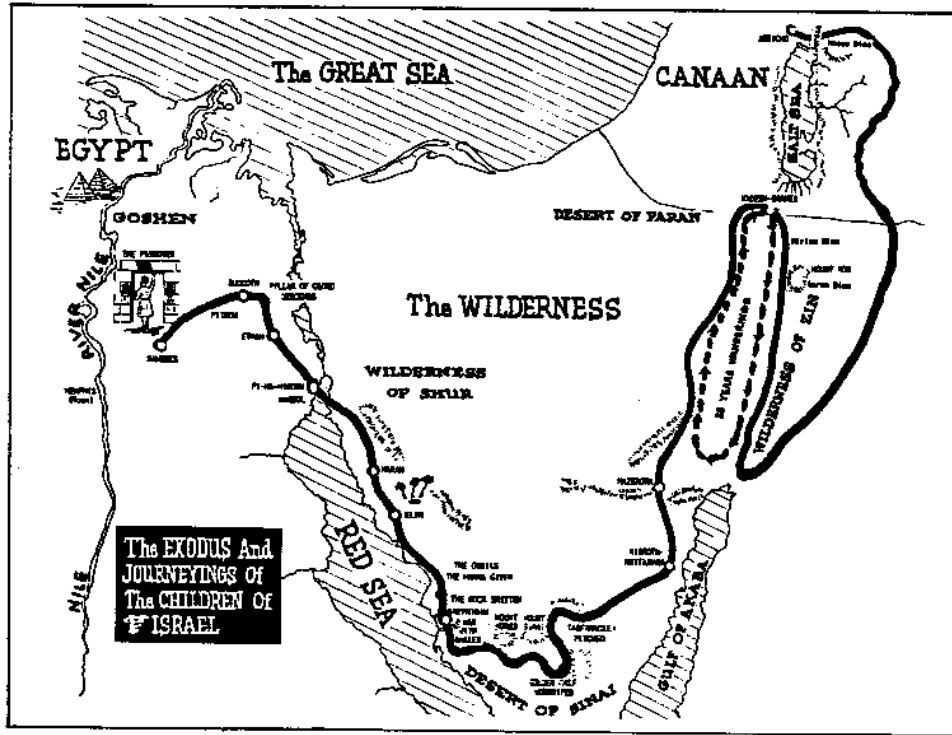


64. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE PORTRAYED IN ISRAEL'S JOURNEY



1. Bondage in Egypt, pictures our bondage to the devil. Acts 7:6.
2. Deliverance by the Passover blood, pictures Christ our Passover. I Corinthians 5:7; Exodus 12:13.
3. Leadership of the cloud, pictures the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Exodus 13: 21, 22; 1 Corinthians 10:1.
4. Baptism in the sea, pictures water baptism. I Corinthians 10:2.
5. Marah and Elim, picture bitter experiences in the Christian life followed by spiritually refreshing and uplifting blessings leading to righteousness after suffering. Exodus 15:22-27.
6. The church in the wilderness, pictures joining a local church after salvation. Acts 7:38; Hebrews 4:1,2,11.
7. Victorious leadership of Joshua, pictures entering into the faith-rest life of victory in Christ's resurrection life. Hebrews 4:1-13.

LESSONS: I Corinthians 10:1-18.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Don't lust. | 5. Don't murmur or complain. |
| 2. No idols. | 6. Let Israel be an example of not to lust. |
| 3. Don't commit fornication. | 7. Don't be proud. |
| 4. Don't tempt Christ. | 8. Temptation has a way of escape. |

65. BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

Ephesians 5:18.

What is the meaning and the conditions of being filled with the Holy Spirit?
The filling of the Holy Spirit is the source of all vital spiritual experience in life.
Every day can be a day of victory through the power of the Holy Spirit.
When you received Christ as Saviour, the Holy Spirit came to live in you.
The Holy Spirit makes it possible for every Christian to live a fulfilled, joyful life.

I. FACTS ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT.

- The Holy Spirit is God. II Corinthians 3:17. "The Lord is that Spirit."
The Holy Spirit is a person. Revelation 2:7. "Hear what the Spirit **saith**." John 16:8.
The Holy Spirit gives us power to live the Christian life. Galatians 5:22,23.
The Holy Spirit gives us power to witness for Christ. Acts 1:8.
The Holy Spirit is more powerful than any other Spirit. I John 4:1-4.
The Holy Spirit is called "the Comforter." John 16:7.
The Holy Spirit authored the Bible. II Peter 1:21.
The Holy Spirit holds back and limits Satan's full power. II Thessalonians 2:7-14.
The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. John 16:8-11.
The Holy Spirit builds local churches.
The Holy Spirit led, anointed, empowered and raised Jesus Christ. Romans 8:11.
- The Holy Spirit has five ministries in believers' lives:
1. He regenerates us. John 3:5, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit..."
 2. He baptizes us. I Corinthians 12:13. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."
 3. He indwells us. I Corinthians 3:16. "Know ye not that...the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."
 4. He seals us. II Corinthians 1:22. "sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."
 5. He fills us. Ephesians 5:18. "be filled with the Spirit."
- The Holy Spirit does these things in our lives:
1. Prays for us. Romans 8:26. "the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be"
 2. Guides us. Romans 8:14. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."
 3. Teaches us. I John 2:27. "the same anointing teacheth you of all things..."
 4. Empowers us for soul winning. Acts 1:8. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come.."
 5. Imparts the love of Christ to us & through us. Romans 5:5 "love of God is shed abroad in our hearts"
 6. Gives us liberty. II Corinthians 3:17. "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty."
 7. Conforms us to the image of Christ. II Corinthians 3:18. "changed into the same image by the Spirit"
 8. Strengthens our new nature. Ephesians 3:16. "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man."

9. Reveals Bible truths to us. I Corinthians 2:10. "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit."
10. Assures us of salvation and service. Romans 8:16. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit.."
11. Fills our mouth with appropriate things. Mark 13:11. "it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."
12. The Holy Spirit gives gifts to individual believers:
Seven temporary gifts that ceased by 96 AD:
 1. Apostles.
 2. Prophets
 3. Miracles.
 4. Healing.
 5. Tongues.
 6. Knowledge.
 7. Interpretation of tongues.**Eleven permanent gifts:**
 1. Wisdom.
 2. Discerning of Spirits.
 3. Giving.
 4. Exhortation.
 5. Ministering.
 6. Mercy.
 7. Administration.
 8. Faith.
 9. Teaching.
 10. Evangelism.
 11. Pastor/Teacher.
13. The Holy Spirit gives us the fruit of:
 1. **Souls** being saved: "Gather fruit unto life eternal". John 4:35,36.
 2. **Christlikeness**: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Galatians 5:22,23.

I. THREE TYPES OF PEOPLE.

1. **UNSAVED person** without Christ:
 - a) Jesus is outside his life.
 - b) Self is on the throne.
 - c) This person is under the judgment of God.
2. **SPIRIT-FILLED Christian**:
 - a) Jesus lives within this person.
 - b) Christ is on the throne, and Christ controls this person's life.
 - c) This Christian now lives to serve Christ.
3. **SELF-CENTRED Christian** - Carnal (I Corinthians 3:1-3):
 - a) Jesus Christ is still his Saviour and is in his life.
 - b) Self is on the throne, controlling his life.
 - c) The Holy Spirit does not have full control of his life.

The self-centred Christian cares more about pleasing himself, than about pleasing God. He is like a baby who wants his own way.

Symptoms of the self-centred Christian are:

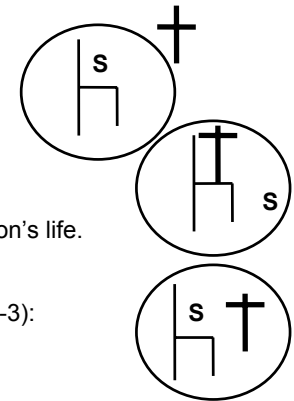
Often he:

- does not fully trust God.
- has sinful thoughts.
- disobeys God's Word.
- has little interest in the Bible.
- has a poor prayer life.
- does not help others come to Christ.

He may:

- feel guilty.
- be discouraged.
- be jealous.
- judge others harshly.
- worry.
- be angry.

Question: Which kind of person are you like?



III. FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT contrasted with spiritual maturity.

Christians are encouraged to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”.
II Peter 3:18 This is **gradual growth** over time to spiritual maturity.
However, any Christian may be filled with the Holy Spirit by meeting the conditions.
A newborn believer may be filled with the Holy Spirit, but immature.
A mature believer may lack the fullness of the Holy Spirit.
Only Christians **YIELDED TO GOD** are filled with the Holy Spirit.
Here the Holy Spirit works in people in entire freedom from hindrance.
Filling of the Holy Spirit means that the **Holy Spirit** has more of us.
It does not mean that “we have more of the Holy Spirit”, because we get all of the Holy Spirit at salvation.

Old Testament filling of the Holy Spirit was temporary for a special purpose.

New Testament filling of the Holy Spirit is the universal experience of all yielded believers.

IV. THE COMMAND TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT.

“Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit”. Ephesians 5:18.

“Be filled” is ‘plerousthe’ in the Greek language. It’s tense indicates a **continuous command to keep being filled with the Holy Spirit**.

- a) **Filling** of the Holy Spirit is a **moment by moment relationship**, that may be hindered by sin.
- b) **Baptism of the Holy Spirit**, in I Corinthians 12:13, is in the ‘aorist’ tense, meaning an action which takes place **once and for all**.

Regeneration, indwelling, sealing, and baptism of the Holy Spirit are accomplished once and for all at the time of salvation.

Filling (“PLEROO”) of the Holy Spirit is like:

1. **Water filling a glass**.
2. **Wind filling a sail** and therefore carrying a ship along. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be moved along in our Christian life by God Himself, as writers of the Bible were “moved along by the Holy Spirit”.
3. **Salt permeating meat** to flavour and preserve it. God wants the Holy Spirit to permeate our lives so that all we say, think and do reflects God’s presence.
4. **Total control**. For example, a person filled with sorrow (John 16:6) is no longer under his control, but is totally under the control of sorrow.
The same is true for one who is filled with fear (Luke 6:11), filled with faith (Acts 6:5) or Satan (Acts 5:3). He is no longer under his own control, but is under the total control of that which dominates him. Being filled with the Holy Spirit detaches us from the desires, standards, aims and fears of the world.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit makes all else that is NOT God’s will of secondary importance.

