus' was sent into the wilderness under similar hardships for 40 days.

*And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not,*

*neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. – Deuteronomy 8:2-3*

We know from this scripture that the Israelites were sent into the wilderness to be humbled and tested. This time was to show them whether they would keep his commandments following the Word of God. Jesus was sent into the wilderness in similar fashion for a different purpose. There was no need to test Him or humble Him because Jesus is perfect. Jesus' forty days in the wilderness is also a living testimony to us of how to resist temptation.

Can you imagine going 40 days without food? The hunger would be extremely difficult to bear. Satan's first temptation was to tell Jesus that if He was indeed God he could command the stones to be made into bread so that he could eat. Satan knew that Jesus was God the Son and could turn the stones into bread by merely willing it to be. It was Satan's plan to try to get Jesus to disobey the leading of God to be within the wilderness without bread. Jesus immediately put an end to the temptation by telling Satan that man does not only need bread/food to live but also requires the Word of God.

*But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. – Matthew 4:4*

Satan wanted for Jesus to focus on the flesh just as he wants us to. Jesus reminds Satan that a focus on the spiritual is vastly more important and is the path to eternal life. Satan's focus was on the flesh, as he always is, and Jesus' focus was on the spiritual, as He always is. We can follow Jesus' example by making Christ the center of our life and grounding ourselves in the Word of God to help us resist temptations.

***What were the next two temptations of Christ in the wilderness?***

***What did Satan say was in God's Word?***

***How did God the Son rebuke Satan?***

***What did the devil claim he could give Jesus if God worshipped Satan?***

Eve was tempted in the garden by Satan in the form of a serpent. Satan told Eve that God surely did not mean what He said by changing one word of God's command to Eve. This subtle deception was all that man needed to fall into sin. Satan tried the same tactic with Jesus. Satan knows scripture. He knows all that is within God's Word. He often uses subtle changes in scripture to try to tell us that God does not mean what He says. This is why it is so important for us to be wary of man changing God's Word. Satan can use men to bring about his purpose.

In Matthew and Luke, Satan tries to tempt God by misquoting Scripture:

*Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. – Matthew 4:5-6*

Satan brought Jesus high above the city and told him to jump down because the angels would prevent him from getting hurt. The verse that Satan was misquoting is from the book of Psalm.

*For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. – Psalms 91:11-12*

There is a vital portion of the verse above that Satan left out of his quotation: *to keep thee in thy ways*. It was not God's will that Jesus should go into the wilderness to listen and obey the will of Satan. Jesus was to obey and follow God's direction and He did just that. God the Son rebuked, or reprimanded, Satan:

*Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. – Matthew 4:7*

*And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. – Luke 4:12*

The third temptation of Satan was to try to get Jesus to worship him. He promised Jesus power, all the world, and glory if the Son of God would fall down and worship Satan. In the book of Revelation we are told that Jesus will reign over this world for 1,000 years and that Satan will be cast into the lake of fire. God is always in control and knows all. Since Jesus is God the Son, Christ is more powerful than Satan. He did not need the things that Satan tried to offer to Him because God is all powerful and all knowing. God receives the glory for all the wonderful things He has provided and most importantly for the price that He paid on Calvary to cover our sins.

Satan used the lure of power with Eve in the garden. It's the same lure he uses with men today. But it did not work with God the Son. Jesus rebuked Satan and sent him away when he tried to tempt Christ with these tactics:

*Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. – Matthew 4:10*

*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. – Luke 4:8*

After the devil left the angels ministered unto Jesus.

***What have you learned from the temptations of Jesus?***

***Are temptations from God or from Satan?***

***Learning from Jesus' response to temptation, what can we do to resist temptation?***

Jesus did not have a sinful nature because he was the only one who was ever without sin. We learned in our scripture passages that the flesh struggles against the Spirit. Therefore, we will struggle with temptations but it is due to our sinful nature.

Satan is the source of temptation to sin. God does not tempt us to disobey Him. We must remember that God is not the source when we are faced with temptation.

*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man – James 1:13*

Some people think that they can sin against God without anyone knowing. There is one that always knows when you sin. God the Spirit lives within you and knows all that you do and think. These temptations do not come from Him but He can help you to avoid them.

Christ's temptations in the wilderness show us that we need to be on guard against the subtle ways of the devil. God the Son knew what the Scriptures said and was easily able to avoid the temptation presented through Satan's change of God's Word.

One way that we can avoid being snared by temptation is to study Scripture. The study of God's Word is so important to our lives that Jesus points out that we need it to survive. If we know what God says about how to handle different things that happen in our lives, we have the tool to obediently follow His direction. It is our choice to either be disobedient in sin or follow God.

From the temptations brought by Satan we also learned a little about the devils tactics with man. We see that he tries to tell us that we *need* something. He wants us to *disobey* God and believe Satan when he tries to lure us through *creating doubt* in God's word, making a person feel above God, or indicating that some need will be fulfilled through sin.

Think about some of the sins of the world and how they fall in line with Satan's desire for us. Lying creates a feeling of power because you convince somebody that something is real that is not. Alcohol and drugs fulfill a person's need to suppress stress, worry, or anxiety. Adultery fulfills a need for a sexual or emotional response a person feels they are missing in their lives. Gambling creates a sense of exhilaration and power when large amounts of money are won. There are so many other sins but if you think about how the devil uses men you can see the patterns and methods that Satan may use to snare you.

Jesus sent Satan away after the third temptation. He resisted the devil and we can too. In fact, the Bible tells us to resist the devil and he will leave us. We learn that we can resist Satan if we submit ourselves to God:

*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. – James 4:7*

**Read James 4:7-10.**

***How can we submit ourselves to God to resist Satan?***

We can humbly go before God asking for forgiveness for any sins that we have allowed in our life. It is through God that we can gain strength to resist temptation, the courage to walk away from sin, and the ability to protect ourselves for sin. If we go to God in prayer seeking his guidance, wisdom, and strength He will help us through the difficult times. They may not always be easy but they will get easier the more we learn from Him and apply His principles to our lives.

*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. – Galatians 5:16-17*

There are two natures at battle regarding sin, the flesh and the Spirit. It is the Spirit which can keep us from sin and temptation. The flesh is weak but the Spirit is strong:

*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. – Matthew 26:41 (Words of Jesus)*

Continuing to feed the flesh with sin will make it difficult for you to resist temptation. We are warned in the Bible not to make provisions for the flesh, meaning not to feed the flesh.

*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. – Romans 13:14*

If we feed the flesh by allowing various temptations of sin in our life then it could easily lead to sin and disobedience.

*But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. – James 1:14 - 15*

### ***What do you think are some ways that we make provision for the flesh?***

The things that we see, hear, or hold can often lead to feeding the flesh and sin. Here are some things to think about regarding feeding the flesh or the spirit. Do you allow your household (or yourself) to listen to music that glorifies fornication, drunkenness, violence, or lust? What do you allow your family (or yourself) to watch on television? Do you go to lunch alone with the coworker that you find tempting? Do you play video poker rationalizing that it is only a video game? When you are travelling for work, do you feed the flesh through pornography or flirting with other travellers staying at your hotel? There are many ways in which we have a choice of either feeding the flesh or the spirit. Whichever nature we feed more is the one we will be more likely to follow.

### ***How do you think you can feed the spirit to resist temptation?***

First, humble yourself before God and ask in prayer for His forgiveness for the sin(s) that you have allowed in your life. If you struggle with a certain sin or sins (strong holds), ask the Lord each morning to help you to resist, protect, and keep you from temptation. Spending time daily with God in prayer is important to help us increase our faith and learn how to bring everything to Him. Remember that God is always in control!

*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 exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; - 2 Corinthians 10:3-5*

If we spend time with God learning what His Word says we can protect ourselves for the subtle trappings that are often used to create doubt in God's Word.

*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged 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. – Hebrews 4:12*

*Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. - Psalms 119:11*

We can learn from Scripture what we need to do as Christians. Every aspect of our lives is covered in God's Word. God tells us how to treat other people, what to do in different circumstances, and how to react to those circumstances. We even receive encouragement from His Word that increases our faith in Him.

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. – 2 Timothy 2:15*

God helps us to build our foundation on Christ. The foundation is one that can be used to keep us from sin or help us to resist sin. It gives us the strength and courage we need to walk in the spirit and turn away from the old nature.

*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. – 1 Corinthians 3:11*

Our Father does not stop there. He provides us a doorway, way of escape, out of every sin. We know this because He tells us so in His Word.

*There hath 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 ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. – 1 Corinthians 10:13*

Temptations will come because of our sinful nature but we can turn away from them by leaning on God while living for Christ. In the next section, we will cover some basic Christian principles to help begin your walk as a new believer and gain a closer relationship with the Lord.



## **Christian Principles**

*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Proverbs 3:5-6



## Baptism

*Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*

Colossians 2:12

As a show of your new faith in Christ your first act of obedience is to publicly profess your faith in Him and your second is to be baptized. You will need to establish with a local church prior to baptism. We have included a chapter in this book on how to find a church to help you as you begin your new walk with Christ.

### What is Baptism?

Baptism is a symbolic profession of faith in Christ Jesus. The believer is completely submerged in water for a few seconds signifying the death and burial of Christ. When the believer is brought out of the water it symbolizes the resurrection of Christ.

This same symbolism refers to the new believer as the death and burial of Christ represents our death to self and our sinful nature while the resurrection shows that we are a new creature in Christ.

### Read Romans 6:3 – 5 and fill in the blanks in your notebook.

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ into death: that like as \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_ up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. For if we have been planted together in the \_\_\_\_\_ of his \_\_\_\_\_, we shall be also in the \_\_\_\_\_ of his \_\_\_\_\_.

As you see from the passage of Scripture, baptism represents our death to sin and new life through Christ.

Baptism is typically done within the local church in front of the congregation. The pastor will be in the baptismal pool with you. He will lower you into the water and lift you straight out of the water.

### Read Matthew 28:19.

*In whose name will you be baptized?*

Read Acts 2:41, 8:12, 10:44-48, 16:14-15.



***In Acts 2:41 what was required to be baptized?***

***Do you receive the Holy Spirit (Ghost) by baptism?***

***Must you be a baby to be baptized?***

***Can only males be baptized?***

When we take a look at Acts 2:41, we see that those who “received his word” were baptized. Receiving the word of God means that we have received Christ as our Saviour.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*  
– John 1:1

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* – John 1:14

*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* – John 14:6

Jesus Christ was the Word made flesh. He is God the Son and the only begotten of the Father. As we discussed in our chapters on our need for salvation, the only way of salvation is through Jesus. For this reason baptism is not required for you to enter into heaven.

We see in the scripture below that Jesus says that God is in us when we believe on Him. As we noted in the chapter titled Children of God, the book of Romans further shows us that the Holy Spirit lives within us.

*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou has sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.* – John 17:20 -23 (Words of Jesus)

In the book of Acts baptism came after believing in Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Some may have the preconceived idea that baptism occurs when you are a baby or a child and is a part of salvation instead of a symbolic showing of faith. In Acts 8:12, we see that men and women were baptized.

We learned that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God but we know that repentance, asking for forgiveness, and calling on the Lord for our salvation are a choice. A newborn infant is incapable of understanding this or making a choice regarding salvation. Since baptism is a show of our faith in Christ a baby should not be baptized.

Let's learn more about baptism in the Bible. Have you heard of John the Baptist?

*Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. – Malachi 3:1*

This verse in Malachi is prophesy of a messenger that would come to mankind before Jesus. The specific purpose of this man's life was to prepare the way for Jesus, to get men and women thinking about their need of Christ.

**Read Luke 1:1-25.**

***Who appeared before Zacharias?***

***What was Zacharias told in Luke 1:13?***

***Why did Zacharias doubt Gabriel (see Luke 1:7, 18)?***

***What was going to be the child's role in life (see Luke 1:15 – 17)?***

***What happened to Zacharias in Luke 1:20-22?***

Zacharias was an elderly priest married to a woman named Elisabeth. His wife was infertile and they had no children. When Zacharias was doing his duty as priest in the temple he was visited by the angel Gabriel. As any person would be if an angel appeared suddenly to them he feared the angel. Gabriel calmed his fears and proceeded to tell him that his prayers had been answered. Elisabeth would give birth to a son.

The angel told Zacharias that he should name the boy John. Gabriel explained to Zacharias that John's purpose was to prepare the people for the Lord.

Can you imagine the doubt that would surely creep into your mind if you were told that a child would be born to you under those circumstances? Zacharias had to have faith in something that did not make sense to him, something he could not see. Gabriel reassured him that Zacharias and his wife would bear a son and made him unable to speak until the time of John's birth because of Zacharias' unbelief in Gabriel's message.

**Read Luke 1:26 – 41**

***What is important to note about Mary in Luke 1:27 and Luke 1:34?***

***Who brought a message to Mary?***

***What was Mary initial response to the message?***

***What did the baby, John, do when Mary greeted her cousin Elisabeth?***

This is a wonderful account of the conception of our Lord Jesus. We see that Gabriel brought the message to Mary that she would bear a son although she was a virgin. Mary responded with fear and doubt just as Zacharias had. The angel told Mary that her cousin Elisabeth, who was in her old age and had been barren all her life, was now six months pregnant. We know from this that John was six months older than

Jesus. The Bible tells us that John leapt for joy when Mary greeted Elisabeth indicating that John knew that Mary was carrying Jesus.

**Read Luke 1:57 – 80.**

***When did Zacharias receive his ability to speak again?***

***What was the first thing that Zacharias did when he could speak?***

***What prophecy did Zacharias deliver to the people?***

Elisabeth gave birth to John and on the eighth day, as was the Jewish custom, he was to be named and circumcised. The people were shocked when Elisabeth said that the boy would be named John and her husband confirmed the name in writing. At that time, he received his ability to speak again and immediately praised God. Zacharias prophesied that John would prepare the way for the Lord giving men and women knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins through the mercy of God.

**Read Luke 2.**

The account of the birth of Jesus can bring you joy throughout the rest of your days. Without Jesus we would not be able to have our sin debt paid in the eyes of God. Through Christ we have eternal life and will dwell with him in heaven.

**Read Matthew 3:1 – 3.**

***What did John the Baptist preach in the wilderness?***

In Matthew 3:3, we are reminded that the coming of John to prepare a way for the Lord was foretold. The prophecy was found in the book of Malachi and the book of Isaiah. See Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3.

John the Baptist told to the people, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” This same message of repentance is the message that we bring to the world. Without repentance there is no salvation as noted when Nicodemus is talking to Jesus in John chapter 3.

Although John baptized people with water this baptism was not for salvation but for repentance. He specifically notes that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Ghost meaning that those who will repent and believe in God the Son will receive the Holy Ghost (Spirit).

*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh 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 – Matthew 3:11*

**Read Matthew 3:13 – 17.**

***Why did John forbid Jesus from being baptized by him?***

***What was Jesus’ response to John?***

***Who came upon Jesus when He was baptized?***

***What did God the Father say about Jesus?***

When Jesus came to John to be baptized by him, John was very quick to reject the idea because John knew that he needed Jesus. Jesus told John to baptize him anyway. It was part of God's plan. Although John did not understand it he obeyed God the Son and baptized him. When Jesus came out of the water the Holy Spirit came upon him and God the Father acknowledged that Jesus was His beloved Son. We know from our previous text that God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one.

Although it was not necessary for us to study John the Baptist, it is important for you as a new believer to understand how to read your Bible and look in Scripture for understanding and guidance. The Holy Spirit will reveal to you the meanings of verses. Never focus solely on one verse without looking through the Bible for additional information. The Word of God is filled with supporting verses to help you in your studies.



## Prayer

*...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

James 5:16

Prayer should become a daily part of your life as a new believer. When we pray to the Father we are spending time with Him and acknowledging that He is the master of our lives.

### The Reasons We Should Pray

Whenever there is something you need to make a decision on in life, you should go to God in prayer for guidance. Whether you are buying a new car, choosing a new job, or considering a vacation, the results are the same. He knows what we need, what we can handle, and what will come from our decisions. We have the ability to make a choice but we should always seek His guidance first. God is all knowing and wiser than us.

*...for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him – Matthew 6:8 (Words of Jesus)*

No prayer request is too small or too large for God to handle.

*And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. – Luke 18:27*

We should always give praise and thanks to the Lord when we go to Him in prayer. All good things are from God and we worship Him in prayer when we praise Him or give thanks.