V. HOW TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

If you **want** God’s Spirit to direct your life and give you power to live:

1. You must **WANT** the Holy Spirit to fill you.
“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.” Matthew 5:6.
2. **CONFESS YOUR SINS**. Agree with God that you have sinned. Thank God for forgiving you because of Christ’s death for you. Turn away from your sins and choose to obey God. I John 1:9.
3. **GIVE THE THRONE** of your **LIFE** to **JESUS CHRIST**.
“Yield yourselves to God.” Romans 6:13.
To live the Spirit filled life, you must be willing to let Jesus Christ control everything you do, e.g. your money, free time, work and relationships with family and friends.
4. We are **filled with the Holy Spirit** by **FAITH** as we **ASK FOR IT IN PRAYER**.
Tell God now: “Lord Jesus, I have been controlling my life.
I agree with you that this is sin.
Please take control of my life, as I yield to you.
I want to obey you. Thank you for forgiving me.
I now trust you to fill me with your Holy Spirit.
Thank you for filling me as you promised.”

5. **STAY FILLED**. Every time you take control of your life through sin, disobeying God in thought, word or action, **breathe spiritually**:

- i) **EXHALE**- Confess your sin (I John 1:9). Thank God for forgiveness. Turn from the sin.
- ii) **INHALE**- Ask Jesus Christ to again take the throne of your life (Yield- Romans 6:13). Trust the Holy Spirit to fill you again. Remember the command of Ephesians 5:18, & the promise of I John 5:14,15

Note: Breathe spiritually every time the Holy Spirit shows you sin and you will have a joyful and victorious life that honours God. Let the Holy Spirit keep controlling your life.

6. FILL OURSELVES WITH GOD’S WORD.

“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Colossians 3:16.
God’s thoughts then become our thoughts. Ephesians 5:18,19.

7. QUENCH NOT the SPIRIT. I Thessalonians 5:19.

Don’t suppress, stifle, resist or oppose the Holy Spirit’s will.
Don’t say “No” to the Holy Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit leads us to do something, don’t pour water on (i.e. quench) the Holy Spirit. Be yielded to the will of God as the rule of our life. Quench means refusal to follow the evident leading of the Holy Spirit.

Yieldedness to the Holy Spirit includes:

- a) Submission to the plain teaching of the Word of God.
- b) Obedience to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, e.g. soul-winning, Bible reading, prayer.
- c) Acceptance by faith of the acts of God, e.g. suffering. Luke 22:42.

8. GRIEVE NOT the SPIRIT. Ephesians 4:30.

The presence of sin in any form grieves the Holy Spirit and involves:

- i) Quenching the Holy Spirit -refusing to follow the Holy Spirit's leading; resisting the Holy Spirit's will
- ii) Loss of fellowship with God.
- iii) Loss of fruit of the Spirit.

Spiritual darkness then descends on the person.

The Christian is given time for self-judgment and confession of sin. If we neglect this opportunity and persist in sin, God intervenes and chastens the Christian by trials.

9. WALK IN THE SPIRIT, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Galatians 5:16.

This means to walk daily by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, who dwells within and involves:

1. **Reckon** ourselves dead to the **sin** nature.
Christ's death not only atones for the guilt of sin, but Christ's death also has power to deliver us from the bondage of sin. HOW?
- As we know our old man **died with Christ** (Romans 6:6).
- As we reckon ourselves **dead to sin's habit pattern** left from the old man, and reckon ourselves alive to Christ (Romans 6:11).
- As we yield ourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead (living in resurrection power), and yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God (Romans 6:13).
2. Love each other as Christ loves us. John 13:34.
3. Every thought must be brought to the obedience of Christ. II Corinthians 10:5.
4. We must be longsuffering towards all. I Thessalonians 5:14.
5. Always follow that which is good. I Thessalonians 5:14,15.
6. Comfort and edify each other. I Thessalonians 5:11.
7. Know them (appreciate and respect Pastors) who work to the point of weariness... and be esteeming them most highly with a divine and self-sacrificial love because of their work.
I Thessalonians 5:12,13.
8. Be at peace among yourselves. 5:13.
9. Warn them that are unruly (i.e. soldiers who desert). 5:14.
10. Don't render evil for evil to any man, but always follow good. 5:15.
11. Rejoice evermore. 5:16.
12. Pray without ceasing. 5:17.
13. In everything give thanks. 5:18.
14. Quench not the Spirit, i.e. stop stifling and suppressing the Spirit. 5:19.
15. Despise not prophesyings, i.e. don't get restless during preaching. 5:20.
16. Prove (test) all things. 5:21.
17. Hold fast that which is good. 5:21.
18. Abstain from all appearance of evil. 5:22.
19. Pray for us, and each other. 5:25.
20. Greet all the brethren. 5:26.

Question: Is it wrong to preach that we must DO, WORK or STRIVE?

Answer: No. We "do" as we "yield" constantly to Christ. "**Do** all things..." Philippians 2:13,14.

"Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death...to supply your lack of service". Philipp. 2:30.

"So have I strived to preach the Gospel." Romans 15:20. "**Strive** for masteries." II Timothy 2:5.

Question: What if I don't feel like going soul-winning and feel condemned and guilty?

Answer: If we think something should be done, check if it is God's will for me at the time, e.g. to sleep, or phone people, or go soul-winning, or Bible Study. I may not feel like doing God's will. (This is sin and disobedience). I must confess it to God and regain fellowship. I then claim the filling of the Holy Spirit. I then go and do God's will in the power of the Holy Spirit by yielding to God.

VI. RESULTS OF BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

As you continue growing in Jesus Christ, God will continue to change your life.

As you let the Holy Spirit lead and control your life every day:

1. Your life will show the fruit of the Spirit more and more. Galatians 5:22,23.
2. Your prayers will be more effective. James 5:16.
3. Your understanding of the Bible will increase. II Timothy 3:16,17.
The teaching of the Holy Spirit warns us against error.
4. You will have greater power to witness. Acts 1:8.
5. You will have God's power to defeat temptation and sin, and to live a life of victory. I Cor. 10:13.
6. You will be guided to apply Bible truths to life's problems. You'll have less self-inflicted trouble.
7. You will worship God in praise and thanksgiving, which is the fruit of a life lived in fellowship with God.

CONCLUSION:

A Christian can only live a Spirit-filled life by faith.

Are you filled with the Holy Spirit?

66. PRAYER: COMMUNICATING WITH GOD

"Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it". Psalm 81:10.

Aim: To convince us of the value and effectiveness of prayer.
To receive what we need through prayer.
To pray daily in the morning.

Introduction:

"Power belongeth unto God." Psalm 62:11. God has many things for us that we can have for the asking.

"Ask, and ye shall receive" God says in Matthew 7:7,11.

The poverty and powerlessness of the average Christian is explained in James 4:2,

"Ye have not because ye ask not." This means that our asking actually has an effect on events.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16.

Prayer is one of the hardest things to do. Why? Because we don't always see instant results. It may seem like a waste of time. It is an act of FAITH, which we cannot perform in the strength of the flesh.

Definition:

Prayer is asking specific things from God and receiving them. Prayer is worship addressed to the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is having two-way fellowship with God. It's not just talking **TO** God, but **WITH** God.

God promises to hear our prayers, as He promises in Psalm 102:17.

"He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer."

Question: Why do so many Christians achieve nothing for God, never see any miracles, seem depressed, bored and get nothing out of their spiritual life?

Answer: Because they rarely pray or read the Bible.

We need to: a) see the value of daily morning prayer to ourselves and others, and
b) discipline ourselves to pray daily.

I. HOW PRAYER BENEFITS OURSELVES AND OTHERS.

Objection 1: The sceptic may ask: "Does daily prayer achieve anything?"

Answer: God says that it does and people's experience proves that it does.

If we were **really convinced** that we really received whatever we prayed for, we would pray more seriously and more often.

Objection 2: Some may say: "I'm OK, I don't need anything".

Answer : Don't you see any needs of others to pray for? Attempt some work for God, seeking to win people to Christ and teach God's Word. Then you'll have much to pray for.

What direct benefits does prayer bring us?

1. **Fullness of Joy.** "Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full." John 16:24.
We get what we ask for, and we get fullness of joy. If we don't pray, we are full of self and problems. Prayer fills us with the Holy Spirit and with joy.
2. **We build ourselves and others up by prayer.**
"Building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." Jude 20.

3. Prayer brings **relief from burdens.** 'Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.' I Peter 5:7
4. Prayer develops a **humble** and **right attitude in us.** It keeps us from becoming proud. God then **exalts us** in due time. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time." I Peter 5:6.
5. Prayer makes us **sober** and **alert** to Satan's devices.
"Be sober, be vigilant : because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour." I Peter 5:8.
6. "The **Peace of God** which passes all understanding shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus", when we fulfil the conditions of:
 - i) Be **careful** for nothing. (don't worry about anything).
 - ii) **Pray** for every need.
 - iii) **Thank** God for all his goodness. Philippians 4:6,7.
7. Prayer will **HEAL OUR LAND** from trouble (II Chronicles 7:13,14) if God's people
 - i) Humble themselves.
 - ii) Pray.
 - iii) Seek God's face.
 - iv) Turn from their wicked ways.Then God promises to:
 - i) Hear from heaven,
 - ii) Forgive our sin,
 - iii) Heal our land.
8. Prayer **summons strong angelic forces** into the spiritual battle on our side to achieve things required and to give us **victory** (Daniel 10:12-14). This prayer gave Daniel **knowledge** of the future history of Israel (Daniel 11).
Therefore, prayer gives us:
 - i) **power** in the spiritual, angelic realm, and
 - ii) knowledge as to what to do.
9. We **receive what we ask God for** in Matthew 21:18-22 if we fulfil the conditions of v.22 of:
 - i) Asking in prayer, and
 - ii) believing God's will to be done.
10. **Prayer** and **fasting** can cast powerful demons out of people. Mark 9:24-29.
11. If we draw near to God in prayer, **God will draw near to us.**
"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." James 4:8.
12. **Humility** and **exaltation.** "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will **lift you up.**" James 4:10. **Prayer** results in **humbling us** which results in **God lifting us up.**
13. Prayer relieves **affliction** and can **cure sickness.** James 5:13-15.
14. Prayer can turn the **rain off** and **on.** James 5:17,18.
15. God shows us new **great and mighty things** through prayer. Jeremiah 33:3.
16. Prayer strengthens us to **resist temptation.**
"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Matthew 26:41.
17. Prayer **defeats Satan.** "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Luke 22:31,32.