*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. – Romans 8:28*

All of our sins have been forgiven (past, present, and future) when we accepted Christ as our Saviour. If you have allowed sin to enter into your life, or fallen into temptation, you can go to the Father asking for forgiveness and He will forgive you because our sins have been covered by the blood of Jesus. Never allow sin to take a hold of your life. You can ask God to keep you from temptation and deliver from any strongholds that draw you to sinful behavior. He can and will respond if you go to him with a truly repentant heart asking for his help.

**Read 1 John 1:7-9 and fill in the blanks in your notebook.**

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 \_\_\_\_\_ us from

\_\_\_\_\_ sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_, he is \_\_\_\_\_ and just to \_\_\_\_\_ us our sins, and to \_\_\_\_\_ us from \_\_\_\_\_ unrighteousness.

You may remember the verses above from the chapter titled Assurance of Salvation. In 1 John 7, we see that the blood of Jesus has cleansed us from all sin (past, present, and future). But if we continue to read we see in 1 John 1:9 that we are to go to the Father asking for forgiveness when we have allowed sin in our life and He will forgive us. Prayer is the means in which we speak to God to ask for that forgiveness.

Throughout our lives we will experience trials. These trials could be poor health, lost jobs, difficulties with others, or perhaps financial burdens. So many different things happen to people but the Lord knows what is happening in your life. During these times we are not walking alone. The Lord is always with us. Remember how the Holy Spirit comes to live within you at the time of salvation?

*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? – 1 Corinthians 3:16*

He knows our burdens and helps us to carry them. We can go to Him in prayer with our trials and ask for His help, protection, guidance, healing, and even encouragement.

*Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. – Psalms 55:22*

We need not worry ourselves over the things of tomorrow. God knows what we need and can provide. Go to the Father humbly to make your petition known to him. He already knew you were going to ask and has already worked in your life to provide for all of your needs.

### **How to Speak to God**

Often new believers are confused about how to speak to God. It seems like there should be some magical way for the Lord to hear us. Sometimes it is a fear of addressing God directly that keeps a new believer from prayer. Other times it is a belief that there is standard wording or repetition that must be spoken. God wants to hear from you whether you speak eloquently like prose or as natural as talking to a friend. After all, Jesus should be the best friend that we have in our lives. If God the Son and God the Father are one, we can go to him with confidence speaking naturally.

There are some things we must do when we go to the Lord in prayer. Let's take a look at a few verses of scripture and see what God says about how to speak to Him.

**Read 2 Chronicles 7:14 and fill in the blanks in your notebook.**

If \_\_\_\_\_, which are called by my name, shall \_\_\_\_\_ themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and

\_\_\_\_\_ from their \_\_\_\_\_ ways; then will I  
\_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_, and will  
\_\_\_\_\_ their sin, and will heal their land.

In this verse, God is addressing his people, the Israelites, during the time of Solomon. This verse applies to believers today as we have already seen that we are God's children. Our Father shows us that we must be humble when we go to Him in prayer. This is not a suggestion but a requirement. This verse shows us that he will hear us if we are humble. There is a second requirement to our prayers in this verse. We must be right with God. In other words, we have to turn away from any sin we have allowed in our life and ask for His forgiveness.

**Read Luke 18:9-14.**

***When the Pharisee spoke to God did he go to God with humility, exalting the Father?***

***How was the publican praying?***

***When the publican spoke to God did he go to God with humility, exalting the Father?***

You will see the term Pharisee in the Bible often. A Pharisee was a Jewish religious leader. They tried to follow Old Testament laws to the letter and saw themselves in a highly exalted position. We see in these verses that the Pharisee spoke a prayer about all of his great works. Instead of praising God, he was praising himself. We cannot approach God with an attitude that we are better than Him as the Pharisee did. We must exalt Him above ourselves.

In the times which we live in, we need to be mindful of addressing God with the respect He deserves. You wouldn't want to refer to God as your "homeboy" or addressing him by saying "hey man". Remember to keep God above yourself and others. He should always come first in every aspect of your life.

The publican that came to God in prayer was very humble. We see that he held his head and eyes down humbly going to the Lord in prayer. God will hear your prayer when you seek him with humility.

**Read Matthew 6:5-8.**

***Who do you think Jesus is referring to when he says the hypocrites?***

***Why did the men pray to be seen by men?***

***What do you think it means that when it says "They have their reward"?***

***What do you think the Bible means when it says to "enter into thy closet" to pray?***

***What are vain repetitions?***

***Who are the heathen?***

## ***Why do they use vain repetitions in prayer?***

Often Jesus referred to the Pharisees as hypocrites in the Bible. We see in these verses once again that they were seeking to glorify themselves by being seen praying in front of others. They wanted others to see how holy they thought that they were. God says that they have their reward meaning that they are not rewarded by Him but by the feeling they had toward self in their actions.

The Bible tells us that we are to enter into our closet when we pray to the Father. We are to pray to the Father to spend time with Him alone. This does not mean that we should not pray with others. We simply should not be praying to be “seen” by others. God will hear our prayer and reward us for spending time alone with Him.

These verses bring up a very important aspect of prayer that is often misunderstood. Some religious groups believe that it is necessary to say a particular prayer or saying it over and over again in order for God to hear them. We see that God refers to the heathen and their vain repetitions. The heathen refers to those that have not heard the Gospel and accepted Christ. We were once in this group but are not their betters. We know that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

## **The Guidelines for Prayer**

### **Read Matthew 6:9-15 and John 16:23-24.**

This section of the book of Matthew is a wonderful guideline that Jesus gives us on how we are to pray. It is not a specific prayer for us to pray but the format in which we should address Him. We know this by reading the beginning of Matthew 6:9 (Words of Jesus):

*After this “manner” therefore pray ye*

Let’s break down the components of prayer according to our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. We acknowledge God with reverence of His position in our lives.

*...Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.* – Matthew 6:9

2. We praise Him for bringing Jesus Christ into our lives. There will be a time when Jesus will come again and establish his kingdom on earth.

*Thy kingdom come...* – Matthew 6:10

3. It is important for us to understand and pray that God’s will be done in our lives. God is the one who is in control and He knows what is best for us.

*...Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.* – Matthew 6:10

4. Although God is aware of our needs, we are to ask Him to supply our needs. We should also give thanks for all that He has provided for us.

*Give us this day our daily bread.* – Matthew 6:11



5. If we have done anything displeasing unto the Lord, we are to ask for His forgiveness. It is required that we also forgive others that have done wrong to us for the Lord to forgive us.

*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* – Matthew 6:12

*For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* – Matthew 6:14-15.

6. God is our protector and He can keep us away from temptation and sin. We are to ask for His help to live our daily lives acceptable in His eyes. This also allows others to see Christ in us.

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:...* - Matthew 6:13

7. Jesus tells us that we are to praise the Father again as we close our prayer.

*...For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*– Matthew 6:13

8. There is one final requirement to the closing of your prayer as seen in the book of John. Jesus tells us that we are to ask the Father in His name. For instance, you could say, “I ask these things in Jesus name. Amen.”

*...Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.* – John 16:23-24

Do not be overwhelmed by these guidelines. It can be simply broken down into the following components:

Praise for God  
Thanks to God  
Seeking forgiveness from God  
Asking for our needs and those of others  
Asking in Jesus' name

### **Body Posture for Prayer**

Another confusing aspect of prayer to a new believer is how we are to hold our hands or bow before God when we talk with Him. We have seen in this chapter that the publican bowed his head down when He spoke with God in Luke 18:13.

When we go to God privately in prayer, we can take our direction from the actions of Jesus.

**Read Luke 22:39-42.**

In this passage of Scripture we see that Jesus separated himself from his disciples to go pray alone. He kneeled before God in prayer. Kneeling is a form of giving God reverence. We can also stand when we pray as Jesus tells us in the book of Mark.

### **Read Mark 11:22-27.**

As you can see there is not a correct body posture that you must have for God to hear you. You can pray to God while kneeling, sitting, or standing. You can pray with your eyes closed or your eyes open. Another great time for prayer is during exercise.

When a congregation is praying in church, one person may speak a prayer out loud but you can silently pray along with them. God hears your prayer regardless of whether it is spoken silently or out loud. He lives within us and knows our heart.

### **What Time of Day Should We Pray**

Many Christians will tell you that if you go to God the first thing when you wake up your day will be easier to handle. This is because we focus our sights on the Lord first.

We can pray to Him at any time during the day. If someone contacts you needing prayer, pray right after they ask so you do not get sidetracked by other things.

It is a good thing to say a prayer of thanks before each meal and ask the Lord to bless the meal for your nourishment. There are so many chemicals used in food preparation and many different bacteria that can be difficult to digest. It is good to know that the Lord is so powerful that He can even bless the food that we eat.

You can pray as often as you feel a need to throughout the day but should always end your day in prayer. If the Lord is our foundation and we bring all things to God we will be better prepared to handle anything that comes our way.

### **Praying With and For Others**

Often times we learn of another person's trial(s) that touches our heart and we have a desire to see God work in that person's life. Some may ask us directly to pray for them.

We are directed in the book of 1 Timothy to pray for all men. This means that we are to pray for other Christians, those that have not come to know Christ as their Saviour, and even for men/women who are our enemies. We are even to pray for our leaders in government whether we agree with their position or not. We should pray for God to direct them.

*I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; - 1 Timothy 2:1-3*

### **Do We Have to Go Through a Priest to Talk to God?**

We have taken an in-depth look at the reasons for prayer with Jesus' guidelines for our prayers. We've seen that we need to pray for others. Some may have been

mistakenly told that they cannot go to God directly. They may think that they need to go through a priest to talk to God or pray to the Holy Spirit. They may think that they should be calling on a saint to help them with a task or call on Jesus' mother for guidance and help.

The Bible makes it very clear that there is only one mediator between us and God for all things.

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. – 1 Timothy 2:5-6*

We see this again in God's Word in the book of Hebrews. Christ, God the Son, is with the Father in heaven for us.

*And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. – Hebrews 9:15*

*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: - Hebrews 9:24*

### **The Power of Prayer**

Let us now look at the power of prayer so that it may be an encouragement to you in your prayer life.

**Read 1 Samuel 1:1-20.**

***What the reason that Hannah prayed?***

***What did Hannah say she did in 1 Samuel 1:15?***

***What was her answered prayer?***

This is a wonderful testimony of the power of prayer. The Word of God tells us that Hannah poured out her soul before the Lord. She told God her prayer with all her heart and she was reward. Despite the fact that she had been infertile the Lord answered her prayer for a son.

**Read Daniel 6:1-28.**

***What was the royal statute that the men where wanting the king to sign?***

***What was the punishment to be for anyone who had been found guilty of disobeying the decree?***

***What did Daniel do when he heard that the decree had been signed?***

***What happened to Daniel for bringing a petition to God in prayer?***

***How did God answer Daniel's prayer?***

In this chapter of Daniel we see that there was a man who tried to find fault with him before the king. They knew that Daniel prayed to God (Daniel 6:11) and sought to use that against him by asking the king to sign a decree that no man could ask a petition of any God within 30 days except for the king. They did not stop there. They told the king that he should make the punishment that anyone who disobeyed should be cast into the lion's den.

Daniel was a faithful servant of God's and continued to go to God in prayer with his petitions. The men saw him praying and went to the king to tattle on Daniel so that he would be punished. We see that the king was grieved by his actions but had to carry them out and told Daniel that his God would deliver him. He set Daniel in the lion's den.

God had heard Daniel's prayers and answered them mightily. Not only was Daniel free of harm but God allowed Daniel to prosper. God did not stop there. The king recognized the power of God through a royal decree.

There are many other examples of answered prayer in the Bible that you will see through your Bible studies. Jesus tells us that if we have faith in God there is nothing that is impossible for Him which we ask in prayer.

*And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. – Mark 11:22-24*

Never underestimate the power of prayer.



## **Bible Reading**

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

2 Timothy 2:15

Many new believers become overwhelmed by the thought of reading the Bible. Some may visually compare it to climbing Mount Everest. All the Old English speech and numerous books can leave a new believer with wide eyes and uncertainty.

Did you know that many Biblical scholars still learn from God's Word daily? No matter how many years you have read the Bible there is always something that God can reveal to you. Let's break the Bible down into sections, the New and Old Testament.

### **The New Testament**

You will want to begin your Bible reading and study in the New Testament. This section of the Bible covers the life of Jesus, the gospel of Christ, and how we should live our Christian lives. It can be a great encouragement as well as a source of direction.

The New Testament is made up of 27 books:

Matthew  
Mark  
John  
Luke  
Acts  
Romans  
1 Corinthians  
2 Corinthians  
Galatians  
Ephesians  
Philippians  
Colossians  
1 Thessalonians  
2 Thessalonians  
1 Timothy  
2 Timothy  
Titus  
Philemon  
Hebrews

James  
1 Peter  
2 Peter  
1 John  
2 John  
3 John  
Jude  
Revelation

The first four books of the New Testament are called the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It is in these books that you will learn about the life of Jesus and the way of salvation. We can learn a lot from Jesus and how God the Son treated others.

The book of Acts covers the history of the early church. The books between Acts and Revelation are letters with a wealth of information for Christians. The book of Revelation addresses the end times, the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus, and what will happen in the world during that time.

### **The Old Testament**

In the Old Testament we see some excellent examples of faith. We learn about God from these chapters and how he worked in the lives of the Jewish people. It is hard for us to imagine all the tasks that the priests and people had to complete in order to have their sin justified in the eyes of God but learning about the law of Moses helps us to see what a wonderful gift we were given by Jesus' shed blood on the cross to cover our sins in God's eyes.

There are many prophetic books in the Bible that we can learn from as well. During Biblical times these prophets brought God's Word to the people. Today there are no living prophets to which hidden future events are revealed.

There are 39 books in the Old Testament:

Genesis  
Exodus  
Leviticus  
Numbers  
Deuteronomy  
Joshua  
Judges  
Ruth  
1 Samuel  
2 Samuel  
1 Kings  
2 Kings  
1 Chronicles  
2 Chronicles  
Ezra  
Nehemiah  
Esther  
Job

Psalms  
Proverbs  
Ecclesiastes  
Song of Solomon  
Isaiah  
Jeremiah  
Lamentations  
Ezekiel  
Daniel  
Hosea  
Joel  
Amos  
Obadiah  
Jonah  
Micah  
Nahum  
Habakkuk  
Zephaniah  
Haggai  
Zechariah  
Malachi

The first five books of the Bible are the books of Moses and the Law called the 'Pentateuch' which in Hebrew means 'five books'. They are followed by books dealing with history from Joshua to Esther. Do not discount these books as a simple history lesson. We can always gain insight and knowledge through reading these books of the Bible.

From Job to the Song of Solomon are the books of Wisdom. Psalms and Proverbs are excellent books to add to your daily Bible Reading schedule. They can be of great encouragement and provide direction.

The books of the prophets are from Isaiah through Malachi. Do not dismiss the books of the Old Testament. God can reveal much to us through both sections of the Bible. We gain knowledge through reading His Word.

### **Why We Should Read the Bible**

God desires to have a relationship with us. We see this so many times in both the Old and New Testaments. In the last chapter, we noted that spending time in prayer was a way of speaking directly to God. Reading the Bible is one of the ways God can speak to us.

The Bible tells us that there is nothing new under the sun. God's Word did not leave anything out that pertains to our lives. Many that have walked before us have experienced the same trials or triumphs.

*The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. – Ecclesiastes 1:9*

God can guide us and direct us through His Word if we spend time learning from it.

*A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps. – Proverbs 16:9*

Through His Word we know how to respond to other people, what to consider in our lives, how God works with us, and how we should live our lives. Sometimes we can be warned about something in our life that is displeasing to God that he can help us change. Other times we are given clear direction as an answer to a prayer.

The more we read and study the Bible the more God can reveal to us. The Biblical knowledge that we receive can help us to build a firm foundation.

*For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. – Proverbs 2:6-7*

The Bible refers to the wisdom of God as a buckler, or shield, to the righteous (born-again believers). God's Word can protect us from sin, discouragement, idleness, and even false doctrine. It can help us to understand what is right and wrong from God's standpoint.

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. - 2 Timothy 2:15*

We start off as babes in Christ, learning and growing through God's Word. The Bible warns us that as children we could easily be swayed by different religious doctrines.

*Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth 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; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: – Ephesians 4:13-15*

With Christ as our foundation, we have the Holy Spirit living within us that can reveal things to us as we read the Word of God. Understanding of God's Word only comes from accepting Christ. You will not verbally hear the Holy Spirit but you will begin to understand God's Word the more you read.

It is important to get involved in a good church and take part in Bible Studies to learn more from the Bible so you can apply it to your life. Understand that while books such as this book are a good source of help, you only need the Bible to help you learn what God says. For that reason, this book continues to point you back to the Bible with Scripture. The Bible is not what this author says but what God says.

We have a great example in the Bible showing us that we should search the Scriptures to ensure that what we have heard, taught or read is the true Word of God

*And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. – Acts 17:10-11*



These two verses show us that the people of Berea listened intently to the preaching of Paul and checked in the Scriptures to make sure that what Paul was preaching to them was the Word of God. We should consider this whenever we hear a sermon or read something that pertains to God's Word.

### **How to Read the Bible**

Pick a time every day that you can set aside to read God's Word. This may be during your lunch hour at work or in the evening when you can be undisturbed. Always pray before you read for God to help you learn from His Word. You may not get something from the reading each time you sit down to read but often times that which you have read will be called into remembrance during a sermon, when talking to a friend, or in a future reading.

Read the chapters that you have selected and think on God's Word. A verse may jump out at you that you would like to learn more about. You can write down the verse or topic to do more research. Take time to pause and reflect on what you have read. Sometimes you may even want to reread a chapter.

When you have finished reading, be sure to pray again with thanks unto the Lord.

There may be times when you want to look up something that the Bible says about a specific topic. There is a concordance in the back of most Bibles with words from the Bible that will help you in your search. It will give you the Bible reference that contains that word but due to space it will not contain all words and references. You could also purchase a more complete concordance, such as Strong's Concordance, that covers every word and verse listed in the Bible.

Online there is a Bible program which is free, at the time of this writing. It is called e-Sword. You can get the King James Version and the Bible software completely free on their website. This Bible program allows you to search on words which can be a great computer tool for Bible study. The website to download this free software is <http://www.e-sword.net>.

As mentioned earlier, always look for supporting Bible references. God will provide you with multiple references to show you that you are not taking a verse out of context. You will understand this more as you spend time with Him in Scripture.

### **How Not to Read the Bible**

Many new believers and non-believers will search the Bible to support a personal opinion they have. Deep inside their heart they may know that something is not right in the eyes of God but want something to back up their personal belief. They will find one verse that they think supports their claim and stop there never looking for any other verses which clarify God's Word.

Here's an example of the wrong way to study your Bible. Our fictional character, John Doe, is a new believer and has a heart knowledge (a conviction or belief that comes from the Holy Spirit) that perhaps God does not approve of his drinking wine every day. But John Doe's doctor tells him that it is great for him to drink a glass of red wine each night for the anti-oxidant effects of resveratrol. Since the Bible was

written years and years ago, John decides that his concern that God may want him to stop drinking could not possibly be correct so he searches for wine in the Bible.

John Doe finds the verse in the book of John that says Jesus made water into wine.

*So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine... – John 4:46*

John Doe thinks this must be a sign from God that it is okay for him to drink wine because first it is in a book that has his name and Jesus, God the Son, turned the water into wine so it must be okay. He shuts his Bible and goes to pour a glass of wine.

There were several things that John did not think about. He did not stop to think about wine in Biblical times. What was wine during Biblical times? The wine seen in Biblical times was not alcoholic wine. It was similar to grape juice. Wine was watered down and contained very little alcohol due to the process of fermentation that was required and unable to be attained in their current times.

John also did not stop to consider if there were other words in the Bible that might describe wine or alcoholic drinks of today. There are many references in the Bible to 'strong drink' that reference alcoholic drinks. If John Doe had continued his research, he would have discovered there were not one or two references to drinking in the Bible but 75 references. God tells us 75 times that he does not approve of drinking alcohol.

We have the ability today to purchase resveratrol in non-alcoholic form to experience the same health benefits that John Doe's doctor recommended without disobeying God's Word.

This is one example to show you how we need to be certain we are not trying to find a verse to support a belief.

### **Bible Reading Plans**

There are a variety of checklists available online that you can use to help you stay focused on Bible reading. Each day a few chapters of the Bible are read and marked off the checklist. You can find both a New Testament checklist and a complete checklist on this author's website. Visit <http://www.kimberlymcræe.com/> and enter Bible Reading Plan in the search box on the right.

**Using a Printed Bible to Complete the Following Questions:**

***Look in the Table of Contents, in what testament can Ephesians be found?***

***In what testament can Proverbs be found?***

***On what page of your Bible can the book of Romans be found?***

***On what page of your Bible can the book of Psalm be found?***

***Turn to Psalm 119. How many verses are in this book?***

***Open to the back of your Bible, if there is a concordance select a word and write it and a verse containing the word in your notebook.***

***Look up the verse John 3:16 and write it in your notebook. Memorize this verse. When you have memorized this verse, pick another verse to memorize.***

***Look up the verse 2 Peter 3:18 and write it in your notebook.***

***Begin a Bible Reading Plan by reading Matthew chapters 1 through 5.***



## **Fellowship with Others**

*God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

1 Corinthians 1:9

We've seen ways in which we can spend time with God and now we are going to take a look at fellowship with other Christians. Fellowship means to have a common interest or belief with others. Because we all have a relationship with Christ we can and should have fellowship with other believers.

There are many reasons that Christians should fellowship with other believers. The book of Romans gives us very direct instructions on how we are to work together for God's purpose, be of help to others, and how we are to treat unbelievers.

**Read Romans 12:3-18.**

***What characteristic or attribute does Romans 12:3 and Romans 12:16 say that we should have?***

***As believers what does the Bible say that we are collectively in Romans 12:5?***

***What does God give each of us in order to work together?***

***How are we to treat our brother or sister in Christ as seen in Romans 12:10?***

***What characters should we have when serving the Lord as seen in Romans 12:11?***

***What do you think the purpose of Romans 12:12 is?***

***What does the Bible mean by 'distributing to the necessity of saints'?***

***How must we act with one another as shown in Romans 12:15-16? Why?***

As we read this passage of Scripture in the book of Romans we see many directions on how we should act with other Christians. It is easy for man to get caught up in pride so God warns us twice to not think that we are better than our brothers in Romans 12:3 and Romans 12:16.

Born-again believers in God's eyes are one body in Christ. That is to say that we have a common belief in Christ that draws us together and enables us to work together to accomplish God's will for His church and our lives. We see in Romans 12:6 that God gives each of us gifts that allow us to carry out specific functions within

the ministry of God's church and to be a blessing to others. The gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8 are only a few of the gifts that God gives to his children but not everyone will receive the same gift so that all can work together. Other spiritual gifts can be found in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4.

Romans 12:10 tells us that we are to treat each other with kindness, honor, and brotherly love. We are all sinners and can be easily swayed into anger or resentment if a brother or sister does not treat us with kindness. We receive direction on how to handle these situations in the book of Matthew. First we are to forgive our brother:

*Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but Until seventy times seven. – Matthew 18:21-22*

*And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. – Ephesians 4:32*

Sometimes people's feelings get hurt from a perceived action or inaction. In circumstances where we feel something has been done wrong to us by a brother, we have direction on how to handle that situation in the book of Matthew.

*Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. – Matthew 18:15 (Words of Jesus)*

If we practice Christian love by treating our brother and sister with kindness and conditional love many of these issues can be avoided. When you unconditionally love your brother or sister in Christ, it is easy to be there for one another as an encouragement, a help, or to work together.

The Bible shows us that we are to love the brethren in other verses of Scripture.

**Look up 1 Peter 1:22 and enter the verse in your notebook.**

1 Peter 1:22 says that we are to love one another with a pure heart. This type of love is a natural love and not a romantic love.

**Look up John 13:34-35 and enter the verse in your notebook.**

We see that there is a purpose for us to love one another. When we can unconditionally care for our believers others can see Christ within us. This is very important as we speak to others about the gospel of Jesus Christ and is often your best witness to unbelievers of the need for salvation.

**Look up John 15:12 and enter the verse in your notebook.**

In John 15:12 we are given a reason to love one another that we cannot deny. If Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to sacrifice His life for us then we can certainly share that love with others.

**Read Ephesians 4:1-3.**

These three verses show us that we are to be humble with one another and exhibiting patience with Christian love for the purpose of keeping us all together in peace as the body of Christ.

When we work together serving the Lord we are directed in Romans 12:11 to not be lazy. We give the Lord our best with a cheerful spirit. Together we rejoice with others during the good times and share in each other's sorrows. Romans 12:12, 15, and 16 are very much aligned. If we rejoice in hope, others will rejoice with us. When we are patient during times of trouble it can be an encouragement to others. Our prayers for ourselves and others can also be of encouragement to other believers.

**Look up 1 Thessalonians 5:11 and enter the verse in your notebook.**

It is important for us to comfort one another through difficult trials. This comfort can help to elevate the trial through sharing of our experience, teaching of God's Word, praying with one another, or simply listening.

**Read Romans 1:12.**

In Paul's letter to the Romans, he shows us that our mutual faith in Christ is also a comfort to one another.

There will be times when a Christian brother or sister may be in need. This need could be spiritual or physical. We are directed in Romans 12:13 to be given to hospitality. We often see this when a family has suffered from a death or been under extreme hardship. Often other Christians will come together to bring food as a help to the family.

*Use hospitality one to another without grudging.* – 1 Peter 4:9

In addition, if a brother or sister is suffering from a spiritual hardship they may have need for us to visit them or pray with them.

**Look up 1 Peter 3:8 and enter the verse in your notebook.**

God directs us to have compassion for our brother or sister in Christ. If we read further in 1 Peter 3:9 we see that we this compassion is not extended during times when they may not treat us with the same kindness.

These concepts of unity within the body of Christ can be found in many places within the Bible. We can see another tremendous example of the need for each person to make up one unit, the body of Christ. We all may be different with different qualities or spiritual gifts but we are needed to work together for God's church and to help others within His church.

**Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 to see this demonstrated to us again.**

There are a few ways that you can fellowship with other Christians. It is highly recommended that you establish with a Bible-believing church. Here you should find many others of like faith.

If you find yourself in a situation where attending church is not possible such as soldiers on the field of battle, spend time in your Bible and seek out others who share

your faith. There may be a Bible study group that you can get involved in. This is a fantastic way to learn and spend time with other believers.

There are some ministries that have regular scheduled meetings that you can get involved in. For young children, there are clubs that may meet at church. Teens often meet together weekly at church and have scheduled events. There are some ministries that have clubs at colleges while workplaces sometimes have social clubs where you can find a Bible study.

*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* – Matthew 18:20 (Words of Jesus)



## **Finding a Church**

*And he is the head of the body, the church...*

Colossians 1:18

We have just seen that as believers we are all part of the body of Christ. As noted in Colossians 1:18, we are part of Christ's church. It is not possible for all Christians to gather in the same place to worship Christ. There are local churches established for this purpose. One of the most difficult tasks for you as a new believer will be to find a church that God wants you to join. This is in part due to the fact that you have not yet built a firm foundation from the Word of God to discern what is right and what is not in the eyes of God regarding a church.

This chapter is designed to give you a rather brief overview of what to look for in a church. You will need to spend time in prayer asking for the Lord's direction to guide you to a church and help you to determine if it is where you should join.

Please note that this chapter is not about religious denominations but it will draw your attention to some practices by various religious groups that do not align with God's Word. There will be supporting Bible references for you to see what God says and help you in making your church selection.

### **Where to Begin the Search for a Church**

If there was someone that led you to the Lord, your first stop to find a church should be to speak with that person or persons. The church that they attend may not be where the Lord needs you but they can direct you to some churches in your area for you to visit.

A simple way to find churches in your area is to look in the telephone directory. This may be more confusing to you since there are several denominations.

Outside of personal recommendations the best way to look for a church is to search the Internet. There are some churches that may not have a website but many do. This can help you eliminate some churches before attending. Most churches will post their beliefs online for you. Look for a link that says 'doctrine' or 'doctrinal statement'.

### **Look First for a Bible-believing Church**

Before you look for anything else in the church make sure that they are a Bible-believing church. Search the Internet using the words 'Bible believing church' with your town.



The Bible tells us that all scripture is given by inspiration of God. This includes both the Old and New Testament.

*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 furnished unto all good works. – 2 Timothy 3:16 – 17*

If you go to visit a church and there are no Bibles in the pews this should be a red flag. It may be possible that the church is unable to afford Bibles but if an alternative book is used for sermons you should be wary.

Previously, we discussed the importance of Bible study and that the Holy Spirit will help the believer to understand its meaning. There are no hidden mysteries that are only revealed to the pastor, priest, or elders in the church. The writers of each book of the Bible were given scripture by inspiration of God.

*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. – 2 Peter 1:20-21*

### **How Does the Church View God?**

Does the church recognize that Jesus is God the Son? Do they recognize that God is made up of three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit? That all are one and equal sharing the same attributes?

*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. – 1 John 5:7*

We know by reading scripture that the Word referred to in 1 John 5:7 is Jesus Christ our Lord.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. – John 1:1*

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. – John 1:14*

If you visit a church and find that the church worships idols, this is a big warning bell. An example of physical idols would be a statue, a picture, a carving, or something similar. An idol can also be a person (man or woman) that is viewed on an equal or higher standard than Christ.

There are some churches that even worship the Holy Spirit above Jesus. Some of these churches believe that the Holy Spirit only comes on you for a short period of time before departing. These incidents usually occur during a church service. Some of them speak in tongues, play with snakes and even drink battery acid. We know from our previous studies that the Holy Spirit lives inside of you as a result of salvation and there is no need for God to reveal things to you through charismatic means.

Psalm 97:6 tells us that the heavens declare Jesus' righteousness and that all the people see his glory but that those would worship idols are puzzled.

*The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods. – Psalm 97:6-7*

Although not a specific sign of a bad church, use caution if the church has a large crucifix with Jesus on the cross dominating their sanctuary. The Bible says that Jesus is no longer on the cross but sitting at the right hand of the Father. Most Bible-believing churches will have a cross that is empty.

*He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. – Acts 2:31-33*

*Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. – Romans 8:34*

*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. – Hebrews 12:2*

### **What is the Church's View of Sin?**

Do they believe in the fall of man as outlined in the Bible? Do they believe that our sins can only be covered by the blood of Jesus? What is the church's view of salvation? Do they think it is automatically given to everyone or do they believe what the Bible says about repentance and being born again?

You may want to review the section titled Our Need for Salvation when considering a new church. There are several Bible references for you to use to help you understand how sin is viewed in God's eyes.

There are some churches that believe that your salvation can be lost but we saw in the Assurance of Salvation chapter that salvation is eternal. Other churches believe that you must go through a priest for salvation. We saw in the early chapters of this book that the only way of salvation was through Jesus Christ. Some churches have the mistaken belief that only specific people (the elect) can be saved but we saw in the book of Romans what 'any' person must do to be saved. Review the chapter on Romans Road for more information.

### **What is the Church's View of Baptism?**

Does the church believe in the Baptism of babies? Does the church believe that Baptism occurs at a specific age? Does the church believe in sprinkling of water or water immersion?

The church should believe in Baptism by immersion as a symbolic means of identifying with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Baptism should only be done for a person that has accepted Christ as their Saviour. Review the chapter on Baptism for more information.

While there are many other things that you can look for in a church these basic things should help you get started in your search. The best thing to do is to seek God's direction in Bible study and prayer. Let's take a look at evaluating a church.

### **Evaluating a Church**

So, you've selected a few churches to visit to hear the pastor preach and you are concerned about what to wear and bring. Some men may be in suits while ladies are in dresses. If you do not own a suit or a dress, do not be alarmed. You should be accepted at the church regardless of the clothes that you wear. Typical Sunday attire can be business casual.

You will want to bring a small pad, a pen, and a personal Bible if you have one. If not, there should be some in the pews. The pad and pen are for taking notes during the sermon. Taking notes is a great way to keep a record of the topic of the sermon. As God reveals something to you from the sermon, write it down on the pad. Be sure to write down every Scripture reference used. This is so that you can go back over the sermon at a later time or to check to see if what the Pastor was saying aligns with God's Word. As we noted in the Bible Reading chapter it is important for us to verify Scripture so that we can learn to discern God's Word from that of the word of man.