18. Prayer **saves any sinner**. "God be merciful to me a sinner." Luke 18:13.
"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Romans 10:13.
19. Prayer **restores backsliders**. James 5:16,19,20.
20. Prayer **sends forth labourers**. Matthew 9:36-38.
21. Prayer has power to **give us WISDOM**. James 1:5.
"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.....it shall be given him."
We can have God's wisdom for every decision in life. God doesn't want us to grope in darkness **or** in our own foolishness. He greatly desires us to know His way and is willing to make it known upon our asking. Oh the joy of knowing and walking in God's ways. We can have all this for the asking.
22. Prayer **reveals our true condition** of weakness, selfishness, sinfulness and powerlessness, Eg:
i) **Isaiah** was brought face to face with God. He **saw himself** as God saw him and he cried out: "Woe is me for I am undone: because I am a man of unclean lips." (Isaiah 6:5). Then a life of power began for Isaiah and God sent him forth to do a mighty work for the Lord. Isaiah 6:8,9.
ii) **Moses** met God at the burning bush. He was then emptied of his former self confidence and saw his utter unfitness for the Lord's work. Then the Lord sent him out as a mighty man of power. Exodus 3:10-22. Compare this with Exodus 2:11-15.
iii) **Job**, after meeting God cried, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Then the Lord turned the captivity of Job, he received power to intercede for his friends and he bore abundant fruit. (Job 42:5,6,10,12).
iv) **David** prayed in Psalm 139:23, "Search me, O God; and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts."
If we pray this to God, He will search us and reveal "SELF" to us as God sees it. This brings a consequent utter emptying of self, and room will be made for the incoming power of God.
23. Prayer has power to **cleanse our hearts from sin**, and **prevent us from sinning**. Psalm 19:12,13; I John 1:9. The Holy Spirit works in our lives in answer to our prayers. In Luke 22:40 the disciples slept when they should have prayed. Christ prayed and triumphed gloriously in his greatest hour of need. We must prepare ourselves for temptation by meeting it with prayer. Many of us are led into defeat and denial of Christ, as Peter was, by sleeping when we ought to be praying.
24. Prayer has power to **govern our tongues**. "The tongue can no man tame." James 3:8.
God can and will tame our tongue in answer to believing prayer. Pray:
"Set a watch, O Lord before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." Psalm 141:3.
25. Prayer has power to **OPEN OUR EYES** to **BEHOLD WONDROUS THINGS OUT OF GOD'S WORD**. Psalm 119:18. When we look to God to interpret the Bible in earnest, believing prayer,
- difficulties vanish,
- obscure passages become as clear as day,
- old familiar passages show new meaning.
The soul-winning man of prayer can best understand the Bible.
26. Prayer **brings** the **FILLING** and **POWER** of the **Holy Spirit into our lives to make us like Christ** and to serve Him. Proverbs 1:23.

When we turn at God's reproof in prayer, He pours out His Spirit to us and makes known His Words to us. "I bow my knees that I might be strengthened with might by the Holy Spirit." Ephesians 3:14-16
"... thou would have asked him, and he would have given thee living water." John 4:10.

We have little power of the Holy Spirit in our life and service because we spend so little time in thought and in prayer. Every precious spiritual blessing is given by God in answer to true prayer.

27. Prayer has power to bring **SALVATION TO OTHERS**.

Prayer avails for the salvation of others where every other effort fails.

Paul, an enemy of the early church was saved by earnest prayer.

Many are led to Christ after some other person has been praying for them.

Prayer will bring blessing upon a church.

Prayer will settle quarrels.

Prayer will resolve misunderstandings.

Prayer will root out heresy, and

Prayer will bring revival from God.

Genuine revivals are brought down by prayer. We need people to devote themselves to

calling upon God till He visits this land with a mighty outpouring of His Holy Spirit.

Prayer will bring wisdom and power to Gospel Ministers.

Paul was a great worker for God, yet he so deeply felt the need of the prayers of God's people, that he asked for them from every church to which he wrote, except the backslidden Galatian church.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Isaiah 40:31.

True prayer takes **TIME** and **THOUGHT**, but it is the great timesaver. If we are to know the fullness of power of the Holy Spirit, we must be men and women of prayer.

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit for all saints." Ephesians 6:18.

To pray "in the Spirit" is to pray in the name of Christ; it is to pray consistently with God's nature and will. It is **not** praying in tongues as Charismatics think about Romans 8:26,27 because these groanings cannot be uttered, yet tongues are uttered. The Holy Spirit prays with our spirit. To pray rightly is to pray as the Holy Spirit prays, to join our petitions with His petitions and our will with the Holy Spirit's will. It is to line up our will, mind and desires with the Holy Spirit's will, mind and desires.

2. WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?

God commands us to pray for many things. To stop our thoughts from wandering in prayer, a list of these divine prayer requests may be made:

a) **ADORATION.**

The Lord's or Disciples' prayer should be taught to everybody from a child.

"Our Father which art in heaven

Hallowed be Thy Name

Thy Kingdom come

Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

Give us day by day our daily bread

Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone

that is indebted to us.

Lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Matthew 6:9-15.

b) **CONFESSION.** "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". I John 1:9.

Lord, I forgive those who have wronged me.

Lord, I confess my sins of _____.

c) **THANKS and PRAISE.** "In everything give thanks." I Thessalonians 5:18.

Thank you Lord for my family _____

my Church, my Pastor _____

my friends _____

for supplying my needs of food, clothing, shelter, for a free country to serve you, for the Bible, for fellow workers, for a job, health, for Your love.

d) **SUPPLICATION (humbly asking).**

a) Others Needs (Ephesians 3:14-16).

Help my spouse and I to be the best example of Christian marriage to everybody and to be greatly used to serve You. Help us to have a really great impact on this world for Christ.

1. Give Pastor _____ encouragement, wisdom and strength to guide and teach the church the best way. Hebrews 13:17,18.

Give these missionaries Pastors hearts, make them preach the gospel of Christ to many people, let them do the work of an evangelist, see many saved, many disciples and many churches started. Give them many **good**, faithful workers to help them. Keep Satan bound and out of Churches, Bible Colleges and out of all ministries. Let the Word of God have free course and be glorified. Let us and them be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.

II Thessalonians 3:1.

List the **missionaries** names:

2. **Pray for people in your church.**

3. For kings, Prime Ministers, Presidents and for all in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

Prime Minister: _____,

Premier: _____, I Timothy 2:1,2.

4. For all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. I Timothy 2:4.

5. Lord "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.

I pray therefore the Lord of the harvest, that you will send forth labourers into the harvest." Matthew 9:36 -38. "Here I am, send me." Isaiah 6:8.

6. Lord I pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Psalm 122:6. Even so come, Lord Jesus. Rev. 22:20.

7. I pray for those who despitefully use me and persecute me. Matthew 5:44.

b) **My Needs.**

1. Lord, I need You to give me **your wisdom to:**

- decide right in all situations.
- guide your people in right and wise decisions.
- win souls continually and bring them to church.
- defeat Satan's temptations.
- teach many Christians, so they can teach others also.
- build churches in Australia and overseas.
- study and know Your Word very well.
- visit and do soul winning.
- organise many new churches like Paul.
- be powerfully effective in prayer and understanding prayer.
- teach my wife and children to be powerful servants of God. James 1:5.

2. "The Lord God of your fathers make me 1,000 times as many as I am and bless me as you have promised me." Deuteronomy 1:11.

3. "Oh that you would bless me indeed and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou would keep me from evil that it may not grieve me. And God granted him (Jabez) that which he requested." I Chronicles 4:10.

4. Lord give me many mighty men and women as went with David and Saul. I Samuel 10:26.

"Give me a band of men and women whose hearts you have touched to fulfil **all** your will."

5. Lord, "make me a man after your own heart, who shall fulfil all your will." Acts 13:22.

6. Let us see our spiritual poverty, to stay humble all our days, and to tremble at Your Word.

"But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit and trembles at my word." Isaiah 66:2.

7. Lord, we pray for you to revive our hearts and bring a revival to Australia:

Lord we, a) Humble ourselves now,

b) Pray to You,

c) Seek Your face,

d) Turn from our wicked ways.

Please Lord, a) Hear from heaven, b) Forgive our sin c) Heal our land.

Revive me, our church and Australia. II Chronicles 7:14.

8. Lord relieve the suffering of believers being persecuted for their faith in You. Hebrews 13:3

9. Lord, let us be:

a) Filled with the knowledge of Your will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

b) Walking worthy of the Lord.

c) Be fruitful in every good work.

d) Increasing in the knowledge of God.

e) Strengthened with all might ... to all patience and long suffering with joy. Col. 1:9-12.

f) Thankful to You.

10. Lord, we pray that:

a) You would count us worthy of this calling.

- b) Fulfil all the good pleasure of your goodness.
 - c) Fulfil the work of faith with power.
 - d) The name of Christ might be glorified in us. II Thessalonians 1:11,12.
11. Lord, we pray that:
 - a) Our love may **abound** more and more in all **judgment**.
 - b) We may **approve things** that are **excellent**.
 - c) We may be **sincere** and **without offence** until the day of Christ.
 - d) We may be **filled with the fruits of righteousness**. Philippians 1:9-11.
 12. Lord, turn all Muslim, Hindu, Roman Catholic people to be truly saved by faith in Christ.
 13. Lord give us greater ability to spread your Gospel all over the world.
 14. Lord fill me with your Holy Spirit today and produce the fruit of the Spirit in me today.
 15. Judge and remove all those who preach a false Gospel.
 16. Let our church grow and our ministry win many to Christ. Give our work for you good success. Strengthen us in times of trouble. Pour out your mercy and grace upon us.
 17. Lord give us _____ souls saved this year, and _____discipled this year.
Let us see _____ Christians become soul winners this year.
 18. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10.
Keep me possessing the joy of my salvation. Let me be disciplined and efficient in my time and service to you. Don't let me put things off. Give me a field that I can fully exploit for you. Through us, raise up people who are **WHOLEHEARTED, SINGLE MINDED and with a FIGHTING SPIRIT**.

Lord teach me to praise, thank and trust you in all things. Prepare me Lord for what you have prepared for me. Make me a hard worker for you in soul winning. Make me a fisher of men.

Bring us to walk worthy of you Lord in all things. Show us successful ways of quickly starting and building churches in Australia and overseas. Keep me from making serious mistakes. Help our church to grow to 1000 in attendance.

3. WHERE TO PRAY.

- a) Everywhere.
- b) In our bedroom. Matthew 6:6.
- c) In church. "Two men went up to the Temple to pray." Luke 18:10.

4. WHEN TO PRAY.

- a) **Daily**. "Be merciful unto me for I cry unto thee **daily**." Psalm 86:3.
- b) **Evening, morning and noon**, will I pray and cry aloud and he shall hear my voice. Psalm 55:17; Daniel prayed 3 times a day. Daniel 6:10.
- c) **Morning**. "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord." Psalm 5:3.
- d) **Always**"Pray without ceasing" I Thess.5:17;"Men ought always to pray & not to faint" Luke 18:1
- e) **Mealtimes**. John 6:11.

5. DIRECTION OF PRAYER.

- a) Pray - **TO** the Father "Our Father which art in heaven."
- **IN THE NAME OF JESUS** "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name." John 16:24.
- **THROUGH** the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:15,16,26,27.
- b) We pray to Jesus as Stephen did at his death.
"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Acts 7:59; I Corinthians 1:2.
- c) We must **not pray to Mary** or to **dead believers**. "There shall not be found among you any one that is a necromancer."(one who contacts the dead). Deuteronomy 18:11.