When you first arrive at a new church you may feel a little out of place because everyone seems to know everyone else. Depending on the time you arrive some church members may stop by to greet you.

You will likely be given a card to put your address and telephone number on. They will instruct you to place this in the offering plate. Whether you fill out the card or not is a personal preference. The church will contact you about your visit and see if there are any questions they can answer for you.

The church may begin their service with the singing of hymns followed by the sermon delivered by the pastor. At the end of the sermon there may be an invitation time where the pastor will ask if there is anyone who would like to go to the front to pray or to make a decision. When God directs you to join a church, you will go up to the front during this time.

It is recommended to visit a church multiple times before making a decision. Unless God presses on you to join, then follow his direction to join at that time. Visiting a church on several different occasions gives you an idea of what the pastor preaches about and the beliefs of the church.

You can also learn a lot about a church by its members and leaders. If the leaders of the church are openly leading lives that are worldly this should cause some concern. Often the pastor deals with these individual situations behind the scenes but if the majority of the leaders are spending their Friday nights at the local bar or visiting Lady Esmerelda to get their fortunes told you may want to look for another church.

You should be able to see Christ through the actions and lives of the members and leaders.

### **Women's Roles in the Church**

One last note when looking for a church is in regards to a woman's role in the church. The Bible specifically states that women are not to be preachers in the church and are not to be deacons.

*This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; - 1 Timothy 3:1-2*

*And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. - 1 Timothy 3:10-12*

*But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. - 1 Timothy 2:12*

There are many other roles that women can play in the church that does not involve preaching or being a deacon. God has a place for everyone to work together.

Finding a church home is important as it is of benefit to us and to the congregation. After you make a decision to join a church, you will need to give a public profession of your faith in Christ and be baptized. Study your Bible, spend time in prayer with the Lord, and learn all you can from your new church home. You will grow in your faith and be blessed by your efforts. As an added bonus, you will likely find that you are a blessing to someone else at the same time. When you feel like you have a firm foundation you should seek God's direction in how you can serve Him both in and out of your church.



## **Evangelism**

*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world,  
and preach the gospel to every creature.*

Mark 16:15



## **Tell Others about Christ**

*And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*

Acts 5:42

Now that you have accepted Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour you will want to share the good news of the gospel of Christ with others.

### **Why We Should Talk to Others about Christ**

Christians have an important job that we are required to perform for the Lord. This is not a suggestion but a directive from God. We cannot call in sick to avoid it and we cannot wait for Wednesday night or Sunday to do our job.

Each of us has the responsibility to tell others about their need for salvation, we are to be soul winners. Jesus himself was an active soul winner.

*For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.* – Luke 19:10  
(Words of Jesus)

We are commanded by God to go to others to spread the gospel because it is His desire to see all come to know Jesus.

*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.* – Mark 16:15

*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.* – Matthew 28:19 (Words of Jesus)

These commands given to us by Jesus tell us that we are to tell others about the gospel of Christ, help them to find a church where they can be baptized, and disciple them by teaching them what the Bible says. The Bible should be your study tool and the Holy Spirit living within you is your guide.

Sometimes Christians think that the job of soul winning should be left to the missionaries. I was speaking to a man recently about spreading the gospel of Christ on a college campus. He said he firmly believed in the concept that you were either a missionary or on the mission field. I heartily agree. Missionaries spread the gospel to others on a full-time basis. They often bring the Word of God to other countries around the world.

We are all missionaries on the mission field! Do you not have an opportunity to witness to others about Christ throughout the day? The gas station attendant needs to hear about Christ, the grocery store bagger, the fast food restaurant drive-thru cashier, your friend, family members, and even your social networking links. With the introduction of social networking and the use of Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter there is a 24-hour means of reaching out to others to share the good news of the gospel of Christ.

**Read Matthew 4:17-25 and Mark 1:14-22.**

***Why was Jesus preaching to the people?***

***In Mark 1:15, what did Jesus tell Simon and Andrew they needed to do?***

***What would Simon and Andrew become if they followed Christ?***

***Why were the men astonished by Jesus' doctrine in Mark 1:22?***

Jesus is God. He had knowledge that the time would come when He would no longer be with them. He already knew that He would die on the cross for our sins, bare our sins into hell, and rise up to heaven to sit at the right hand of God. He told the people that the 'kingdom of heaven is at hand'. Now was the time for them to listen to Jesus and follow him.

**Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 5:1-9.**

The same holds true today. There will come a time and day which all born-again Christians will be called up in the air to be with the Lord. We won't be here for those that have not accepted Christ. The antichrist will reign in the world for 7 years. During that time the only way for a person to get to heaven will be to reject the mark of the beast. We cannot sit back idle and hope that others will 'figure it out' before it is too late.

You may feel a little uncomfortable reaching out to others in the beginning. We can go to speak to them about the gospel with confidence because Jesus told us that He will help us.

Look back at our text in Matthew and Mark. In Mark 1:15, we see that the first requirement for us is to repent and believe in Him. As a born-again Christian, you have fulfilled this requirement. Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee when he came upon two brothers, Simon and Andrew. These brothers were fishermen and casting their nets into the sea unable to catch any fish. Jesus told Simon where to cast his net. To their astonishment the net was so full with fish that the net broke. The fish that were caught filled two ships and both began to sink (Luke 5:5-9). Jesus told the brothers to follow Him and 'He' would make them 'fishers of men' (Matthew 4:19).

Jesus is the one that can help us to win souls for Christ if we obey and follow Him. Remember how we learned that God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit are all one entity with the same characteristics? The Holy Spirit which lives inside of you will direct your path when you are talking to someone about Christ. This is one

reason why Bible reading and prayer are so important. God can bring back to remembrance verses you have read when you are talking to others.

There was a man who used to persecute Jesus by the name of Saul. When he repented and believed on Christ, his life was changed.

### **Read Acts 9:1-9.**

Saul believed in Jesus and did as the Lord commanded him to do. He went into Damascus and waited for Christ's instructions.

### **Read Acts 9:10 – 20.**

Jesus told a disciple of his, by the name of Ananias, to go to Saul to deliver his instructions. Ananias knew that Saul was the one persecuting the Jews that believed in Christ. Jesus reassured his disciple saying:

*...Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: – Acts 9:15 (Words of Jesus)*

Saul was going to deliver the gospel of Christ to the Jews and to the Gentiles. The Gentiles are people who are not of Jewish descent. From this text we see that Saul believed in Jesus, was filled with the Holy Ghost, was baptized, and then preached Christ to the Jews.

Saul was later called Paul (Acts 13:9). Paul obediently preached the gospel of Christ until the Jews rejected the Lord and he moved on to spread the gospel to the Gentiles. We need to follow Paul's example and boldly follow Christ by going out to others to spread the word about Jesus.

*Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. – Acts 13:46-47*

When Paul preached to the Gentiles many believed on Christ. Several churches were formed and we have the letters that Paul wrote to those churches to help us with our Christian living in the New Testament. Paul suffered a great deal for the cause of Christ but he did not allow that to deter him from obediently preaching the gospel.

People around the world are wondering at this moment about the truth. They are seeking the Lord and God has provided someone to talk to them about Christ. Will you be the person to disobey God while walking away or the one who steps forward in boldness to tell someone about Christ? It is God's desire to see all men come to know Christ to have everlasting life with Him in Heaven.

*For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. – 1 Timothy 2:3-4*

## **Sharing Your Christian Testimony**



One of the first ways that you can begin to share the gospel of Christ with others is to tell them about your personal experience with salvation. Begin by telling them about how you first starting seeking to know the truth.

What was happening in your life that made you think about your eternal destiny? Was there anything that made you want to know more about God, Jesus, or the Bible? How did you feel? Was there someone that spoke to you about Christ or answered your questions? Did you read something in the Bible?

Your Christian testimony is unique to you. There may be something in your testimony that the person you are speaking to can identify with. Maybe they have questions about faith, Jesus, God, Heaven, or the Bible itself. This could open up a door for them to ask you questions or visit church with you.

As an example of what a Christian testimony is, let me share with you my *complete* personal testimony:

*I did not grow up in a religious home. My parents had differing religious backgrounds and we had not been to church since I was very young. I did not know who Jesus was or understand anything about the Bible although I may have been taught some of that when I attended church at the age of 5.*

*In my teen years I had been approached by others who were involved in occult practices. The idea of a nature religion was appealing to me and I got immersed in the Wicca religion for many years. During one of my Wiccan readings and rituals I was made very aware that what I was worshipping was not the good deities that I thought but evil or Satan.*

*Now, I was not a bad person in my own eyes but I was concerned because my religious beliefs I had believed did not have to do with an evil god but yet it was clear that I had been deceived. So, I began to want to know the truth. I prayed the only prayer I thought to pray since I had no concept of prayer. I knew you got on your knees but that was all I understood. I simply said something similar to this, "If there is a God out there, please let me know."*

*I was plagued by wondering if God was real and thought that maybe I would find the answer in a Bible. So, I visited a local bookstore and stood in the Bible aisle for several minutes completely confused! Everywhere I turned there was a different version of the Bible. I wondered which one was actually the right one and not some version another man put together. Instead, I bought a prayer book. I returned home to look through the prayer book and set it aside.*

*A few months later a friend tried to talk to me about Christ. I got very angry at him because I thought he could not possibly be a Christian. He was living a life that was filled with too much bad behavior. I argued with him and we didn't speak of it again.*

*Another co-worker that I was having lunch with tried to argue with me about what my religious beliefs were because he thought that was the way to reach others for Christ. He thought that if you could prove to someone they were wrong and he was right that it could win them to Christ. He continued to push and push and argue until I could not stand it anymore. I was determined not to listen to another person that said they were a Christian.*

*I continued to follow in my occult practices but there was a deep nagging question inside of what the truth might be. This was not something that I talked to others about. No one was aware at the time.*

*During the summer of 1998, Windows 98 had just been released and I was part of Microsoft's support team. I worked several Saturdays and Sundays. I worked as an escalation engineer dealing with difficult support cases. One Sunday, a lady I was working with on the phone had a completely dead hard drive. We couldn't see the data. I knew that one of my co-workers was the best one in our department to handle those cases. I went to his cubicle to ask for his advice. He was on break but always willing to help. He closed the book he was reading and placed it on the desk and I saw the words "Holy Bible" on it.*

*A little later when things were quiet and the day was drawing to a close I asked him about the Bible. I explained my confusion with the different versions and he suggested I get a King James Version Bible. I asked him what to read. He told me to start in Matthew. He gave me his telephone number should I have any questions.*

*I bought a Bible that night at a late night Barnes and Noble and went home to start reading. Over the next few weeks I continued to ask him what to read next and he would ask me questions about what I read. We talked about Christ and salvation but I didn't understand.*

*When I was reading in the book of Romans, I could see my position with God. I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I was a sinner in God's eyes and that Christ died on the cross for me. I knew I wanted to be forgiven by God but did not know how that happened. I was very repentant and distraught. This continued for a couple weeks. I tried to talk to my co-worker about it but was very emotional and would change the subject part way through. I did end up calling him and explaining that I knew I was a sinner but did not know what I was supposed to do to be forgiven in God's eyes. He explained that I only needed to pray to God and ask for his forgiveness and ask for Jesus to be my Saviour.*

*I remember the night as if it were yesterday. On August 31, 1998, I repented of my sin, asked God to forgive me and asked for Jesus to be my Saviour. My life has been forever changed.*

That is my complete testimony but this is rarely everything that I tell someone when I talk to them about Christ. If I were to sit down and try to tell this whole testimony to someone I would lose them within the first minute.

Let's break down the testimony into key points:

I had a desire to know whether God was real.

I thought my answers could be found in the Bible.

I read the Bible.

I was convicted of the fact that I was a sinner in God's eyes.

I knew I needed Jesus to be my Saviour.

When you talk to someone about Christ, you have to consider the context of what someone is saying to you.

Here's an example of a conversation with a fictitious person, Jane Doe.

Jane Doe: *Hey, I heard you are a Christian. Can I ask you a question?*

Me: *Sure, what's up?*

Jane: *Is God real?*

Me: *Absolutely! I wondered that same thing once. I went to the Bible to find out.*

Jane: *I thought about doing that but all those Bible versions confuse me.*

Me: *They did me too. I would personally recommend a King James Version. You can read the book of John and Romans. If cannot find a Bible, I'd be happy to get you one.*

Jane: *Thanks. I might run by the bookstore. How did you know for sure he is real?*

Me: *When I was reading the Bible, my heart became open to the fact that God was real. I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that God existed. I also discovered that everyone is considered a sinner in God's eyes and Jesus Christ died for me on the cross to cover that sin. I repented of that sin and asked Him to save me. My life has been forever changed.*

During this fictitious conversation you see that the door was opened for me to discuss God and Jesus with this person because she came to me to ask a question. You notice that I was able to sum up my Christian testimony in a couple of sentences at the end of the conversation.

Sometimes at the mention of Christ people won't speak to you again. There is nothing more you can do. Other times they want to know more and will come back and ask you questions later.

It is important that when you speak to someone about Christ that you not sound threatening and you try to empathize with them from your own personal experiences. As you saw in the example above I did not go into every detail of my Christian testimony. In fact, even my website holds a very condensed version. My testimony can be summarized in three small sentences:

*I was lost. The Holy Spirit convicted me. I got saved.*

***Write your Christian Testimony on a separate piece of paper.***

***What are the important points from your testimony?***

***Taking one point, how would you tell someone about your Christian testimony in just a few short sentences?***

### **What Must We Do to Be Effective Witnesses**

Looking back at my Christian testimony you will notice that I was approached on three different occasions by people who professed to be Christians.

The friend whose life was filled with bad behavior  
The co-worker that wanted to argue religion  
The co-worker that read his Bible

Although I was the one who asked the co-worker about the Bible, he continued to witness to me about Christ.

Looking at the first professing Christian, we see that the friend had sin in his life that others could see. You can try to hide sin in your life but someone will see it.

*But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.* – Numbers 32:23

When a person without Christ, a lost person, sees sin in someone claiming to be a Christian they will likely dismiss anything that person says. They may feel like that person cannot speak with authority because they haven't made an effort to change their own life. They will count the person as a hypocrite.

When people see Jesus in you they can see that you are speaking to them for Him. People were astonished by the doctrine of Christ because they recognized that there was something different in what He was saying. They knew that he spoke as 'one having authority'.

*And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.* – Matthew 7:28-29

How can someone see Christ in us? We are to remain separate from the world in regard to sin. We cannot allow ourselves to be partakers of things that the world says are fine but God says are sin.

*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 passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.* – 1 John 2:15-17

If we are obedient to God and follow Him, the spirit in which we approach others will be evident. Our love of Christ and God's Word will shine through. The life we live will be pleasing unto the Lord and others will see we mean what we are saying. Others will be more apt to listen to someone who is living the life of an obedient Christian.

Looking back at the third witness I had in my Christian testimony, we see that the co-worker was reading his Bible at work during his break. He was forced to work on a Sunday but still did not neglect God. He was being obedient by reading God's Word. Although not mentioned, this person was a very humble person who showed compassion towards others. He never spoke of anything in his life that was worldly so I could see Christ in him through his speech and actions. I could not articulate what was different about him but knew that he spoke with a true belief in Christ.

The spirit in which you approach others is important. We know that as Christians we are to be humble and have a genuine caring for others. If you are struggling with a

pride problem, the Lord can help you to remove it so that you can be humble. When we speak to others about Christ, it should not be for our own gain. It should be for God's glory and their soul. There is nothing more sorrowful than the knowledge that one has rejected Christ and will spend an eternity in hell. Your heart will weep for that lost soul.

Remember the second witness' desire to argue the point of religion? Approaching people in a malicious way with intent to anger and argue will only alienate you from the one who may be seeking. That spirit of bitterness can leak out into your discussions with others regardless of the source of the anger. The Lord can help you overcome those feelings so that you can be an effective witness for Him.

### **How to Start a Conversation about Christ**

You can walk up to someone directly to start a conversation about Christ such as when church groups visit homes door to door or stand in a mall to talk to others. Most of the time, you will be talking to people you know.

The skill you will need to develop is becoming an active listener. Truly listen to the people you are talking with. You may find a point in the conversation where you can share your own personal experience or your love of Christ. This can lead to more discussion.

You can ask a few direct questions to start the conversation. Here are some examples:

*"If you died tonight, do you know whether you would be going to heaven or hell?"*

*"Do you know where you will spend eternity?"*

*"Do you know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour?"*

*"Did you know that God says all men are sinners in His eyes?"*

*"Do you attend church?"*

*"Are you a religious man? What do you believe in?" or "Are you a religious woman? What do you believe in?"*

*"Have you ever read the Bible?"*

Often others will watch your actions or conversation waiting to see how long you continue to profess your love of God, Christ, and God's Word. Giving God the glory for all that happens in your life is a way of witnessing to others. You are showing that He is the master of your life and is always in control.

### **How to Handle Opposition**

There will be times when others will be angry because you are talking to them about Christ. Sometimes you may be talking to someone and bring up something religious in passing and that person may become angry. I have had both of these happen to me and to my immediate family more times than can be counted. It can be a personal sacrifice speaking to others about Christ but when one comes to repentance and gets saved the efforts are so worthwhile.

God tells us to expect that we will suffer persecution for His name's sake but that we are to rejoice in it. Jesus suffered far more than we will ever suffer.

**Read the words of Jesus in John 15:17-27.**

***In John 15:17, what are we commanded to do?***

***If we are a follower of Jesus and not living in the world in regard to sin, what will those that are sinners feel for us?***

***If they persecuted Jesus, what will they do to us?***

***If someone hates Jesus can they love God the Father?***

***Why is it that they hate Jesus?***

***Who does Jesus send to be with us during these times?***

This passage of Scripture is both beautiful and sad. We are commanded to love one another but that is difficult to do when the world has chosen to hate those that love Christ. When someone has not had their sins covered in the eyes of God by repentance and Christ, they will hate Jesus, God the Father, and us because of that reminder of sin. It isn't personal against us so we can have compassion on them despite them directing their anger at us. Jesus reminds us that He has sent us a Comforter, the Holy Spirit living within us. God is our Comforter and sees us through the times of persecution.

***Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. – Matthew 5:10-11 (Words of Jesus)***

The Bible tells us that if we are persecuted for Jesus' names sake then we are blessed. We are doing something right. We are following Him and we should be glad for when those times come.

***Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. - Matthew 5:12 (Words of Jesus)***

We cannot allow persecution to distract us from spreading the gospel of Christ to others. The Bible tells us that we are the salt of the earth, a light to the world, and we have to have to be faithful followers of Christ to glorify God.

***Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. 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. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. - Matthew 5:13-16 (Words of Jesus)***

When we share the gospel with others it is easy to allow our feelings to be hurt by the words of another that rejects the message. Jesus gave his disciples directions on

how to handle those that rejected them. They were told to let it go and move on. We have to try to do the same because there is nothing more we can do with them.

*And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. – Matthew 10:14 (Words of Jesus)*



## Tracts

*But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

Luke 12:31

God has created a wonderful tool for Christians to use to get the gospel into the hands of the lost. This tool is called a gospel tract. A tract is typically a piece of paper or a small booklet that presents the gospel to someone in a simple easy to read fashion.

You may have seen these at some time yourself. You can leave tracts anywhere that someone might pick one up. They are a great way for someone who is seeking the Lord to learn more. Sometimes we hand them out directly to other people so that they can read them when the time is suitable for them.

### Different Types of Tracts

There are a variety of tracts that can be handed out to others. Some tracts specifically discuss the need for salvation. The tract can be generic simply stating the facts of a sinner's need for salvation or they can be specific to a potential stronghold source in a sinner's life. For instance, there could be a tract that deals with a sinner's desire to worship money in their life instead of following Christ. Another tract could address the party life of a young person or another may address a religious belief that does not align with God's Word.

A short form of a tract could be passing out a Bible verse to someone. That person may reflect on the verse to get them thinking about spiritual matters. God can then place someone in their life to answer any questions they may have regarding salvation.

It is not up to us to decide on how a person uses a tract or what the tract will do in that person's life. We leave tracts with Biblical truths and let God deal in the hearts of those that receive them.

There are also tracts for Christians. Tracts for Christians usually address something in a Christian's life that may need to be examined so that they can walk closer to God. Sometimes a Christian may get caught up in some sin that they are unable to let go of. A tract can be a good way of helping them to see that they need to go to God to repent of that sin to receive forgiveness. God can help a Christian walk away from sin. He always provides a doorway for us to take to escape the sin. We need only look for that doorway, have faith in God, and follow Him.

### Where to Find Bible Tracts



Once you have established with a church that you feel stands firmly on Biblical truths, you can look to see if they have any tracts available. Some churches have a tract ministry in which they supply tracts for their members. Other churches have tracts available for visitors. On the back of the tracts you will see a publisher listed. You may be able to look the publisher up on the internet to order personal stock.

We have included a Biblical tract which can be printed, folded and given freely to anyone in the Appendix of this book. You may print as many copies as you would like to give out to others.

If your local Christian bookstore has a tract section you can pick up a small stack of tracts. Use caution as these will often have various Bible versions. If a Bible reference has been changed to conform to a specific Bible version it could change the meaning of a verse. It could also cause a person to believe that the Bible version is okay in God's eyes. Please read our appendix on why we use the King James Version Bible.

For your reference, here are some places online that provide tracts:

***Chick Publications***

Provides graphic cartoon style tracts in booklet form. These are available in a variety of languages. They often allow others to read their tracts online which can be a great way to send a link to a tract. Tracts are available for children as well.

<http://www.chick.com/>

***Sword of the Lord Publishers***

Provides written tracts in a variety of languages.

<http://www.swordbooks.com/>

***Fellowship Tract League***

Provides written tracts in a variety of languages.

<http://www.fellowshiptractleague.org/>

***Truth for Trials Ministries, Inc.***

This ministry that reaches out to disabled individuals or others that are experiencing a crisis. Their tract titled Are You Hurting? is printed online and a link could be sent to a disabled friend in need.

<http://www.truthfortrials.com/>

***Evangelical Tract Distributors***

Provides written tracts in a variety of languages.

<http://www.evangelicaltract.com/>

***Gospel Tract Society, Inc.***

Provides written tracts in a variety of languages and includes tracts for children.

<http://www.gospeltractsociety.org/>

***God's Simple Plan of Salvation***

This written tract presents the Gospel clearly as if in a written letter to the reader. The tract is available in multiple languages and can be printed directly on your printer or ordered through them. This is perhaps my favorite tract. You can also link to the

message online.

<http://www.godssimpleplan.org/>

### **Where to Leave Tracts**

Never leave home without a tract! You can leave these tracts anywhere or give them directly to others. Here are some ideas of places you could leave a tract.

Restaurant tables with the tip

Public phone booths

Public rest rooms

At the library

Slipped inside a book at the library or a bookstore

Left on the shelf of a store

Given to the cashier at the grocery store

Left in a shopping cart

Doctor's office waiting room

Inside a magazine

Vacationing: leave a tract at tourist attractions and hotels

Traveling along the highway: leave them in rest areas

Movie theater snack bar counter

Give to every cashier, waiter, or service employee you encounter

Pick a name and address from the phone book and mail one to that person

Public areas of your workplace

These are just a few examples. Think of all the places that you go throughout the day. Is there some place that you could leave a tract?

Leaving tracts is a great way for a shy person to reach out to others about the gospel of Christ. Consider adding some tracts to your daily routine.

### **Bibles and New Testaments**

Although more expensive than printing a gospel tract you always have the option of giving a Bible or a New Testament to a friend, someone in need, or to family members.

The Bible is not simply a means of telling others about our need for Christ. It holds the answers to anything and everything that could happen in a person's life. God's Word is infallible. It will never go out of style and does not ever become outdated.

Giving a Bible or a New Testament to someone provides them with all the answers they will ever need if they have a desire to seek the truth. My husband, son and I give Bibles to people who meet who are unable to get one themselves. We give out Bibles to high school and college students when they graduate. When a baby is on the way, we typically give the parents a New Testament for their child. It is a timeless gift.

I wish we could say that they are always appreciated when they are received but they are not. We do not give them to others to receive any kind of recognition. There may come a time in life when that person needs and seeks God's Word. I would rather have them prepared should that day come then to know we could have helped

but decided to turn away. God has always provided what we have needed even when we have purchased Bibles for others when we could not afford to.

King James Version gift bibles are readily available in most local bookstores. KJV New Testaments are a little harder to find. Sometimes you can find them in a local Christian bookstore.

As an online reference, here is a place online that only sells the King James Version in a variety of styles:

The KJV Store

<http://www.kjvstore.com/>



## Discipleship

*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

Matthew 28:20 (Words of Jesus)

When we witness to others about Christ we are not always the one who is there when they accept Christ. If we have the privilege of being with them during their time of accepting Christ we cannot stop there. We need to work with them to help them build a firm foundation as they begin their new Christian walk. Without a good foundation, they can easily be swayed by various doctrines that do not align with God's Word or fall back into their old way of living.

We are commanded to disciple these new Christians by God as seen in Matthew 28:20. Jesus tells us that we are to go into the world to share the gospel, to see new believers be baptized, and to teach them to follow Him in their daily walk.

Hopefully, you have learned enough in this book to be able to speak with another new believer about prayer, Bible reading, finding a church, and baptism to help them find a church to establish with and begin following Christ. This book can be freely distributed to anyone. I believe strongly in God's command in Matthew to freely give that which we have received. This book is available for free download to anyone. Paper copies of the book are available at the publisher's printing price. No royalties are paid to the author.

It is recommended that you participate in Bible study groups at a local church and that you spend time with God in His Word. If you feel uncomfortable with your own knowledge of God's Word you can speak to the Pastor of your church to see if there is someone who can help to work with the new believer.

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. – 2 Timothy 2:15*

Let's take a look at some Bible verses that express to us how important it is for a new believer to gain a firm foundation in God's Word and their life with Christ.

**Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-9.**

***In 1 Corinthians 3:2, what does the Bible mean when it says they were fed with milk and not meat?***

***In 1 Corinthians 3:6, Paul said that he planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. How did these two men work together for God?***

In this passage of Scripture we see in Paul's letter to the church of Corinth that these Christians were not growing in Christ. Babies get their sustenance from milk and later move on to solid foods. These Christians had not grown in their spiritual knowledge. We see the result of this in their strife, envy, and division among their church members. They thought very highly of their own knowledge and did not see that they are all supposed to work together for the cause of Christ.

If we do not take responsibility for our own Christian growth by studying God's Word, serving Him as He calls us, then we will find that we are still as babes on milk. We need to be striving to learn all that we can so that we can serve Him effectively and be of help to others.

The Bible tells us that Paul planted and Apollos watered in 1 Corinthians 3:5. This means that Paul first brought the gospel to them and Apollos taught the church. God is the one who is responsible for the rest. The Holy Spirit is the one who convicts us of our need for salvation and He works with a Christian to live a righteous and obedient life for God.

**Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.**

We see in this passage of Scripture that the firmest foundation we can have is one built upon Jesus Christ. If all that we do is for Him and through Him then our work can be found faithful in God's eyes. As we disciple others we need to help them build their foundation on Christ.

*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. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. – Colossians 3:16 – 17*



## Devotional

*And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 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.*

Colossians 3:15-16

### Day 1: Obedience

*And Samuel said, Hath 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 hearken than the fat of rams.*

1 Samuel 15:22

In Old Testament times, the men and women that committed a sin had to bring an offering to the priest to be sacrificed so that the blood would cover their sins in God's eyes.

Samuel was talking with Saul who had rebelled against the Lord and Saul was complaining that the people took everything that could be used as a burnt offering so he had none. Samuel asked Saul the question, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?"

Although this account is of a conversation between Samuel and Saul we know that it is the Word of God because all scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Tim 3:16). This account was given to help us understand that it is better for us to listen and obey the Lord.

Samuel tells Saul that obeying is better than sacrifice and to hearken unto the Lord (listen to the Lord) is better than the fat of rams (used in sacrifices). He continues in the scripture to tell us that God views rebellion the same as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness as the sins of iniquity and idolatry (1 Samuel 15:23).

God gives us His Word and commandments for our good. He knows everything that will happen if we disobey. The Lord wants to protect us from harm and bless us for being obedient.

Introspection in our walk as believers is important. We need to make sure that we are trying to live for Christ instead of ourselves. Look at your own life. Are there any sins in your life that you rationalize with the idea that all you have to do is ask forgiveness so you might as well sin?

Obedience is more pleasing to God than to sin and ask forgiveness. Our Lord has given us direction through His Holy Word that will enable us to be obedient. Today, ask the Lord to help you with any sin that you are allowing in your life that has caused you to be disobedient to Him.

## **Day 2: Worry or Anxiety**

*Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

Isaiah 41:10

Our daily lives are filled with unknown circumstances. We do not know what today or tomorrow will bring. This can often cause worry or anxiety in people's lives. Teens may worry whether all their study time will produce a good grade on a test. Adults may become anxious when the company they work for has undergone reorganization. There are too many things that we can speculate on that might cause worry or anxiety.

We serve a mighty God! If God is capable of creating the heavens and the earth, should He not be capable of watching over every aspect of our lives. He is all powerful and all knowing. We cannot see into the future but God can. There is comfort in knowing that the one who is in control of our lives already knows what will happen to us each day. Our Heavenly Father also knows how we will respond to things that happen throughout the day.

God works in our lives for our good (Rom 8:28). When circumstances occur that could potentially cause worry, we need to remember who is in control...God. He is always with us, living inside us. There is nothing that you go through without the Lord by your side to carry you through.

God reminds us that we have nothing to fear because He is always there. We do not need to be dismayed, or distressed, as the children of God. Through our faith in Him during difficult times He gives us strength and support.

Do you allow worry or anxiety to dominate your thoughts? Do you have a fear that may be overwhelming to you? Is there a situation in your life that seems too big for you to bear? Does an upcoming event cause you to worry?

Whatever may be causing you distress take comfort in knowing that God is there for you right now and He will continue to be there for you through the future. Bring your troubles to Him in prayer and ask Him to help you with any fears you may have. God can take away your worries and anxieties and He will never leave you.

### **Day 3: Doing Your Best**

*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;*

Colossian 3:23

The never ending 'To-do' list sits on the counters of many homes, outlined on the computer, in the notebook that rests on your desk, or demanded in email from a superior. Tasks can become daunting when someone feels overwhelmed. Many will take a list of tasks and do just enough to 'get by' before they finish. Others may procrastinate and put off until tomorrow what should have been done yesterday.

God gives us direction on how we are to complete anything that we have to work on whether it is the history essay, yard work, a presentation at work, or preparing the Sunday school lesson. He tells us that 'whatsoever' we do that it should be done 'heartily'. This doesn't mean that only things that we do for church or only things that we do for work. It means everything that we do.

There is another condition placed on our directive to completing something 'heartily' or doing our best. That condition is that whatever we do we should do it as if we were doing it for the Lord. When you do your best, the Lord is pleased. The exception to this would be when you are committing a sin. The Lord is never pleased by sin.

Our love for the Lord will give us a desire to do our best for Him. Others may see that love of Christ through the work that we do. The first testimony we have to others that are lost is how we live our lives. When a lost person sees Christ in you they believe that your faith is real and that your belief in God is real. They may not fully comprehend it but they know that there is something different about you.

If you performed your tasks to the point of 'getting by' what do you think others would think about your efforts? What about when you don't put any effort into a task at all? Do you think they would recognize your love for Christ? Do you think they would want to listen to you when you speak to them about their need for salvation?

The recognition of men is fleeting and passes quickly but the love of God for His children remains true throughout our lives. Is there something that you would like to do your best in to please the Lord? Pray and ask Him to help you with your task today.

### **Day 4: Authority**



*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

## Romans 13:1-2

God is in control of all aspects of our lives. He has placed people in positions of authority over us whether it is our boss at work, the police officers down the road, the teachers in your school, or even our President. Regardless of our personal opinion of a law or directive by a superior we have to obey their authority to be obedient unto the Lord (1 Pet 2:13).

There will be leaders that we do not agree with or that have created laws which we think are wrong. Some leaders may be tyrants or difficult while others are good natured. It is pleasing unto the Lord if we walk honestly and honor the position of the man, obedient to the laws we have been placed under. If we are directed by authority to commit a sin or oppose God, we are not required to comply but still must be subject to the authority placed over us.