6. REASONS FOR PRAYER.

- a) God **commands** us to. I Timothy 2:8; I Thessalonians 5:17.
- b) **Christ's** example. I Peter 2:21-23.
- c) **Early churches'** example. Acts 2:42.
- d) It is **God's chosen method** for:
 - Defeating the devil. Luke 22:31,32.
 - Saving the sinner. Luke 18:13.
 - Restoring the backslider. James 5:16.
 - Strengthening the saint. Jude 20.
 - Sending out labourers. Matthew 9:38.
 - Curing the sick. James 5:13-15.
 - Achieving the impossible. James 5:17,18.
 - Receiving good things. Psalm 102:17.
 - Getting wisdom. James 1:5.
 - Getting peace. Philippians 4:6,7.
 - Keeping us from sin. Matthew 26:41.
 - Glorifying God's name. Revelation 5:8.
 - Revealing the will of God. Luke 11:9,10.
- e) It is our **Christian duty**.
- f) Because God **hears and answers** our prayers.
- g) Because we **gain access to God's throne**. Hebrews 4:16.
- h) **Paul's** example.
- i) We are **blessed by God and filled with His Spirit** by prayer.
- j) We **achieve much more** than by not praying.
- k) It is a **cure for depression, fear, worry and trouble**.

7. HINDRANCES TO PRAYER.

If your prayer life seems difficult, it may be because of one of these reasons. See which reasons apply to you and confess the cause to God.

- a) **Asking amiss** or wrongly to serve our selfish lusts. James 4:1-3.
- b) **Loving** the world. James 4:4.
- c) **Pride**. James 4:6; Job 35:12,13.
- d) **Unconfessed sin**. James 4:8; Proverbs 28:13; Psalms 66:18.
- e) **Not considering God's will** in your plans. James 4:13-15.
- f) **Marital discord**. I Peter 3:7. Every husband must honour his wife.
- g) **Laziness**, not bothering to ask. James 4:2.
- h) **Lack of Faith**. Not seeing the importance of prayer. Doubting if prayer will change things. Not seeing prayer as a means of being blessed. Doubt, unbelief. James 1:5,6.

- i) **Not keeping God's commandments** and not doing those things that are pleasing in God's sight. I John 3:22.
- j) **Insincerity.** Matthew 6:5; Deuteronomy 4:29.
- k) **Robbing God.** Malachi 3:8-10.
- l) **Refusing to submit to Bible teaching.** Zechariah 7:12,13; Proverbs 28:9.
- m) **Refusing to forgive** or to be forgiven. Matthew 6:12,14,15.
- n) **Refusing to help the poor and needy.** Proverbs 21:13.
- o) **Satanic activity.** God, for a short time may allow satanic interference to block the believer's prayer line, to test and to purify us. Daniel 10:10-13.
- p) **Disobedience.** Micah 3:4; Deuteronomy 3:26.
- q) **Not abiding in Christ.** John 15:7.
- r) **Sleepiness** hinders prayer. Matthew 26:40-44.
- s) **Giving up, losing heart.** Luke 18:1.
- t) **Vain repetition.** Matthew 6:7.
- u) **Praying contrary to God's will.** I John 5:14.
- v) **Wickedness** hinders prayer. Proverbs 15:8,29.

- g) Abraham's servant prayed for a bride for Isaac and found Rebekkah. Genesis 24:12-14.
- h) Elisha prayed to open his servant's eyes to see the Lord's army surrounding the city.
He saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire. II Kings 6:13-23.

Conclusion. Let us be convinced of the value of prayer and pray specifically, fervently, persistently and daily as we live and work for Jesus Christ.

8. **QUALIFICATIONS OF PRAYER.** Prayer should be:

- a) **Humble.** Psalms 10:17. "Thou hast heard the desire of the humble."
- b) **Bold.** Hebrews 4:15,16. "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy,..."
- c) **In Faith.** Hebrews 11:6; James 1:6,7. "without faith it is impossible to please him."
- d) **Sincere.** Psalm 145:18."The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him,...in truth."
- e) **Simple.** Matthew 6:7. "Use not vain repetitions."
- f) **Persistent.** Luke 18:1-7. "men ought always to pray, and not to faint."
- g) **Definite.** Psalm 27:4. Too often our prayers are so vague and indefinite, that they are meaningless, and provide no basis for divine action. eg. "Lord save that soul nearest to hell."
- h) **Biblical** and in accord with the Word of God. I John 5:14,15. "Ask any thing according to his will."

9. **EXAMPLES OF ANSWERED PRAYERS.**

We are greatly encouraged by those who persevered in prayer & received great things as a result.

- a) The apostles gave themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. Acts 6:2-4.
- b) Cornelius gave money and prayed. Acts 10:1-6,31,44. An angel tells Cornelius that his prayers have been heard and that he should go to Peter to see how to be saved.
- c) The Jerusalem church prayed for God to deliver Peter from jail. Peter was released. Acts 12:5-16
- d) Israel prayed to be delivered from slavery in Egypt and God raised up Moses to deliver them. Exodus 3:1-8.
- e) Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed for God to spare Jerusalem from the Assyrian king's army.
That night the angel of the Lord went out and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. Isaiah 36,37.
- f) Hannah who was barren, asked God for baby Samuel and bore 7 children. I Samuel 1:1-28.

67. GROW IN GRACE

“But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”
II Peter 3:18.

Aim: To give some general instructions to young Christians as to how to grow in grace, be strong in the Lord and to avoid backsliding.

Introduction:

To grow as a Christian one must:

- a) Methodically - Study and obey the Bible, Pray, Obey God, attend Church, and Do Soul Winning.
- b) Cultivate Spiritual Graces and a quality Christlike lifestyle.

Let us see some things that the Holy Spirit wants to cultivate in our lives and check if we are listening to Him and acting on His voice.

I. “GROWING IN GRACE” DEFINED

Grace is used in two senses: a) in GOD - it is undeserved favour.
b) in MEN - it is holiness.

Therefore, to grow in grace is to grow in holiness, to be more like God, to govern our conduct more and more by the same principles that God does.

God wants to glorify Himself and to fill the Universe with holiness and happiness.

Growing in grace is not gradually giving up sin. We must, at salvation, give up sin instantly and wholly.

II. HOW TO GROW IN GRACE

- 1) Be saved and love Jesus Christ with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. (Matthew 22:35-40).
- 2) Repent of all known sin.
- 3) Make a full surrender and consecration to God of everything we are, have, desire and love.
- 4) An intense desire to learn more of God's Ways through the Holy Spirit's leading.
- 5) Keep up with our convictions of duty and with our growing knowledge of God's will. (John 14:15).
- 6) An increasing and confident faith in God's character so that we'll trust him in the dark as well as in the light, whether we understand why or why not He deals such with us. (John 10:27 like sheep).
- 7) A deeper personal acquaintance with Christ. (John 14:21).
Christ has promised to manifest himself personally to those who love and obey him.
- 8) Watch against besetting sins such as levity (foolishness). Hebrews 12:1.
If you yield to temptation once, it's easier to yield again.
- 9) Censoriousness. - Young Christians begin full of zeal and are soon amazed at the coldness and apathy of many churches or Christians. They are likely to say critical things against them.
Be careful about what you say to and about other Christians, even though it may be true.
- 10) Pride - thinking that you are greater than other people.
“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” I Corinthians 10:12.

- 11) Anger and Temper with workmates, neighbours, the government or events.
“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour and evil speaking be put away....” Ephesians 4:31.
- 12) Selfishness - don't act from selfish motives. Think of what God wants first, then put others second.
- 13) Sloth and Laziness - How many young Christians stop and decline by laziness, as if there was no work to do. Proverbs 6:6-11.
- 14) Envy - If you see others going ahead of you in prosperity, in influence, in talents and in the Lord's work, examine your feelings and see if it pleases you. If the sight gives you pain, beware!
- 15) Impure Thoughts. Make a covenant with your eyes, ears and all your senses, or they'll prove the inlet of temptation and sin. If you find yourself in danger, turn your thoughts away instantly and think of something else, such as Scripture, people's needs, or Christ's example.
- 16) Maintain great firmness of purpose and decision of character to be undeviating in the performance of secret duties (prayer and Bible) and in obeying the truth no matter what others may say or think (I Corinthians 15:58).
- 17) Meekness is patience under injuries. When you are reviled, learn not to revile again. If persecuted, don't threaten back. I Peter 2:21-23.

III. PROOF OF GROWTH IN GRACE

What will a Christian be like when he is growing in grace?

- 1) He does things, less because he feels like it, and more because it is right.
For example, “I don't feel like praying” - do it anyhow; “I don't feel like church” - do it anyhow.
- 2) More love to God resulting in a growing veneration for all the commands of God.
“Lord what would thou have me to do?” Acts 9:6.
“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Proverbs 9:10.
- 3) More love to men. As young Christians grow in Godliness, they feel more and more a desire that all the world should be converted to God. They have more heart-breaking agony at the dreadful state of men in their sins. I Samuel 17:45-47.
- 4) They have greater humility and self abasement. James 4:10; I Peter 5:5,6; Isaiah 66:2.
- 5) An increased abhorrence of sin, feeling less disposed to compromise with sin.
“Ye that love the Lord hate evil.” Psalm 97:10.
- 6) Less love for the world. I John 2:15,17.
He seeks wealth and honour only to glorify God, and of doing good to men.
He is less desirous of worldly company and carnal conversation. He will love to read the most spiritual books and will love the company and conversation of the most spiritual Christians.
He will love attending the most pungent, and searching spiritual preaching.
- 7) An increased delight in fellowship with saints. I John 3:14.
- 8) He finds it more easy to exercise a forgiving spirit and to pray for his enemies. He easily gets over injuries. “Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” Ephesians 4:32.
- 9) He becomes more ready to bestow property, being willing to give all that is in his power to extend Christ's Kingdom. Luke 6:38.
- 10) His time, talents, property and life itself have value only in relation to Christ's kingdom and eternity. Matthew 6:19-21. He lives by eternal values.
- 11) He is more willing to confess faults to men. Matthew 5:23,24.

- 12) He regards less and less either the good or bad opinions of men and is less influenced by what "other people say" and popular opinion.
- 13) He will expect frequent and agonising conflicts with Satan.
Spiritual Christians are doing Satan a vast injury and therefore he sets himself against them.
"Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His Might." Ephesians 6:10.
- 14) A growing peacefulness under sudden and crushing disasters.
"Love, joy, peace" Galatians 5:22. "He is our peace". Ephesians 2:14.
- 15) A growing realisation and confidence in the wisdom, goodness and providence of God.
He develops a state of mind that sees God's hand in everything. Romans 8:28.
- 16) A growing jealousy for:-
 - a) the honour of God.
 - b) the purity and honour of His Church.
 - c) the rights of God and all men. "Is there not a cause?"
1 Samuel 17:29.

IV. EVIDENCES OF BACKSLIDING

How do you detect backsliding in yourself or another?

1. Being weary of giving money or time to promote the kingdom of Christ.
2. Stops coming to church.
3. Reluctant to converse on spiritual matters. Young Christians delight to discuss spiritual issues.
If you leave your first love, watch out.
4. Less interest in private and public prayer, Bible reading and drawing nearer to God.
5. More delight in public meetings than in secret communion with God.
6. If you find yourself growing very much critical and afraid of the measures that good men pursue (and that God blesses) for promoting revivals, you are backsliding.
For example, people (Christians?) come here and say that we are too pushy, yet they never, ever lead a person to Christ. They are usually backsliders from a backslidden church.

V. HOW TO ESCAPE FROM BACKSLIDING

Backsliding is very hard to recover from because you resist what other Christians say and you avoid meeting with other Christians. The solution to recover from backsliding is:

1. ADMIT that you are backsliding.
2. APPLY and take God's REMEDY for your sin.
3. FIND your CAUSE of backsliding and give it up. God will hold you at arms-length and will frown upon you when you pray unless you search out and remove the cause of backsliding. Give up your idols.
4. Apply to the Lord Jesus Christ for PARDON and peace with God, as a guilty sinner.
Confess your sins fully, forsake them, return to God, and
He will have mercy on you. He will heal your backslidings & will remember your iniquities no more.
Backsliding is why revivals cease.

VI. SOME THINGS WHICH SHOULD BE TAUGHT TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS

Aim: To know how to help and teach young Christians. "Feed my lambs." John 21:15.

Introduction: Why do Christians backslide? Because they aren't being fed or taught Bible doctrine and are not applying it to their lives. **What ought to be taught?**

TOPICS:

1. Basics such as "What all Christians must know".
2. Soul Winning - How to lead people to Christ.
3. Apologetics - Answers to common objections met in Soul Winning.
4. How we know the Bible is true.
5. Second Coming of Christ.
6. Fundamentals of Bible Doctrine.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

1. **Attending Church is Raising a Standard against the Devil.**

"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall raise up a standard against him." Isaiah 59:19.

Today as the tide of evil increases, there is a greater than ever need for God's people to pull together by joining a sound church immediately they are saved. **DON'T WAIT!**

"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; but exhorting one another and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

Hebrews 10:24,25.

If you set out in your Christian life by waiting, most likely you will always be waiting and never do anything to much purpose. Never wait when God has pointed out your duty.

"The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth". 1 Timothy 3:15.

Usually a young Christian's character through life is moulded according to how they are dealt with when first converted. When they are first brought in, their minds are soft and tender, and easily yield to the truth. They may then be taught easily. If you don't disciple them immediately, they'll be harder to disciple later on.

2. However dull your feelings may be, **if duty calls, DO IT.**

Distinguish between emotion and principle in your Christian thinking.

Do it because it is right. Don't wait until you feel like it.

KNOW, RECKON, and YIELD your members to God. Romans 6:6,11,13.

3. Teach them to cultivate a tender conscience. 1 Timothy 1:5,19. Don't resist your conscience. When they see a "Thus saith the Lord", they'll be always ready to obey it, come what may.
4. **"YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN"**. 1 Corinthians 6:19,20. Know that all your time, property, influence, faculties, body and soul belong to God. When you submitted to God, you made a full surrender of all to Him. If you don't do this, don't call yourself a Christian, because the very idea of a Christian is to renounce self, and become entirely consecrated to God.
"Purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:14.
5. Pray without ceasing. 1 Thessalonians 5:17.
Keep a watch over your minds and be all the time in a prayerful spirit. Pray always or you'll get far from God. When your conscience presses you, go to Christ, confess your sin fully, and pour your heart out to God. The Holy Spirit will lead you in prayer and the dark clouds of guilt will go away.
6. **Don't adopt a false standard** in your Christian life. Don't keep older Christians as a standard of holy living, but always look at Christ as your model. "Looking unto Jesus." Hebrews 12:2.
Aim at being HOLY and don't be satisfied until you are as perfect as God.
7. **Don't aim at comfort**, but at usefulness in your Christian life.
Don't spend your time in seeking to be happy or on a spiritual high, but spend time in agonising prayer for sinners and in pulling people out of the fire. Consider how the

apostles travailed for souls and laboured in weariness, painfulness and in death to save sinners. Don't calculate on a life of joy and triumph. You may be called on to go through fiery trials.

- a) Seek to go forward and be useful, not happy;
 - b) Talk about duty, not comfort;
 - c) Talk about triumph, not flights of joy;
 - d) Seek for righteousness, not entertainment; and
 - e) Seek how to know the will of God and do it. You'll be happy enough in heaven.
8. You must **learn to say NO to wrong activities of old friends**. If you go with them once, it will be easier to go with them again, then you'll start to backslide. Learn to resist the beginnings of temptation. "Be sober, be vigilant." I Peter 5:8,9.
9. **Be Strictly Honest**. "Let us walk honest, as in the day." Roman 13:13.
Be straight in everything, so that God's pure eyes can see that your mind is perfectly upright.
"Whatsoever things are honest." Phillippians 4:8. "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." I Peter 2:12.
10. Christianity is not high flights of feeling, but **obedience to God** from the heart, and voluntary submission to his will.
11. Christianity is **SELF DENIAL**. Mark 8:34-37; Matthew 16:27.
 - a) Christ exercised Self Denial to save sinners.
 - b) The Father exercised Self Denial in giving His Son and in sparing us.
 - c) The Holy Spirit exercises Self Denial in striving with unholy men to bring us to God.
 - d) Angels exercise Self Denial in watching over the world.
 - e) The Apostles exercised Self Denial in planting Christianity among many nations. Is it too much for us to exercise some self-denial daily for Christ, the gospel & to build this church?
12. Be **temperate** (self controlled) in all things.
13. Show just as much Christianity, holiness and sincerity in all your **daily activities** as on Sunday.
14. **Aim at being perfect**.
Live entirely to God and obey all His Commandments. Sin should be the exception to our lives. Be as holy as God, and seek not to sin at all. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." I Peter 1:16.
15. **Exhibit your light** to the world or it will go out.
God won't go to the trouble of keeping a light burning that is hidden. You'll backslide. God may put you on the shelf. (1Corinthians 9:27). "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:16.
16. **They should be taught HOW to win souls for Christ**. Live for this as the great purpose of life. The reason why we are left in the world is to pull sinners out of the fire. If you don't do this you are better off dead. Teach this immediately they are saved. "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel." 1 Corinthians 9:16.

VII. SOME EVILS OF DEFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

1. If not fully taught, they'll never be fully grounded in right principles.
2. If rightly taught, they'll take the right side on all great issues that come to the church. You can depend on them and the church will be stronger.
3. If they are not well taught, they will inevitably backslide and disgrace Christ.

VIII. HOW YOUNG CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE TREATED BY THE CHURCH

1. Older Christians ought to greatly help and teach younger Christians. If you don't teach them, they'll never grow.
2. Put young Christians to work in the church. Keep them looking to God. We are saved to serve.
3. They should be watched over by the church and warned of their dangers. Young Christians don't know the dangers that surround them, such as:
 - a) the devices of satan.
 - b) the temptations of the world.
 - c) the power of their own passions and faults.If not properly watched and warned, they will run right into danger.
4. Be tender in reprovng them. Don't be severe. They are easily thrown down. They are like a child starting to walk.

CONCLUSION and CHALLENGE

1. If churches had properly trained young Christians, the world would have been converted long ago.
2. They should be trained to work for Christ, just as carefully as young soldiers are trained for war.
3. Train young Christians to be intelligent, single hearted, self-denying, working Christians.
Train them: - how to pray,
 - how to talk to people about their souls,
 - how to win souls to Christ, and
 - how to disciple people.
4. If you want to get involved training someone, let me know.
Pray now surrendering yourself to God concerning all these issues.

68. TOOLS TO CONQUER WORRY, FEAR and DEPRESSION

Bible Reading: Psalm 34, 37 and 139.

Introduction: We all go through trouble and suffering in this life, yet we can control our reaction to it and gain victory. "With God, nothing shall be impossible." Luke 1:37. God can cure our worries and depression only if we come to Him for comfort. The Bible is the book of comfort for us.

Question 1: Why do people get discouraged, depressed and worried?

Answer: By letting circumstances and events produce **fear** in their mind, rather than by keeping their **minds fixed** on the Lord. Isaiah 26:3 promises:

"Thou wilt keep him in **perfect peace**, whose **mind is stayed on Thee**: because he **trusteth** in thee."

Question 2: What **TOOLS** can we use from the Bible to relieve worry?

TOOL 1: GET RIGHT WITH GOD and MAN.

If my fear or worry are due to **sins** that I have committed, **confess** it to God, and **make it right** with the one wronged. "Be ye kind one to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you." Ephesians 4:32.

TOOL 2: DRAW NEAR TO GOD.

"Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands ye sinners. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall **LIFT** you up." James 4:8,10.

As we draw near to God, **He lifts us up**. I Peter 5:5-10.

TOOL 3: CAST ALL YOUR CARE UPON HIM.

"Casting all your care upon Him for he careth for you." I Peter 5:7.

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Psalm 55:22.

TOOL 4: LEARN TO TRUST IN THE LORD'S GOODNESS.

Learn to **Trust** in the Lord's goodness, and power to always do what is right for us.

"What time I am afraid, I will **trust in thee**." Psalm 56:3.

"It is better to **trust** in the **Lord** than to put confidence in man." Psalm 118:8.

"My God shall supply all your need." Philippians 4:19.

"Trust ye not in a friend, **put not** confidence in a **guide**." Micah 7:5.

"Whoso **trusts** in the **Lord**, **happy** is he." Proverbs 16:20.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart....." Proverbs 3:5,6.

TOOL 5: THANK THE LORD FOR PAST BLESSINGS.

Thank the Lord for **past blessings** and use this to build your trust that your current problem will be solved. "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises to thy name." Psalm 92:1.

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise.....be **thankful** to him and bless his name." Psalm 100:4. "In everything give thanks..." I Thessalonians 5:18.

TOOL 6: MEMORISE BIBLE VERSES THAT APPLY TO YOUR SITUATION, and OF GOD'S GOODNESS.

"But his **delight** is in the law of the Lord and in his **law** doth he **meditate** day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Psalm 1:2,3.