It is the will of God that we submit ourselves to authority. Our obedience to God could not be disputed by people without Christ when we do as He has commanded (1 Pet 2:15). Through obedience we may find ourselves in a situation where we are grieved by authority and the laws that have been placed on our society. We still must remain honorable for the Lord's sake and do as He has commanded. How we react and act towards human authority is how we react and act towards God's authority. There is no difference.

There is a powerful way in which we can handle authority that is out of the will of God or mistreats its subjects. We can pray for those that are in authority (1 Tim 2:1-2). The Bible tells us to pray for those in authority so that we can lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

Have you been rebelling against a boss, a teacher, a pastor, your parents, a military officer, or a political figure? Rebellion can be open rebellion through actions or passive aggressive rebellion through inaction and disregarding the authority placed over you. Pray for the Lord to help you to submit unto the authority over you and pray for the leader(s) that are in your life.

## **Day 5: Sin**

*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:*

Psalms 66:18

Make no mistakes about it that God hates sin. There are always consequences to sin, one of which is that God will not hear our prayers if we do not repent of that sin.

This applies to lost people who are in need of salvation and to Christians who allow sin to take hold in their lives.

Is there a besetting sin in your life that you just cannot seem to let go of? Do you allow sin in your life when you think no one is watching? Have you been considering sin or imagining yourself participating in sinful behavior?

Some people are under the misconception that if the sin is not seen in the eyes of another man or woman then it is not a sin. Whether you are out of town away from the view of those that know you or sitting behind a computer screen in your home, you are not alone. God knows all and sees all. You cannot hide any sin from God!

What about the person who is considering sin or imagining it? God tells us that if we conceive of sin in our thoughts it is sin. Jesus makes that very clear to us in Matthew 5:28, "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." God knows our thoughts and intents. If we regard iniquity, or consider immoral acts/sin in our hearts, God will not hear us.

You can break free from sin by repenting of that sin and asking for God's forgiveness. Ask Him to help keep you away from the sin that you have been holding on to. Take time to examine yourself and what activities may be contributing to your desire to sin. There may be changes you could make in your daily living to help keep you from the temptation to sin. Remember that God always provides us a doorway to avoid the sin (1 Cor 10:13).

Read your Bible and build a firm foundation on Christ to give you the strength to turn away from sin. As you spend more time in the Word of God it will become easier for you over time. If you have a sin that is dominating your life, it is time to let Christ become the center of your life. Pray for His forgiveness asking for Him to help you and guide you throughout your Christian walk.

## **Day 6: Disappointment**

*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.*

Romans 8:28

Just about everyone has had some form of disappointment in their life. We may hope for something and then discover that it is not in God's plan for us and feel discouragement. Perhaps some aspect of your life has changed and you find yourself saddened. The job you wanted may not have come through or the home you wanted to purchase was beyond your financial means. Some couples pray for children but find that they are unable to conceive.

Regardless of the cause of the disappointment, God knows what is best for us. He has a purpose for not allowing what we thought we needed. Sometimes it is because there is something that is better for us. If we wait upon the Lord, continuing to keep

our focus on Christ, we often later discover the reason why he allowed the disappointment to come.

Many Christians will tell you about some point in time when they were disappointed only to discover the wonderful blessing God had already planned for them or the protection that God gave them as a result. There are some things we will not know the reasons for until we get to heaven. But God always does what is best for us. He tells us so in this beautiful verse in Romans.

God says that 'all things work together for good to them that love God'. That means that even our disappointments work toward something that is good for us. Perhaps God is teaching you how to come to Him when you feel disappointment or discouragement. He may just be waiting for you to ask Him to show you what you need to do in your life from this point forward.

If you are struggling with a disappointment, go to God in prayer and ask Him to help you. He has sent us a Comforter to help us through these difficult times. Remember that He already has a plan for you and has worked everything out to your good. Take joy in knowing that God is in control.

## **Day 7: Temptation**

*There hath 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 ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

1 Corinthians 10:13

Throughout your life you will be faced with temptations to sin. We are born with a sinful nature from the fall of Adam. Temptations do not come from God. They are brought into our life by Satan, the flesh (old sinful nature), and the world who would like nothing more than to see a Christian be disobedient.

God understands that we will be tempted and provides us a means of escape. He will not allow the devil to put any more temptation on us than we can handle. The Spirit within us can help us to resist the temptation to prevent us from falling into sin. We need to use caution in what we allow in our lives that could be a source of temptation.

It is important for us to be on guard in our lives for our own protection. Sin is disobedience and God hates sin. We have a choice of whether to take the means of escape or to allow the sin to enter into our life.

When you find that you are tempted by something immediately consider your means escaping the temptation. If it is something you are viewing on television, you can turn the television off. If you have a problem with gambling, don't go to places that have slot machines or video poker. For those that are tempted by alcohol, do not spend

time in a bar. Everyone knows what their weaknesses are and should take measures to protect themselves before temptation comes.

We need to remain accountable to God for our actions. There is no secret sin. He is always with you and knows if you commit a sin. Spend time in God's Word and in prayer with the Lord to help you build a firm foundation. A good spiritual foundation can give you the tools to keep you from temptation and sin.

Is there a sin that seems to have a strong hold in your life? Think about the ways in which you could make changes to reduce the possibility of being tempted by that sin. Go to God in prayer today asking forgiveness for any sin you have committed while asking him to help you to keep you from all temptation and sin.

## Day 8: Prayer

*Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

Matthew 21: 21-22

Never underestimate the power of prayer! There is nothing that is impossible to God. Our Lord can heal the sick and work situations out in our life that seem overwhelming to us. In fact, He already knows what you are going to pray for even before you pray. He's just waiting to hear from you.

When we have strong faith that God will answer our prayers and go to Him with certainty, if that prayer is within His will it will be answered. We will not have prayers answered that oppose God's commandments to us. It is important that we go to Him with the right motive. Earnestly seek His help or guidance with a willingness to accept whatever the Lord has planned for you. He knows our future and what will happen under all circumstances.

There was a woman that was sick from a disease in her blood. She had such a strong faith in Christ that she knew that if she merely touched His clothes she would be healed. Because of her strong faith when she reached out and touched Jesus' clothes, virtue went out of Him and she was healed (Matthew 9:20-22).

God takes notice of our petitions if we go to Him with faith. It is humbling when the Lord answers a prayer for us. We are reminded of how much we need Him, the strength we have through Him, and the love He has for us.

There will be times when our prayers are answered through God's silence. If a prayer appears to go unanswered it could be there is something else even better planned for you or that God is protecting you from something. The Lord knows what is good for us and what is not but He always works in our lives for our good (Romans 8:28).

Cast all doubt and fear aside going to the Father with your petitions today. Christ is our intercessor with the Father. Let your faith in Him guide you throughout the day and into your prayer life. Pray today for healing, direction in your job, guidance in your finances, and salvation for your enemies or loved ones.

## **Day 9: Gratitude**

*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

Colossians 3:17

Every day is the right day for giving thanks and praise to God. There is so much to be thankful for. Many things we often take for granted. We are commanded that everything we do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus. We are to do our very best because we love God and want to please Him. When we do our best joyfully, regardless of the task, with praise unto God others can see Christ through us. It becomes a living testimony of our faith in Him.

Whether you are at work, home, school or serving in the church this applies to you. Every task you complete you have done so with help from the Lord. He has granted you the ability to walk, to stand, to talk, to use your hands, to see or hear, or to think clearly. There are many people who are not fortunate enough to have the use of their eyes to even read the Bible or the use of their hands to hold a printed book.

God's love and care for us is so great that 'even the very hairs of your head are all numbered' (Luke 12:7). There is no aspect of our life that He does not have control over. Every blessing is from Him and every trial has been allowed to serve a purpose for our good.

In our fast-paced world it is easy to forget all that God has done for us. People around the world complain about their jobs, longing for vacations, or change. College kids bemoan tests at exam time. Marriages suffer through stress. We need to keep our eyes focused on Christ and all the good things that God has given us. Be thankful for the job and the help to make it through the stress. Be thankful for the ability to go to college as many cannot afford to attend. Be thankful for your spouse because they are walking through the valleys and mountains of life alongside you.

Think about this past week. Have you done your best for the Lord? What has the Lord done for you this week? Did He help you through a task? Did He provide for you or your family? What blessings have you received this week? Go to the Father and thank Him today for the wonderful things He has done for you or simply for providing you with another day.

## **Day 10: Courage**

*Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

### Deuteronomy 31:6

When sin entered into the life of man so did doubt and fear. God knew that there would be many who might struggle with this in their lives so he told us to “be strong and of a good courage” more than once in His Word. Whether you are a soldier on the battlefield or the silent prayer warrior praying for a loved one who is sick, you have nothing to fear if you are a child of God.

At the time that you received Christ as your Saviour you became His property. There is nothing that can happen to you that God does not allow for some purpose. He will never allow more in your life than you can handle.

Let your faith in Christ give you the strength and courage to get through the difficult times, to help you to turn away from sin, or to be bold enough to tell others about Jesus. Never forget that God is with you every step of the way. You are never alone because He lives inside you. The Lord may have to carry you through some difficulties but He will never fail you nor forsake you.

Jesus and his disciples were travelling by ship when the winds rose into a big storm tossing the ship about. The disciples became afraid while Jesus was sleeping. They woke Him to alert Him of the storm. The Lord was in control and the ship would not be lost but the men had become frightened. Jesus rebuked the winds and sea stopping the storm. He asked them why they were so fearful and if they had no faith (Mark 4:35-41).

There may be times in your life when you feel alone and scared. Perhaps you are the only Christian among thousands of lost people or you may have lost your way on a hike in the woods. Has a circumstance in your life made you feel weak in your faith? Are you facing a medical issue that seems daunting? Is an overwhelming trial leaving you with doubt? Have you lost your job and fear the current economy? Are you a soldier fighting on foreign soil? What do you need strength and courage to face today?

If you have accepted Christ as your Saviour, God is with you right now. Give that fear over to Him and let the Lord lead. God is mightier than any man or circumstances in which we find ourselves. Be strong and of good courage because the Lord has told us that He will never fail you or forsake you!

## **Day 11: Hope**

*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

Romans 15:4

Around the world people are facing uncertain times. We are moved by circumstances and the actions of others. In America many have lost their jobs or have loved ones fighting the war on terrorism. Cities have been devastated by tornados or forced flooding.

When tumultuous times arise in our life we need not despair. As born-again Christians we can have hope. The Bible tells us that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we may have hope. God's Word can be an anchor in the storm, a rock of strength when you feel weak, and a road map when you need direction in our life.

We have hope in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is made very clear to us that there will come a day when the Lord will return. He will call up His children in the air to be with Him forever (1 Thes 4:16-18). What a wonderful day that will be for those of us that have accepted Him! We do not know the day or the hour in which He will come (Mat 24:36, Mat 25:13, Mar 13:32) but we can have hope knowing that He will come for us. God has promised us eternal life through salvation. Through this promise we have hope of a wonderful life in heaven with our Lord (Tit 1:2, 3:7).

Inside the Bible there are many promises we have from God. The Bible tells us that God cannot lie (Tit 1:2). As we read the Scriptures and see those promises we can have faith in the fact that God's Word is true. This can bring you peace, joy, comfort, strength, and confidence to boldly proclaim the name of Jesus.

Is there something in your life that you are allowing to rob you of your joy or peace? Are you stressing over circumstances or feeling despair from your present situation? God can help you to have hope. Spend time reading His Word today. Go to Him in prayer to help you to overcome your feelings and trust in the Holy Spirit to lead you and guide you through your Christian life.

## **Day 12: Joy**

*This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

Psalms 118:24

As you wake each morning what are your first thoughts of the day? Do you stress about getting ready for work? Is your focus on preparing the kids for school? Where does your focus lie and what attitude do you have throughout the day?

There are so many blessings that we often lose sight of as we go about our daily lives. Do you have a roof over your head? Is there food on your table? Do you have clothes to wear? God's provision for our physical and mental well-being is one way He shows His love towards us. If there is no other blessing you can find in your day then you can find joy in knowing that you are under God's care.

Take a moment to think about the world around you. We can see God's creation everywhere we turn. Whether you live on a mountain top with expansive views, near the sea shore, or in a big city you can find something that God has created. Seeing

the care He has taken in that creation we can know that if He has taken the time to meet the needs of nature around you then He will also meet ours.

The greatest joy in the life of a Christian comes from the Lord. We can rejoice because we know that we have a home waiting for us in heaven where we will be forever with the Lord. There we will not experience the pains and sorrows of this world. The Holy Spirit living within you helps you to learn to live a Godly life for Christ which can keep you from some of the hardships and despair that arises from sin. As a saved child of God all of your past, present, and future sins have been forgiven.

When difficult times arise or the stresses of life have you feeling weary think of the things that God has done for you. Remember all of the blessings whether they be small or grand. Keep your eyes focused on Christ making time each day to spend with the Lord through prayer or Bible reading.

## **Day 13: Patience**

*Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

James 1:3-4

Product marketing has made millions of dollars off of our desire to have something now. This instant gratification often is a temporary feeling until we turn our attentions to something else that we 'want' or 'think' that we need.

Many people try to turn this same principle towards prayer. When they ask God for something they become disappointed if the prayer is not answered immediately. Often this happens when someone is faced with a trial. That trial could be persecution, grief, health, job, marital, or trouble with our children. We want the Lord to fix things instantly. We become impatient.

Impatience can lead to anger and bitterness if we let it. It can turn our sights away from God and inhibit our witnessing to others. Jesus had an endless supply of patience. We should learn from His example. When we witness to the lost we often find our patience running thin if we are treated poorly in return, see rebellion in a person's life, or are faced with ungodly behavior. We need to remember that their actions are due to the sinful nature we were all born with. It is not up to us to change their behavior; only to present the gospel to them. God is the one that works in their hearts if they are seeking Him.

Whether you are praying for salvation of a loved one, direction on a big decision you need to make, or asking for help there may be times when waiting on the Lord teaches us patience. Often when we look back at circumstances where we did not receive what we 'thought' we should have or in the 'time' we expected then we discover that it was in our best interest to wait. God is already working in your life on the things you have need of. God works in our lives for our good so we need to consider waiting itself a blessing.



When trials come do you go to the Lord in prayer or try to handle it alone? Do you pray about it and get frustrated when the prayer isn't answered immediately or is answered in a way other than what you had hoped for? Trust in the Lord's timing and ask Him to help you to learn to be patient.

## **Day 14: Love**

*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*

1 John 4:18

Everyone has a desire to be loved by someone. What many people do not realize is that they are already loved beyond our comprehension. God loved us so much that He sent the Son of God to be a sacrifice for our sin (John 3:16). Since God the Father and God the Son are one He chose willingly to suffer for us.

When you repented of your sin and accepted the Lord Jesus as your Saviour a kinship was formed between you and Christ. Our love for the Saviour is greater than any other love we have. He comes before a spouse, a parent, a child, or even a friend. To put this into perspective, when we read the book of Ephesians we can see that God compares the church (born-again Christians) to Christ as a wife to her husband (Eph 5:21-33, Rev 21:9).

In the world today we have marriages that suffer trouble or do not last. Teens discover their first love and often those relationships are fleeting. Broken hearts can arise from the actions of one or many.

God's love for us is unending and will never change. What a wonderful feeling it is to know that you are cared for with such a perfect love! This relationship you have with the Lord can help you through any struggle you may face. Knowing He is there with you and will never leave you can be a great encouragement.

What about the lost? Without salvation the lost person is separated from God due to sin. When trouble comes they will not have that same peace that Christians have. They fear the outcome whether they would admit it openly to another or not. That fear is always there. Only salvation can bring true peace and perfect love.

Are you heartbroken due to a recent breakup or troubled marriage? Do you feel lonely? Are you placing your hopes and dreams all on an earthly relationship? Is there something in your life that you are facing that has caused you to be frightened? Christian, there is comfort in knowing that you are Christ's and that the Lord will always love you.

## **Day 15: Meekness**

*Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.*

### Psalms 25:8-10

From an early age in our society we are taught from television, books, news media, and well-meaning relatives that you must always have the upper hand or your will be seen as weak. You may have been told that you cannot be seen as an effective worker, parent, teen or soldier if you do not express yourself with pride and forcefulness.