"...written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matt 4:4

TOOL 7: KEEP AWAY FROM UNGODLY, ANGRY, AGGRESSIVE, FOOLISH PEOPLE.

"Make no friendship with an angry man, lest thou learn his ways & get a snare to thy soul." Prov. 22:24

Most problems in life are caused by mixing with wicked or foolish people. Psalm 1:1-3.

TOOL 8: CONTROL WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT.

Only think about **good** things, not bad things. "As he thinks in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7.

If you think about **good** things, you'll be **happy**. If you think about **bad** things, you'll be **depressed**.

"Whatsoever things are true honest just pure lovely.....good report..... virtue any praise, **think on these things**. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received and heard, and seen in me do: and the God of peace shall be with you." Philippians 4:8,9.

TOOL 9: LEARN TO WAIT PATIENTLY ON THE LORD.

Learn to **wait patiently** on the Lord and **not fret** because of **evildoers**.

"Fret not thyself because of evildoers." Psalm 37:1.

"Delight thyself also in the Lord.....He shall give thee the desires of thy heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord.....Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." Psalm 37:4,5,7.

"My soul **wait** thou only upon God, for my expectation is from Him." Psalm 62:5.

"They that **wait** upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Isaiah 40:30-31.

TOOL 10: PRAY TO GOD IN TIMES OF SORROW.

Who do we seek counsel from in sorrow? It should be the Lord. Learn to pray effectively and fervently.

"Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made unto God." Philippians 4:6,7.

"Ask and it shall be given you; **seek** and ye shall find, **knock** and it shall be opened unto you." Matt.7:7

"They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses." Psalm 107:13.

"If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7. "Pray one for another, that ye may be healed." James 5:16.

"The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends." Job 42:10.

TOOL 11: EXPECT TROUBLE IN LIFE.

Then you won't get surprised when trouble comes. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." John 16:33.

"We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God." Acts 14:22.

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him from them all." Psalm 34:19.

"We are troubled on every side yet not distressed...." II Corinthians 4:8.

"Our light affliction which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." II Corinthians 4:17. "Let not your heart be troubled." John 14:1.

TOOL 12: BEWARE OF BELIEVING WRONG DOCTRINES or WRONG IDEAS.

Develop consistency, stability, faithfulness, commitment and reliability. "Be not carried about with strange doctrines. It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." Hebrews 13:9.

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit..and not after Christ." Colossians 2:8.

TOOL 13: FIX YOUR MIND ON HEAVEN, THE KINGDOM OF GOD and ON CHRIST'S SECOND COMING.

"I will come again and receive you unto myself..." John 14:3.

"Set your affection on things above and not on things on earth." Colossians 3:2. (Matthew 6:33.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you."

"When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye appear with him in glory." Colossians 3:4.

TOOL 14: LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME.

Don't bring yesterday's problems forward to worry about today. Don't bring tomorrow's problems back to worry about today. "Take no thought for tomorrow: for tomorrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Matthew 6:34.

TOOL 15: FORGET THE PAST.

Forget the past, you can't change it, and **let God take care of the future**. "Forgetting those things which are **behind** and **reaching** forth unto those things are before (ahead)..." Philippians 3:13.

"We **wept** when we **remembered** Zion." Psalm 137:1. "Thou shalt forget all thy misery." Job 11:16.

"God has made me to forget....all my toil, and my father's house." Genesis 41:51.

TOOL 16: BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Ephesians 5:18.
"The **fruit** of the **Spirit** is **love, joy, peace**, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Galatians 5:22,23. Be filled with the **Holy Spirit**, not filled with **Self**.

TOOL 17: THINK ON GOD'S PROVISION and GOODNESS TO US.

"There has not failed one word of his good promise" I Kings 8:56."I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" Heb13:5.

"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord"Ps 33:5. "The goodness of God endures continually."Psalm 52:1

"No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Psalm 84:11.

TOOL 18: BE GUIDED BY GOD and AVOID SIN.

"He that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8:12.

"Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, this is the way, walk ye in it..." Isaiah 30:21.

TOOL 19: LEARN THE PRINCIPLES OF HAPPINESS.

"Whoso trusts in the Lord, happy is he." Prov.16:20."A merry heart doeth good like medicine." Pro 17:22.

"Rejoice in the Lord always." Philippians 4:4 Happiness is a choice. When persecuted for Christ:

"Rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven." Matthew 5:12.

TOOL 20: HAVE A LIFE GOAL of USEFULNESS TO GOD.

It is better to **serve God** and win souls to Christ, than to be **happy**. Be **God-centred** and **others-centred**, not **self** centred. "He that **finds** his life shall **lose** it: and he that loses his life for my sake shall find it." Matthew 10:39. "I have finished the **work** which thou gavest me to do." John 17:4.

"**Come unto me** all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest** Take my yoke upon you, and **learn of me**....ye shall find **rest** for your souls." Matthew 11:28,29.

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15.

TOOL 21: GIVE TO GOD and TO OTHERS.

"Give and it shall be given unto you..... " Luke 6:38. "Ye have **robbed me**.....in tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a **curse** Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat in my house, and **prove me now** herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and **pour you a blessing** that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:8-12.

TOOL 22: GOD WILL NOT LET YOU BE TEMPTED ABOVE that YE ARE ABLE TO BEAR

"God will make a way to escape the temptation, that ye may be able to bear it." I Corinthians 10:13.

Look for the way to escape. Others have gone through the same temptations,& found God to be faithful.

TOOL 23: FULFIL YOUR GOD-GIVEN ROLE IN LIFE.

"The **aged women** teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands. **Young men**....be sober minded,pattern of good works, in doctrine, showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech." Titus 2:3-8. "I will therefore that the **younger women marry**, bear children, guide the house" I Tim 5:14

TOOL 24: LEARN WISDOM from THE BIBLE.

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom." Proverbs 4:7.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." Proverbs 9:10. Wisdom will study the Bible to find answers to life's questions, and will obey the Bible even when it is difficult. By applying God's wisdom, we prevent bad things from happening to us and to our family. Preventing a problem is better than curing a problem.

TOOL 25: HONOUR GOD in ALL THINGS and GOD WILL HONOUR YOU.

".....them that honour me, **I will honour**." I Samuel 2:30. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and **all these things** shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33.

Conclusion: When we feel depressed or worried, don't panic or fear, but trust the Lord, review these 24 tools and claim Romans 8:28. "We know that **all things** (even bad things) work together for **good** to them that **love God**.....". Do you love God? Then prove it by using these 25 TOOLS as part of your life and you will have victory over your worries, fears and depression.

69. ABC'S OF LIFE'S FOUNDATIONS

The Scriptures counsel new Christians to desire the sincere milk of the Word of God.

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious;” I Peter 2:2,3.

Christian parents need to help their children learn simple Bible verses that can be put into action in their lives so they will accept the Lord early in life and grow strong spiritually. These verses are categorized under the ABC's so the children can learn the alphabet while they are learning important verses. The following are verses of doctrine and action. Help your children to apply these verses in everyday situations. People who have been saved later on in life still need to learn these character-forming verses.

- A.** Ask, and it shall be given you. **Luke 11:9;**
All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. **Romans 3:23;**
Abstain from all appearance of evil. **I Thessalonians 5:22.**
- B.** Be ye kind one to another. **Ephesians 4:32;** Be of good cheer. **Acts 23:11;**
Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. **Acts 16:31;**
Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love. **Romans 12:10;**
Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only. **James 1:22.**
- C.** Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. **Ephesians 6:1;**
Commit thy way unto the Lord. **Psalms 37:5;** Cease from anger. **Psalms 37:8;**
Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith the Lord. **Isaiah 40:1.**
- D.** Do all things without murmurings and disputings. **Philippians 2:14;**
Depart from evil and do good. **Psalms 34:14;**
Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil. **Psalms 37:4;**
The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul. **Proverbs 13:19.**
- E.** Even a child is known by his doings. **Proverbs 20:11;**
The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good. **Proverbs 15:3;**
Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. **James 1:17.**
- F.** Fret not thyself. **Psalms 37:1;** Fear not, for I am with thee. **Isaiah 43:5;**
For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. **John 3:16;**
For by grace are ye saved through faith. **Ephesians 2:8.**
- G.** God loveth a cheerful giver. **II Corinthians 9:7b;**
A good man showeth favour and lendeth. **Psalms 112:5a;**
A good word maketh it (the heart) glad. **Proverbs 12:25b;**
Go from the presence a foolish man. **Proverbs 14:7a;**
Good is the word of the Lord. **Isaiah 39:8.**
- H.** Hear ye children, the instruction of a father. **Proverbs 4:1;**
Honour the Lord with thy substance. **Proverbs 3:9;**
Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings. **Proverbs 4:10;**
He that gathereth in summer is a wise son. **Proverbs 10:5;**
Here am I, send me. **Isaiah 6:8b;**
Honour thy father and thy mother. **Ephesians 6:2.**
- I.** In everything give thanks. **I Thessalonians 5:18;**
In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. **Genesis 1:1;**
If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. **John 13:17;**
I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. **Philippians 4:13;**
I will not fear what man shall do to me. **Hebrews 13:6b;**
If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God. **James 1:5;**
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. **I John 1:9.**
- K.** Keep thy tongue from evil. **Psalms 34:13;** Keep thee far from a false matter. **Exodus 23:7;**
Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins. **Psalms 19:13a;**
Keep thy heart with all diligence. **Proverbs 4:23;**
Keep thy commandments and live. **Proverbs 7:2;**
Keep in memory what I preached unto you. **I Cor. 15:2.** Keep the unity of the Spirit. **Ephesians 4:3.**
- L.** Love one another. **I John 3:11b;** Love your enemies. **Luke 6:27b.**
Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. **Proverbs 12:22;**
Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. **Matthew 6:20;**
Lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him. **I Corinthians 16:2b;**
Let all your things be done with charity. **I Corinthians 16:14;**
Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth. **Ephesians 4:29.**
Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking be put away from you. **Ephesians 4:31.**

- M.** Make a joyful noise unto the Lord. **Psalm 100:1**;
My son, keep thy father's commandments. **Proverbs 6:20**;
A merry heart doeth good like medicine. **Proverbs 17:22**;
A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance. **Proverbs 15:13**;
My God shall supply all your need. **Philippians 4:19**;
- N.** Neither shalt thou profane the name of God. **Leviticus 18:21**;
Neither murmur ye. **I Corinthians 10:10**;
If any would not work, neither should he eat. **II Thessalonians 3:8,10b**.
- O.** Overcome evil with good. **Romans 12:21b**;
To obey is better than sacrifice. **I Samuel 15:22b**;
Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people. **Jeremiah 7:23**;
Owe no man anything. **Romans 13:8**; Obey them that have the rule over you. **Hebrews 13:17**.
- P.** Pray one for another. **James 5:16b**; Pleasant words are as an honeycomb. **Proverbs 16:24**;
Pray without ceasing. **I Thessalonians 5:17**; Preach the word. **II Timothy 4:2a**.
- Q.** Quench not the spirit. **I Thessalonians 5:19**; Quicken me according to thy word. **Psalm 119:154**;
Quit you like men, be strong. **I Corinthians 16:13b-14**.
- R.** Rest in the Lord. **Psalm 37:7**; Rejoice with them that do rejoice. **Romans 12:15**;
Recompense to no man evil for evil. **Romans 12:17**;
Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. **Ephesians 5:16**.
- S.** Seven times a day do I praise thee. **Psalm 119:164**;
Sing unto the Lord, all the earth. **I Chronicles 16:23**;
A soft answer turneth away wrath. **Proverbs 15:1**;
Speak every man truth with his neighbour. **Ephesians 4:25b**;
Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. **Ephesians 5:19**;
Study to be quiet. **I Thessalonians 4:11a**;
Study to show thyself approved unto God. **II Timothy 2:15**.
- T.** Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. **Proverbs 3:5**;
To every thing there is a season. **Ecclesiastes 3:1**; Think on these things. **Philippians 4:8b-9a**.
- U.** Use hospitality. **I Peter 4:9**;
Understanding is a well-spring of life unto him that hath it. **Proverbs 16:22a**
- V.** Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. **Romans 12:19**;
Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity. **Ecclesiastes 12:8**; (John 3:3b).
Verily, verily, I say unto thee. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
- W.** Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord. **Colossians 3:23**;
Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. **Ecclesiastes 9:10**;
Wait on the Lord and keep his way. **Psalm 37:34**;
Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. **Matthew 26:41**;
We are labourers together with God. **I Corinthians 3:9**;
Work with your own hands. **I Thessalonians 4:11b**.
- X.** eXalt the Lord, our God. **Psalm 99:9**.
- Y.** Ye are the light of the world. **Matthew 5:14**. Yet will I not forget thee. **Isaiah 49:15b**.
Yield yourselves unto the Lord. **II Chronicles 30:8b**;
- Z.** Zacchaeus, make haste. **Luke 19:5**.

70. GREAT CHRISTIANS INSPIRING LIVES

Bible Reading: Hebrews 11:32 - 12:2.

Aim: Do something great for God.

Introduction:

We all love inspiring, encouraging, true stories. The Bible is full of many people's life's stories who had a great impact on their country, generation and world for Christ. The exciting thing is that you and I can have a great impact on the world for Christ. We need to exercise our faith to pray and trust God to do great things through our lives, as we work together to win, baptise and teach people for Christ. Hebrews chapter eleven describes many people's lives of faith who did great things for God in freeing people from sin's bondage.

These are the "so great a cloud of witnesses" that are watching you and me today from heaven. Having run their race and finished their course, having passed the baton onto us today, they are cheering us on in the heavenly grandstands to best use our opportunities and talents to win this world to Christ.

The last 2000 years contain many Christians lives that can greatly inspire us. Let us consider some of their life's stories, so that we might be encouraged to attempt and to complete great things for God.

We will meet these people in heaven, so it's good to be encouraged by their lives now.

1. POLYCARP. 150 AD. *"Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life". Rev. 2:10*

Polycarp was the last one to be taught personally by the Apostle **John**. Since there were no images of gods in early Churches, the heathens concluded that Christians did not believe in the existence of the gods, so they accused Christians of being atheists.

Polycarp was arrested and brought to an arena in Smyrna before a great multitude and urged to renounce Christians by saying "away with the atheists". He instead, pointed to the crowd and said "Away with the atheists."

The proconsul said "Deny Christ and I will release you." Polycarp said "86 years have I served Him, and He has never done me wrong. How can I blaspheme Him, my King, who has saved me? I am a Christian." The crowd called for him to be burned, and he was burned at the stake without ropes."

2. PETER WALDO. 1176 AD.

He was a rich merchant of Lyons, France who sold all his goods and gave money to the poor. He believed that the Bible was the only rule of faith and practice. He and his followers went about two by two preaching. They memorised large parts of Scripture.

They did not believe in purgatory or in masses. They believed that prayers said "in a house, to be just as effective as in a church. They grew so numerous that the Roman Catholic church's very existence was threatened. The Dominican and Franciscan Catholic orders were started to oppose the Waldenses, but they failed. Then the Roman Catholic church started the Inquisition to try them for heresy and kill them. In Southern France, there were too many Waldenses for the Inquisition to kill, so the Roman Catholic Church organised armies to march into Southern France to kill them. For 20 years blood flowed like water. The Waldenses fled to the high valleys of the alps and survive today. *John 16:1-3.*

3. JOHN WYCLIFFE. 1320-1384.

John Wycliffe was born in England in 1320 and became an Oxford University Professor. In 1376 he began to rebuke the wealthy, corrupt clergy. He declared the Bible to be the only rule of faith, not the Church. He translated the Bible into English from Latin so that all could read it. He called the Pope the "Antichrist." He and his followers (Lollards) spread Bibles and his teachings all over England. A law was passed to burn his followers as heretics. Thousands were martyred, but Lollardism continued to the Reformation. Wycliffe died in peace in 1384.

29 years after his death, Catholic clergy dug up his bones and burned them for heresy. Why? Because Wycliffe opposed mendicant friars selling indulgences, and the doctrine of transubstantiation. The Catholic church opposed translating the Bible into English.

"The Lord gave the Word: great was the company of those that published it." Psalm 68:11.

"Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book!... That they were graven with an iron **pen** and **lead** in the rock forever." Job 19:23,24.

4. JOHN HUSS. 1369-1414.

John Huss was born in 1369 in Czechoslovakia. He could see the Biblical truth of Wycliffe's teachings. Huss began to preach strongly against Catholic clergy corruption. The Waldenses and the common people heartily welcomed Huss' teachings and he won almost all Bohemia to Christ. Huss taught that:

1) The Church consists of all people who are saved.

2) Christ is Head of the Church, not Popes or Cardinals.

The great Schism in the Roman Catholic church was happening at this time, having 2 Popes, John XXIII at Avignon and Gregory XII in Rome. Pope John promised indulgences to all those who would help him fight Pope Gregory. Huss condemned the selling of indulgences as contrary to the Bible. Pope John XXIII then excommunicated Huss. Huss declared it null and void.

In 1414 Emperor Sigismund invited Huss to attend a Council, promising him safe conduct. Huss accepted. Pope John XXIII then put Huss in prison for heresy.

Huss, the Bohemians and the Emperor protested his arrest, but the Pope said it was alright to deceive and betray heretics, because heretics have no rights.

After 8 months in prison, Huss was cursed, degraded and burned at the stake. A Catholic army invaded Bohemia to kill Huss' followers. War raged for many years. When the Reformation began in Germany, Bohemia still opposed Roman Catholicism. "Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection. Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourings, yea of bonds and imprisonment. All these obtained a good report through faith." Hebrews 11:35,36,39.

Is Their Religion Enough?

People who should know better, tell me that the heathen are better off as they are, that their own religions satisfy them and meet their needs. Is that true? If so, then most certainly we should let them alone. But are they happy as they are?

a) I am thinking now of that **Mohammedan in Algeria** who slashed his head again and again with a large knife, until the blood flowed freely, then took newspapers and plastered them on top of his head; finally taking out a match and striking it, he set fire to the papers, hair, and blood. Can you imagine the agony? Why the self-inflicted torture? Because of his religion. He was laying up merit in heaven. Mohammedanism taught him to afflict himself, and he was doing it with a vengeance. Would you exchange places with him? Would you accept his Mohammedanism and give him your Christianity? Which religion would you prefer? Do you think Mohammedanism brought him peace and comfort and happiness; or the very opposite? I leave you to answer.

b) I am thinking of the **Africans** before Christianity, who killed their **twin babies**, believing them to be demon-possessed. If God should give you twins would you be willing to have them murdered? You would have to if you lived in Africa, for your religion would compel you to destroy them.

c) I am thinking of the **Hindu widows of India**, who because of their religion, have to lie down beside their husbands when they have died and allow themselves to be bound and burned alive. Thousands of them have gone into eternity screaming in agony, as they slowly burned to death. Would you exchange your religion for theirs? Do you think it brings them any pleasure, or any enjoyment? Yet you tell me to leave them alone, that they are better off as they are. What a callous philosophy!

d) I am thinking, too, of the pagans in **Africa**, who, when a chief dies, leaves orders for his widows—thirty, sixty, or a hundred of them to be thrown into the grave with him and bury them alive. Is that a pleasant prospect? Would you be satisfied with such a religion?

Until you, my friend, are willing to accept these religions with their consequences, and their abominable practices for yourself, you ought to be ashamed to say that the heathen are better off as they are. Their religions are religions of fear. They know nothing of peace and love. They have no hope. Jesus Christ alone offers them life, abundant life and that which satisfies the heart. Dr. J. Oswald Smith, *The Sunday School Times*.

5. MARTIN LUTHER. *November 10, 1483.*

He studied Law, but gave it up to become a priest. Luther visited Rome and was deeply shocked by Church corruption and evil. He deeply wanted salvation. So he tried to earn salvation by fleeing from the world and by doing good works. He couldn't find salvation in good works, so he studied the Bible more thoroughly. In 1512 he noticed Romans 1:17 "The just shall live by faith". He paused, he pondered, then joy unspeakable flooded his heart as he realised that he could be justified in God's sight by faith in Jesus Christ as his Saviour, without the works of the law.

His burden of sin rolled away. Up until now he had tried to earn salvation by his good works, but he had never been able to feel that he had done enough good works to take away his sins. God showed him that we are not saved by works, but by faith in Jesus Christ.

Tetzel had earlier greatly angered Luther by selling indulgences to people in market places of towns, saying: "As a coin in you pop, a soul from purgatory doth hop."

Now that Luther was saved he could see many errors and abuses in the Roman Catholic Church. Luther saw Tetzel deceiving people for eternity, so Luther wrote his 95 Theses against indulgences and nailed it on the Church door at Wittenburg on 31 October 1517. People came that day to see the Church's 5000 relics, but they read the 95 Theses and realised that they were true. These 95 Theses were printed in their own languages and sent all over Europe in 4 weeks. This almost stopped the sale of Indulgences. Luther defended his 95 Theses to the Pope.

Indulgence sales brought the Pope an immense income. Luther loosened the priests' hold on the people, because the Pope said that without mass, penance, confession and indulgences there was no salvation.

Fundamental Reformation teachings were that:

1. Early Church Fathers showed that salvation is by preaching and receiving the Gospel.
2. All believers are priests who have direct access to God. We do not need a Roman Catholic priest to get to God.
3. A Church is a community of believers, not a hierarchy of officials.
4. The Bible, not church tradition, is the final rule of faith and morals.