The Bible teaches something entirely different. God says that one of the characteristics we should have is meekness. What does it mean to be meek? Meekness is a gentleness or kindness seen in a person's character. It can be shown through humility, patience, and restraint. A meek man has greater strength than the prideful man. God tells us that Moses was a meek man and that he was above all men that were upon the face of the earth (Num 12:3).

Christians develop a different attitude towards others and circumstances. There is an understanding of God's view of the lost and a Godly sorrow for their state. When we exercise patience with others and treat them with kindness God is pleased. God does not approve of pride in the life of a believer and there are consequences to pride (Prov 16:18).

Through Bible reading/study and prayer a Christian develops a stronger foundation to use a guideline for their lives. As you grow in your Christian life you seek humility and gentleness when dealing with the world. God has clearly stated that He will guide the meek and teach them.

When you are talking to your peers at work or at school do you boast of your own accomplishments? Do you put all your faith in your own knowledge and little in God's wisdom? Be honest with yourself about whether pride is in the forefront of your actions. Ask the Lord to help you to be humble and meek.

When you see someone suffering do you offer your support or pray for them? If someone tries to make you angry, criticizes you or picks on you do you show restraint and avoid further confrontation? When you are witnessing to the lost do you talk to them with a gentle spirit and kindness? Ask the Lord to give you the strength to continue to be humble, gentle, and kind.

## **Day 16: Honesty**

*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.*

## 1 Peter 2:12

Little children know instinctively from a young age how to lie in speech and in action (pretending they did not do something). This starts early as a toddler. This is because we were born with sin through the blood passed down from Adam.

After your sins are forgiven in God's eyes you are directed to be honest in all that you do. The verse in 1 Peter speaks of your 'conversation'. In this case it means your Christian walk both in speech and deed. Throughout your life you may be faced with people who try to set a snare for you or prove your faith to be wrong by bringing false witness against you. They may say you did something when you did not or lie to someone else about you.

The truth will always come to light and God will be glorified through your faith and obedience. Others will be able to see Christ in you when you hold yourself to this standard and maintain your integrity. Our actions are often the first form of witnessing to people in need of salvation.

If your lost friends or family try to tempt you to do something that is against the will of God you may be tempted by sin. When these times arise try to walk away from the peer pressure and stand up for what is honest and good in the sight of God. Do not allow yourself to compromise on God's principles.

We need to hold ourselves to these standards even when we think that no one is watching. Remember that God is always watching. The Holy Spirit lives within you and will know. For instance, a teen goes to the store to buy some snacks and the bill seemed smaller than usual. He checks the receipt and sees that the cashier forgot to ring up a bag of potato chips. Now he has a decision to make. Does he take the bag of chips thinking the store won't miss the two dollars anyway? Or does he walk back inside to show them the error and pay for the chips? The only honest decision to make is to go back inside to pay. It is possible that the cashier or the people in line have been seeking Christ or have a preconceived notion that Christians are phony. The teen's actions would glory God to others. Walk honestly in the sight of all men for it is pleasing unto the Lord.

## Day 17: God's Provision

*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:19

In these difficult financial times people have been facing the loss of a job, trouble paying their mortgages, high interest rates on debts, and troubled by uncertain times. As a born-again child of God you have no need to worry about how your needs will be met. God tells us in His Word that He will supply all of our needs.

Often we may marvel at how those needs are supplied. I have seen so many people provided for when they least expected it. Meals have been brought to families in

need without them asking for food. Some have received checks in the mail that they did not expect. Remarkably the check would be almost exactly the amount that was needed to pay an important bill. There are times when it may feel like a need is not being met but the Lord already has something in place to meet your need. It is during these times that you must have faith knowing that God's Word is true.

There once was a woman on the side of the road whose vehicle had run out of gas. She had no money and needed to get home to her children. This woman did not know Christ. A born-again couple stopped to check on her. They bought a couple gallons of gas and even returned to her with food and drink since they did not know how long she had been stranded. The woman cried uncontrollably because no one had stopped to help her for a few hours. It was a wonderful opportunity for the Christian couple to show some charity and talk with the woman about her need for Christ.

It is that same Christian charity that moves many of us to help another believer. The Holy Spirit living within you may give you a strong feeling to help another Christian. You should follow His leading because you never know what sort of a blessing you could be to that person. There are so many ways that God could supply your need. If He provides for you in unexpected ways, openly praise the working of the Lord in your life. It can be of encouragement to others or a witness to the lost.

Are you fretting over a need in your life that you are uncertain how it will be met? Go to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to provide for that need. Take comfort in knowing that He said He will supply all your need.

## **Day 18: Forgiveness**

*And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.*

Mark 11:25-26 (Words of Jesus)

When you repented of your sin and asked for God to forgive you, He forgave you for all of your sins in the past and any you would commit in the future. It did not matter what sins you committed in your life, God was willing to forgive you. He knew your heart and that you had a genuine sorrow for your sin.

There was only ever one perfect person, Jesus Christ. We are not perfect and sometimes people say things or do things to you that can cause hurt or anger. We have to remember that the other person is not perfect either. Whether they meant to do the things they did or said does not matter. They may not see that they have done something wrong.

If the person is another Christian we are directed to speak to them to let them know that we were offended or hurt by their actions (Mat 18:15-17). If they do not listen we are to go to that person again with other Christians. After that point you are to go to

the pastor of your church. God tells us that if they still do not hear then we are to let them be as 'an heathen man'. You still have to forgive them for their actions.

What about the lost person that falsely accuses you, persecutes you, or commits some wrong against you? You need to look at that person through the eyes of God. They need Christ just like you did. On the cross Jesus made a request of God concerning His persecutors, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."(Luke 23:34) They do not understand the impact of their action and do not realize what they are doing is wrong in the eyes of God. We have to forgive them. Forgiveness does not mean that we need to embrace the person who persecuted us by allowing them in our life to continue the persecution. It only means that we understand 'they know not what they do'.

God tells us that if we do not forgive that He will not forgive us. As a Christian this means that your prayers will be hindered. If you are struggling to forgive someone ask for God to help you. He can give you the strength and understanding you need to forgive so that you can grow closer to the Lord.

## **Day 19: Wisdom**

*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

James 1:5

What is wisdom? Is wisdom the same as knowledge? How can you know if you have wisdom?

To have wisdom is to know what God thinks about something. It means to know the truth and what is right to God. Knowledge is not the same as wisdom. When you are knowledgeable you know facts or are familiar with a subject. Knowledge without wisdom is dangerous because just knowing facts does not help you to discern what is right to God. This could lead you in a wrong direction or you could be swayed by various doctrines that do not align with God's Word.

The Bible tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7). It goes on further to tell us that fools (meaning the lost) despise wisdom and instruction. As a new Christian you should read your Bible and participate in studies at church to gain knowledge of what the Scriptures say. God's Word also tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10). As we learn what God says we should follow through by doing as we are told, we will begin to have wisdom to discern what is right or wrong to God.

James 1:5 tells us that if we lack wisdom we ask God to give us wisdom. This verse tells us that God will give us wisdom generously and not hold us back from knowing what He thinks about things. We will receive the wisdom we ask for.

How can you know if you lack wisdom? If you talk to any Christian about whether they are still gaining wisdom or learning their answer will be 'yes'. You will continue

to learn from God throughout your life as you read His Word. The Holy Spirit may reveal to you what a meaning of a verse is that applies to your circumstances one day while on another day you may discover that it can apply to a different situation.

We can all benefit from asking for more wisdom from God. Before you read your Bible today and every day ask God to give you wisdom from the knowledge that you gain through His Word.

## Day 20: Faith

*And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*

Matthew 17:20

There once was a young boy who had heard this verse in Sunday school. He did not know about the concept of parables and believed it to mean that if he prayed the mountain he lived on would move. So, the young boy prayed and prayed but hence the mountain did not move.

Jesus was talking to his disciples who had been relying on their own power to cast a devil out of a child. The disciples asked Jesus why they were unable to cast out the devil. Jesus spoke to them this parable about the grain of mustard seed to show them that they only needed a small amount of faith in Him to have made the devil leave the child.

This parable applies to us as well. When we put our trust and faith in God anything is possible for Him. It is not the faith alone that makes it possible. God produces the results because of our faith in Him. We cannot simply will something to happen and say I have faith that 'I' can make this happen. It can only come through trust in the Lord.

*But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. – Matthew 19:26*

When we ask God for something and have faith in Him to answer our prayer. We have to follow Jesus' example in the garden of Gethsemane in His prayer to the Father.

*...O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. - Matthew 26:39*

We have to trust that God knows what is best for us and that He will work for our good (Rom 8:28). There may be times when our prayers are not answered in the way we hoped yet our faith in Him was unwavering. Jesus said to let God's will be done and so should we.

How can we learn to have a greater faith in God? To strengthen your faith spend time with God, learn about God in His Word, read your Bible daily reflecting on His Word, and spend time with Him in prayer.

## **Day 21: Peace**

*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

John 14:27 (Words of Jesus)

John 14:27 has a wonderful promise that we have from the Lord. Jesus tells us that He is giving to Christians His peace. When God the Son was here in the flesh He lived peaceably with others. Even when He was persecuted Jesus did not get troubled or afraid. Christ is the perfect model for us when we examine our lives.

Many people express a sense of peace from the moment they accepted Christ as their Saviour. This is especially true of those that are saved later in life. Although the world is moved by circumstances which cause uncertainty, when troubles arise a believer's faith in Christ brings a sense of security even when troubles arise.

When wars come many people begin to fear that their loved ones could be lost in the fighting or called to go overseas. To a Christian soldier there is no place for fear. We have a home in heaven and can have peace knowing that regardless of what happens we will one day be home with the Lord. As a mother of a West Point cadet, I have been asked many times why I would allow my son to go to war. We have peace knowing that our son has accepted Christ and in God's care at all times.

There is peace and harmony within a home of believers that places Christ first in their lives. Marriages can withstand trials and struggles. Children obey God and their parents. Christ's peace is with them even during times of trouble. Even if all family members are not saved, you will have peace during the difficult times. Pray for the salvation of your loved one(s) and live your life for Christ so that they can see Jesus in you.

Being among other believers is very rewarding. There is a sense of contentment, caring, and joy knowing that Christ is among you. Together you can face any storm of life that comes your way.

Are you holding on to fear or worry over something in your life? Do you feel discontent or anxious? Spend time with the Lord in prayer. Let Him comfort you and strengthen you today. The peace of Christ can carry you through.

## **Day 22: Anger**

*Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

## Ephesians 4:26

One of the most damaging emotions that people can have is anger. Anger can cause people to say things they wish they could take back, to act in ways that are uncharacteristic to them, and in the worst of cases to physically harm another person or animal. When someone remains angry over long periods of time it can lead to bitterness and resentment.

When we are saved the Bible does not say that it will take away the ability to be angry. There will be times when we become angry because of something someone said or did. We could become angry at circumstances or angry at objects when they don't work as intended.

We are instructed 'be ye angry, and sin not'. Anger cannot become an excuse for our actions. Think about some of the ways that you handled anger before you accepted Christ. Did you turn to alcohol to help you cope? Was your immediate reaction to return 'an eye for an eye'? Were your words filled with profanity and threats? Did you get violent or threaten violence? These are all responses that you should refrain from making when faced with anger.

We have to try to use patience and restraint when dealing with others that may have caused us to be angry. If you feel the urge to act in an ungodly manner as a result of anger you need to go to God in prayer asking for His help through the situation. Stop yourself before you react. Remember that God hates sin and as Christians we have a natural desire to please Him.

Anger is a type of emotion that can easily consume a person's thoughts and actions. If we hold on to the emotion unwilling to let it go it could turn to bitterness. God instructs us 'let not the sun go down on your wrath' for this reason. He knows that if you carry this anger with you for long periods of time that it could be damaging to you.

Is there some circumstance or person who easily angers you? Do you find yourself getting angry at the smallest of things? As you spend more time with God you will have greater strength to deal with these situations. Go to Him in prayer today and ask him to remove the anger from your heart. Keep your eyes focused on Christ and off the current crisis.

## Day 23: Gentleness

*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men...*

### 2 Timothy 2:24

The Bible gives us direction on how we are to treat others. In 2 Timothy a Christian is told to be gentle with all men. When you show others a genuine kindness it is pleasing unto the Lord. There may be people whose actions make it difficult for you to be considerate to them. During those times we need to ask God to help us to be kind.



Christians have different ways in which they talk to the lost about Christ. When you talk to someone about Christ do you argue with them about their beliefs? Do you ask them what their religious beliefs in order to debate religion? Or do you talk to them in a non-threatening tone about what Christ has done for you?

When you treat others with kindness they can see Christ in you. Someone who is seeking Christ is more likely to listen to a believer that approaches them in a gentle manner than one who is harsh or rude. Arguing with someone over faith or debating religious matters with someone will drive them further away.

How do you treat others when you are not witnessing to them? Do you make fun of the person in line ahead of you? When a friend is hurting do you take the time to see how you can help or do you ignore them because it would take from your time?

Regardless of the situation we must try to be gentle towards all men. Your kindness can be of tremendous encouragement to someone who is struggling or in pain. Helping someone in need can be a great blessing to both of you.

We need to be gentle with others even when they are not in front of us. Speaking poorly and making fun of someone in the room does not show patience and kindness. This type of behavior can hurt your credibility to those near you who know you are a Christian. It can also be emotionally damaging to the one you were making fun of.

Take a moment to think about how you treat others. Do you show them genuine kindness, indifference, or annoyance? If you are not being kind to others, ask the Lord today to help you learn to be gentle towards all men.

## **Day 24: Trust**

*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Proverbs 3:5-6

Throughout your Christian life you will be faced with times where you need to lean on Christ and trust in Him. You could be facing a major medical trial uncertain of the outcome. Perhaps you are wondering where your next meal will come from. Maybe you've been laid off your job uncertain of your future.

When trials come we need to go to the Father in prayer asking for His guidance and help through the uncertain time. We know that with God all things are possible (Mat 19:26). It is important that we consult the Lord about any major decisions we have to make instead of trying to figure things out on our own. God knows what is best for us and can see what kind of impact a decision will have on us and others.

Seeking God's direction for our lives can be a difficult thing to do. We have a tendency to want to make our will appear to be God's will. This often happens when

there is no clear direction from the Lord. At these times you need to trust in the Lord and wait patiently on Him. There may be times you have to step out in faith and trust that the Lord will direct your steps (James 2:20).

There will be other times when you feel that you are following the will of the Lord but everything is not working out perfectly. Christians often expect that things will fall perfectly in line when they are walking in the will of God. While you may experience this from time to time it will not always be the case. Times like this may create doubt in the heart of a believer. They may doubt whether they understood what the Lord meant for them to do and this can create fear. Sometimes the believer will then decide they should not be where they are and that the Lord is directing them somewhere else. It is the fear response to run from a situation that drives the Christian to make a rash decision. Instead, we need to resist the urge to create our own roadmap and trust completely in the Lord.

Where do you place your trust, in God or in yourself? Spend time in the Scriptures and go to God in prayer trusting in His perfect will for your life.

## **Day 25: Mercy**

*But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.*

Luke 6:35-36 (Words of Jesus)

One of the most difficult things for a Christian to do is to be merciful to their enemies. The natural inclination is to return in like kind to the person who has done something wrong to you. The reaction of the lost is to retaliate either through word or deed. We've been told to love our enemies.

How can you love an enemy? You can begin by having compassion for their condition in God's eyes. We are all sinners to God until we repent and accept Christ. When we were lost we were separated from God because of sin. Your enemy's actions are ultimately caused from sin. Pray for God to bring a witness into their life to share the gospel with them. Be kind to your enemy even when they are unkind to you. Let them see Christ in you but don't expect for any kindness in return.

Look to God as a model for your actions. We know that He was merciful with us when we were sinners. We should follow the Lord's example and show compassion to our enemies.

*But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: - Ephesians 2:4-6*

If we show kindness towards our enemies when they are within our power we never know what type of impact that may have on them in the future. God can bring to remembrance our mercy if our enemies begin to seek the Lord.

Is there someone that has been persecuting you, bringing false accusations against you, or treating you harshly? Pray for them today and treat them with kindness whenever they cross your path. God will reward you for the mercy you show towards your enemy.

## **Day 26: Sickness**

*Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up;...*

James 5:14-15

Church prayer lists are filled with the names of people in need of prayer for different health troubles. When Adam and Eve were in the garden there was no sickness. Health problems are one result of sin from Adam's fall in the garden.

God has provided us many tools to help us to deal with sickness. He has provided us with doctors, lab equipment, hospitals, medical procedures, herbal remedies, and prescription medications. There are times when some Christians face a disease that has confounded doctors and traditional medicine does not work. The Lord provides us with direction in how to handle these circumstances.

We are told in James 5:14-15 to go to the elders of the church for prayer and anointing with oil. This would be something a person would need to speak to their pastor about. Because God has provided us many resources to assist us with health issues we should exhaust all other options. Often these cases are when the prognosis is not good and there are no options for healing.

Prayer is a powerful thing and you should always pray for those you know who are sick including yourself. There may be times when God does not answer prayers for healing. I knew a young woman with stage iv Inflammatory Breast Cancer who was anointed with oil and prayed over six times. She did receive healing but in the form of being brought home to be with the Lord. In Heaven she is no longer sick. We must try to remember in these cases that God always works in our lives for our good.

There may be other times when someone suffers from a chronic illness that God does not heal. Although the Lord does not cause disease and sickness, He may allow it in our lives to serve a purpose. Perhaps the way that the illness is handled by the Christian is a testimony to others of the believer's faith in Christ. If you are ever faced with a chronic illness or a disease that is unaffected by the tools God has provided us, go to Him in prayer to seek His healing and his direction. Continue to pray and have faith that God is working in your life today. Pray for someone you love that is sick today.

## Day 27: Giving

*But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:*

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

When you are in church there will be a time when the offering plate is passed through the pews. God gives us direction on our Christian giving, both financially and through deed. Churches are run solely through charitable giving. In the book of Malachi God tells that we need to tithe, or give to the church, to provide for the church's needs. He tells us that we will be rewarded for our faithful giving.

*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. - Malachi 3:10*

The support that we give to the church can also be used to send missionaries throughout the world to spread the gospel. They would be unable to perform the Lord's work in other countries without a church's support.

There is another form of Christian giving that pleases the Lord. This is personal giving to someone in need. It may be a giving of your time, food, or financial resources. This includes giving to the poor or those that have fallen upon hard times. God tells us that when we give to someone in need it is the same as giving to the Lord.

*And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. - Matthew 25:40*

In 2 Corinthians, we see that there is a condition placed on our giving. We are to give willingly and not because we feel like we have to. The Lord tells that we will lack for nothing if we cheerfully give. After you have found a church home, pray for the Lord to direct you on how you should tithe and how you can also give of your time to serve the church.

## Day 28: Christian Fellowship

*And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is....*

## Hebrews 10:24-25

These verses in the book of Hebrews tell us that it is important for us to be in church. Why is it so important for us to gather together in church? The obvious answer is so that we can be instructed on Biblical truths through the preaching of God's Word. Church provides us other opportunities to study the Scriptures through Sunday school classes or visiting speakers to church events.

Another important reason to be in church is for fellowship with other believers. Together we help to carry each other's burdens. There may be times when we hear of someone at church that has a need which we may be able to meet. Prayer meetings are a time for people to bring prayer needs to the church. These are important to attend so that you can pray one for another during the week.

Occasionally churches will have a special supper or get-together. These are great ways to get to know your church family. Having a church family can be very fulfilling. Together you can support each other through encouragement and kindness.

Being with a group of other believers you will hear many people praise the Lord's as He works in their lives or discuss spiritual matters. The Bible tells us that where two or three are gathered in His name that He is there with them.

*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* - Matthew 18:20

Whether you spend time with other Christians in or out of church this verse in Matthew still applies.

There is a kinship that develops between believers. You will have a desire to spend time with other Christians and to be of help to others. Are you avoiding going to church or fellowshiping with other believers? If you are, you could be missing out on a great blessing that God has already provided for you. You could also be missing out on an opportunity to be a blessing to someone else. Pray for the Lord to help you find a church home and for Him to bring other believers into your life.

## Day 29: Heaven

*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

John 14:1-3 (Words of Jesus)

One of the most wonderful promises we have is that we have an eternal place in heaven. We can look forward to that day when we will be forever with the Lord.

What is heaven like? Many people wonder and marvel at the thought of what heaven could be like. Through our faith and love of Christ we can hold on to the verse above knowing that the Lord has prepared a special place for you. We can imagine great mansions lining streets of gold because that is something that we understand from our earthly ideology. But the apostle Paul tells us that the Spirit revealed that we could not possibly begin to imagine all the wonderful aspects of heaven. It is beyond our comprehension.

*But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. – 1 Corinthian 2:9*

Anyone who has received Christ as their Saviour will have a desire to be with Him and worship Him. The Bible tells us that when we are in heaven we will forever be with him. What a wonderful time that will be!

We need not fear our final days here on earth. The home God has prepared for us is a place where we will be changed for the better. There will no longer be pain and sorrow.

*And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. – Revelation 21:3-4*

Have faith and hope in the future. No matter what trials come your way in this life we know that our time here is only temporary. The eternity that awaits us is wonderful, peaceful, and fulfilling.

## **Day 30: Spiritual Growth**

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

2 Timothy 2:15

As you begin your new Christian life there is one thing that is of the utmost importance for you to do. You need to study God's Word! There is no exception to this directive by God. Knowledge of God's Word can keep you from trouble, encourage you, guide you, bring you peace and joy while giving you the tools you need to live a godly life and be an effective witness to the lost.

Once you have found a church home get involved in Sunday school to have a weekly group study of God's Word. If you are the head of your household begin a regularly scheduled Bible reading time with your family whether they are saved or lost. Pray before you read for God to reveal things to you. Read your Bible and think about the passages instead of placing the Bible aside.

When you have a greater understanding of God's Word you will begin to see how various passages apply to your life and know what God would have you to do in those situations. You will also be able to recognize what is or is not the truth when you hear or read religious material.

Knowledge of God's Word is very important for witnessing to others about their need for salvation. You will be able to answer questions they may have based off of their preconceived notions or learned beliefs.

Understanding the Bible does not require that you obtain a doctorate degree. Some Christians choose to get involved in Biblical studies due to a calling from God to work in a specific ministry or for a personal desire to dig deeper into the Bible. It is not required for you to enroll in these courses to learn the Scriptures. As a born-again child of God, you have the Holy Spirit living within you who helps you to understand passages.

Commit yourself to a time for daily Bible reading. It only takes 21 days to form a habit. You will find this habit to be a blessing to your life.



## Appendices

### Why We Use the King James Version

*For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

Revelation 22:18-19

In 1611, the first English Bible was printed. It was called the King James Version also referred to as the Authorized Version. This preservation of the Bible was the result of a thorough translation and review of the original texts. It took several years for this to be completed.

We believe that the KJV Authorized Version from 1611 is God's Word in English. We believe that it is not in need of updating or in need of changing. In fact, we believe that God explicitly forbids His Word to be changed as seen in the passage above from Revelation 22:18-19.

Many people believe that the Old English words are too difficult to understand so they gravitate to the New International Version. These versions created and changed by man can lead someone astray quickly. Words have been omitted or changed. In some Bible versions, entire portions of Scripture have been completely removed. This can cause a Christian to stumble and disobey God.

Some versions omit our need for repentance in order to be saved and our need for Christ to cover our sins. We will look a couple of verse comparisons in a moment.

The King James Version is the only version in which you can freely copy verses to use in any text. There is no copyright infringement by sharing God's Word.

How can we know that the King James Version is the inspired Word of God? Because God tells us that all Scripture was given by Him.

*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 furnished unto all good works. – 2 Timothy 3:16-17*



This means that every book of the Bible was written because of the inspiration of God. These books are not the work of man but the new translations are. The new translations have been changed by men of today.

***But God's Word is not in need of changing:***

*The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. – Psalms 12:6-7*

If God's words are pure, why do they need to be changed? Many people have the false assumption that only the Old English speech has been changed and that it still remains intact. Let's look at how things have been changed.

**A Comparison of John 6:47**

In the KJV, we look up John 6:47. It is words spoken by Jesus Christ. The verse reads:

***Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.***

We see that a requirement for salvation and everlasting life is that we believe in Christ. Now, let's see what the other translations say.

New International Version:

Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life.

There is NO mention of Jesus.

New American Standard Bible:

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.

There is NO mention of Jesus.

New Living Translation:

I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life.

There is NO mention of Jesus.

English Standard Version:

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.

There is NO mention of Jesus.

New King James Version:

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.

This is close and includes Jesus but adds a footnote indicating that text omits "in Me". This can create doubt in the need for Jesus.

### New Century Version:

I tell you the truth, whoever believes has eternal life.

There is NO mention of Jesus.

### God's Word Translation:

I can guarantee this truth: Every believer has eternal life.

There is NO mention of Jesus as a condition for salvation.

### American Standard Version:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life.

There is NO mention of Jesus.

### Holman Christian Standard Bible:

I assure you: Anyone who believes has eternal life.

There is NO mention of Jesus. As an after-thought, they add a footnote saying other messages add "in Me".

## **Omission of Matthew 18:11**

Let's take another look at another verse in the Bible that tells us that Jesus has come to save the lost. This verse is also the words of Jesus:

***For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.***

Some of the new translations completely remove this verse including the New International Version (NIV) and the New Living Translation (NLT).

## **Online Resource for Research**

You can view verse comparison charts online and learn more about versions that have completely omitted passages of Scripture or words in Scripture from the new translations of man by visiting the King James Bible page online at:

<http://www.av1611.com/>

## **His Word is True**

I believe that God's Word is true, complete, and needs no correction. It endureth forever.

*Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.* – Psalms 119:160

I heed to the warning from God in the book of Revelation regarding the changing of His Word. My family and I will continue to follow God's direction and believe on Him.

*...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* – Joshua 24:15



## **A Bible Tract**

The following Bible tract has been written for you by Walter McRae. It can be freely distributed to anyone and cannot be sold. You may copy the text below and print it on a paper. You may give the paper to anyone to share the gospel with them. You may not change the text or claim it for your own.

### **What is “salvation”?**

When God created Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden He created them as sinless human beings (Gen 1:27). Since they were without sin they had full and unrestricted access and communion with God (Gen. 3:8). When Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil they sinned by disobeying God’s explicit command to not eat the fruit of that tree (Gen. 3:11). The fact that Adam and Eve had sinned changed their very nature (Gen. 3:22) and God ordained that they should die as a result (Gen. 3:19).

The curse of sin is the cause of both the death of the physical body (Gen 3:19, 22) and of the soul going to Hell after the death of the physical body – known as the “second death” in the Bible (Rev. 21:8). The curse of sin was passed on from Adam and Eve to all of humanity through natural child birth (Rom. 5:12).

Salvation is God’s plan to remove the curse of sin and re-establish communion between an individual and Himself (2Cor. 5:18). This was accomplished when Jesus, the Son of God, suffered death on the cross to pay the penalty of your sin for you (Rom. 3:23 - 26). In effect, Jesus suffered spiritual death in your stead (Rom. 5:8, 9 & 2Cor. 5:21). Salvation is offered as a free gift to anyone willing to accept it (Rom. 3:24).

### **Why do I need salvation?**

Since you are a descendant of Adam and Eve you were born into sin as a result of spiritual heredity (Rom. 5:12). You commit sin in your life both willfully and instinctively (Rom. 7:15 - 25). As a result of your sinful condition you are fundamentally separated from God, whose perfect and holy nature cannot abide sin (Isa. 59:2). You need the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ to reconcile yourself to God so that you will spend eternity with Him in Heaven rather than spend eternity separated from Him in Hell (Rom. 6:23). Also, the gift of salvation affords you access to all of the graces of God in order to live a full, rich, and meaningful life (Rom. 5:1 - 5). Once you have been saved all sins - past, present, and future – are covered under the blood of Christ and are completely “paid” for in the eyes of God (Rom. 3:24 - 26).

### **How do I receive salvation?**

Salvation is a free gift offered to you by Jesus Christ. In order to receive this gift you must first acknowledge to God that you realize you are a sinner; that you have willfully sinned against God (Rom. 3:23). Then you must repent of this sinful state. Repentance means that you are genuinely sorry that you have sinned against God, that you reject those sins and desire to be reconciled to God more than anything else (2Cor. 7:10). Then ask Jesus to take away your sins and invite Him into your heart as your new Lord and Saviour (Rom. 10:9 - 13).

### **How do I know that I am saved?**

If you have been saved then you have the Holy Spirit living inside you. The Bible says that you are a “new creature” (2Cor. 5:17) and this means that you will think and act differently than you did before you were saved. Here is a list of things that indicate you have truly been saved:

Though you will still sin your attitude toward sin is completely different than before. You will be convicted (feel very guilty) of sin and will make efforts to avoid anything that would displease God (Rom. 7:14 – 25 & 1Jn. 2:6).

You will have a love for fellow Christians and feel a bond to them. You will enjoy being around them and fellowshiping with them (1Jn. 2:9 – 11 & 1Jn. 3:14 - 17).

You will love the things of God. The Bible, the church, the old hymns and spiritual songs will be held in high regard by you. You will love the things which God loves and hate that which God hates (Mat. 6:24 & 1Cor. 8:3).

Regardless of your past personality or character you will begin to exhibit the fruits of the Spirit of God as listed in Gal. 5:22, 23; love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

If you “backslide” and begin to stray back into your old ways and habits, forgetting about God and ignoring His warnings, then God will chastise you if you have truly been saved (Heb. 12:5 - 11). If you are able to willfully sin indefinitely without chastisement then you will need to examine yourself; your salvation is in grave doubt.

The Spirit of God will testify to your spirit that you are a child of God (Rom. 8:16).

These are just some of the indications of salvation. According to the Bible it is expedient that you occasionally examine yourself and your life to evaluate that the salvation you claim is, in fact, the real thing (2Cor. 13:5).



## About the Author



Kimberly McRae was born on February 26, 1970, in Hartford, Connecticut. She made her newspaper debut that same day when her father, a local college basketball star, was seen giving the peace sign as he first received the news of her birth during the half time announcement.

Kimberly's writing career took flight when she became a journalist for her high school newspaper. This experience opened her eyes up to a love of writing. She often spent time writing poems during her youth. For several years, she put her love of writing aside to develop her analytic and technical abilities while working with computers and electronics.

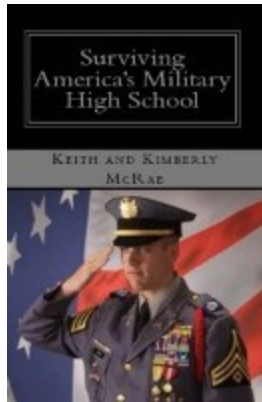
On August 31, 1998, Kimberly knew beyond a shadow a doubt that Christ died on the cross for her sins. She repented of that sin and accepted the Lord Jesus as her Saviour.

In 2001, Kimberly returned to her true love of writing and began working on her first novel which has not been published. Since that time she has begun work on a few different writing projects including screenplays, short stories, and additional novels.

All of her writing works would take a back seat as God began to lay a burden on her heart to write a novel about a young girl in Uganda. The book titled *Captive* would prove to be the most difficult work of fiction for her to write because of the emotional nature of the book which is based on current events. It is still a work in progress.

God placed another burden on Kimberly's heart to write Christian non-fiction. With each written work she diligently seeks the Lord's direction and considers these

writings to be His writings and hopes they will be a blessing to all of His children and those that seek Him.



On September 1, 2010, Kimberly released a book which she wrote with her son, author Keith McRae. *Surviving America's Military High School* is a book written to aid the middle school and high school student entering a military boarding school. It provides practical advice to assist them in all aspects of their military high school life. *Surviving America's Military High School* is available through Amazon and CreateSpace.

Kimberly enjoys spending time with her family in the Southeast along with their two cats and Rottweiler.

To learn more about Kimberly's upcoming books or freelance writing projects visit <http://www.kimberlymcræ.com>. For more information on *Surviving America's Military High School* visit <http://www.militaryschoolbook.com>. Walter and Kimberly McRae's Christian articles can be found at Armor of God Ministries online at <http://www.armorofgodbooks.com>.

Social networking users can also find Kimberly on Facebook or Twitter. Facebook users visit <http://www.facebook.com/authorkimberlymcræ>. Twitter users visit <http://www.twitter.com/kimbermcræ>.