The Pope summoned Luther to Rome to burn him as a heretic. Luther's powerful friend Frederick, Elector of Saxony vetoed this. Dr. Eck wrote an article against Luther, so Luther wrote 12 theses against Eck, showing that Rome's authority over other churches was based on forged documents. This greatly attacked the Pope's authority, so Eck challenged Luther to a debate at Leipzig. Eck got Luther to admit that some of Huss' ideas were right. This meant that Luther had sided with a condemned heretic. The Pope later excommunicated Luther with a Bull. Luther replied with a tract: "Against the Execrable Bull of Antichrist." Luther had read Valla's thesis which proved beyond the possibility of contradiction that the "Donation of Constantine" was a forgery. This enraged Luther to call the Pope an Antichrist.

The Pope got young Emperor Charles to judge Luther. Luther said: "I cannot recant unless proved wrong by Holy Scripture. My conscience is bound to the Word of God. Here I stand."

THE REFORMATION.

The Reformation reformed the church, but it also reformed many nations political, economic, social and cultural life.

On Luther's return from the Leipzig debate with Dr Eck, five men kidnapped him and hid him in the Wartburg Castle at the orders of Frederick the Wise for 10 months. During this time he translated the Bible from Latin to German, the language of the people. Step by step many important changes took place to make a vast difference between Catholic and Protestant.

1. The papacy was rejected.
2. The distinction between clergy and laity was rejected. Hebrews 4:16 teaches that all believers are priests having direct access to God.
3. There are no sacraments (not 7), but only two ordinances being Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
4. The sacraments are not needed for salvation. This was a big load off people's backs.
5. Praying to Mary and to the saints was done away with.
6. Worship of images was done away with.
7. Veneration of relics was done away with.
8. Pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem are not necessary.
9. Religious processions are not necessary.
10. Holy Water is not needed.
11. Outward asceticism, (going without to an extreme) is not needed.
12. Entering a monastery to retreat from the world are not not needed.
13. Prayers for the dead are not needed.
14. Belief in Purgatory is wrong.
15. Transubstantiation is wrong. The idea where the bread and wine are changed to the body and blood of Christ.

Luther added these extra changes.

1. The State should be above the church.
2. He translated the Bible to German. Church services were held in German, not Latin.
3. He established schools everywhere to ground children in Bible doctrine.
4. He wrote a new hymn book. The song "A mighty fortress is our God", was written by Luther.
5. He said that the Roman Catholic Church had left the New Testament Church's teachings.
6. In 1525, Luther married Catherine Von Bora, an ex-nun. He showed that priestly celibacy was not necessary. Titus 1:5,6.

6. ZWINGLI.

In Switzerland, Zwingli reformed the church. In 1518 he attacked the sale of indulgences, removed statues, abolished the mass, altars, relics, processions, and transubstantiation. He said that in the Lord's Supper, the bread and grape juice symbolised Christ's body and blood. He died in battle in 1531.

7. CALVIN.

Calvin reformed the church in France. He was born in 1509. He studied logic, the Church Fathers' writings, Bible and Law. Calvin fled Roman Catholic persecution and taught small groups in secret places. A new torture was invented to lift the victim in and out of the fire, instead of burning him all at once. Calvin fled to Basel, Switzerland where he studied and wrote "Calvin's Institutes." He sent it to King Frances I of France to show that Christians as firm Bible believers, deserved better treatment. Calvin went to Geneva where Farel enlisted his help in Switzerland. All of Norway, Sweden and Denmark embraced Lutheranism. Calvin translated the Bible into French. Both Luther and Calvin believed that Christians should be thoroughly grounded in Bible doctrine, and that salvation was by faith in Christ alone. He wrote a catechism.

Calvin's motto was "My heart for thy cause I offer thee, Lord, promptly and sincerely."

8. ANABAPTISTS.

Baptists existed since John the Baptist, Christ and the Apostles. Anabaptists were so called because they rebaptised people who had been sprinkled as babies. Anabaptists believed in:

1. The Fatherhood of God.
2. The Deity of Christ.
3. The Church as a body of converted believers, not a state church.
4. The Bible as God's authoritative word.
5. The Second coming of Christ.
6. Christ's commandments of love, holiness, self denial, humility and peace.
7. Passionate missionary concern to win lost people to eternal life in Christ.
8. Infant baptism was wrong, believers immersion was right.

They soon spread through Switzerland, Austria, South Germany, Bohemia, and Holland. Because of baptism by immersion, Roman Catholic, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Zwinglians relentlessly persecuted Anabaptists.

9. JOHN KNOX. *Proverbs 28:1 "The righteous are bold as a lion." 1514-72.*

John Knox reformed the church in Scotland. Scotland had a weak King fighting with Scottish lords, corrupt clergy, great poverty and universities of a low standard. Several young Scotsman went to Luther's Wittenburg University and returned to Scotland to spread Luther's doctrines. John Knox was ordained a Roman Catholic Priest. He was captured when the French invaded St Andrews and he worked as a galley slave. Knox helped Archbishop Cranmer of England write the 42 Articles for the church of Ireland. Knox after visiting Calvin returned to Scotland and preached against the Mass. In 1555 Knox urged Queen Mary to favour the Gospel. Being a strong Catholic she sentenced him to death, but Knox had fled the country, so she burned an image of him instead. Knox and his friends pledged to further "the most blessed Word of God and his congregation." After Knox returned to Scotland, the Reformation swept ahead rapidly. His preaching was powerful, direct, vigorous and plain. He used wit and cutting satire. Of his preaching they said: "Others lop off the branches, but Knox strikes at the root."

In the pulpit he was so energetic, he seemed to pound it to pieces and fly out of it. His preaching was like a spark in a gunpowder keg. People smashed images and statues. In

1560 the Scottish Parliament changed the countries religion from Catholicism to Protestantism. The Pope's and Priest's authority was abolished and the Mass was forbidden. Maintenance of the true religion was declared to be the prime duty of Government. Their order of service had: prayer, Bible reading, offering, sermon and singing. The Reformation was preserved unintentionally by Catholic Mary Queen of Scots by her immoral life, the burning of Protestants at the stake and her other unwise actions. These caused the leaders and people to turn to Protestantism. Knox died in 1572.

10. THOMAS CRANMER. (1489-1556).

Cranmer was the first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury. The English Reformation passed through four stages.

- 1) **Henry VIII (1509-1547),**
- 2) **Edward VI (1547-1553),**
- 3) **Mary (1553-1558),**
- 4) **Elizabeth I (1558-1603).**

In 1525 Tyndale translated the Bible into English while being greatly persecuted.

In 1536 Tyndale was martyred near Brussels.

- 1) **Henry VIII** applied to the Pope for a divorce from Catherine to marry Ann Boleyn. The Pope did not reply, so Henry passed a law declaring himself to be the head of the Church of England. If anyone opposed this, they'd be killed. Catholic Thomas More who had burned many Lutherans at the stake, opposed this and was beheaded. Galatians 6:7 says that what you sow, you reap. Henry took land away from the monasteries and gave the estates to his loyal friends. Henry rejected relics such as Malcus' ear, stones that stoned Peter, a crucifix that could turn its head, roll its eyes, move its lips and foam at the mouth and shed tears. A mechanical device was found inside it, which priests manipulated in order to deceive the people.
 - 2) **Edward VI** came to the throne at age 9 years. He favoured the Reformation. That same year (1547) Parliament passed a law stating that:
 - 1) All people could partake of bread and grape juice.
 - 2) Images should be removed from churches.
 - 3) Celibacy of priests and nuns was done away with.
 - 4) The Prayer book dropped prayers for the dead.
 - 5) They adopted the 39 articles. Then Edward died of Tuberculosis.
 - 3) **Bloody Mary (1553-58)** a strong Catholic came to the throne and reversed all the Reformation work of Edward. In 1555 she burned 75 Christians at the stake, including Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley. Her next victim was Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, appointed by Henry as the first Protestant Archbishop. After Henry VIII death, Cranmer was the main moving force behind the Reformation in England. The Pope excommunicated Cranmer in 1555. Cranmer weakened and was pressured to sign a statement denying Protestantism. Mary then decided to kill him in 1556. Just before he was to die, he renounced his denial, and once more strongly declared his Protestant faith. The hand which signed the denial, he held in the flames until it was burned to a crisp. He then was burned as a martyr and a hero. Mary died in 1558 having burned over 300 people to death.
 - 4) **Elizabeth I (1558-1603)** was Mary's sister. Mary's persecutions were aimed at destroying Protestantism, but it greatly aroused anti-Roman Catholic anger. In 1559 Parliament rejected all Papal authority over England.
- * At this time the eight Protestant countries were England, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Scotland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

- * Now Rome formulated a creed at the Council of Trent of 1545-63.
- * Emperor Charles V wanted to destroy Protestantism in its early days, but God raised up the Moslem Turks to attack Charles and a French war which distracted him from attacking Protestantism.

Catholicism was revitalised by 3 new weapons:

- 1) The Index, a list of banned books.
- 2) The Inquisition to try, torture and kill Protestants.
- 3) The Jesuit's job was to win countries back to Catholicism. They won back most of Poland, Austria, Ireland, Belgium, Bavaria and parts of South Germany.

11. FRENCH HUGUENOTS. 1562-1629. French Protestants.

France, like Germany was divided between Protestants and Catholics. The Huguenots were a strong, prosperous, intelligent, nobility class, but they were a minority.

Civil war broke out between Catholics and Protestants in 1562. In 1570 a brief peace was made. Catholic extremists alarmed Catherine de Medici with reports that Huguenots were plotting to take the throne. Catherine convinced Charles IX of this and they plotted to massacre all Huguenots.

All leading Huguenots were invited to the wedding of Henry and Margaret in Paris. On August 24, 1572 which was St. Bartholomew's day, bells were rung to signal the massacre to begin. Over ten thousand Huguenots were killed that day. Most French Huguenots fled to the new world (America) or other countries.

- * Protestants were burned at the stake as heretics in Italy, Spain, France, England, Scotland, but most in Holland (18,000). Phillip II of Spain tortured, burned, drowned and buried alive many Protestants. Spain and Holland fought each other in a bloody 18 year war. England supported Holland until Holland won a peace in 1609.
- * Phillip II of Spain formed an enormous fleet called the Spanish Armada of 130 ships, 180 priests and 30,000 men to conquer England. God defeated the Armada by sending a terrible storm which destroyed most of the ships. 5 years later, Phillip sent 100 ships to conquer England for Rome. God sent a gale destroying most of his ships. "Praise the Lord...stormy wind fulfilling His Word." Psalm 148:7,8.
- * The Thirty Year War (1618-48). Rome and Catholics attacked Germany to destroy Protestantism. When things looked hopeless for the Protestants, King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden brought his armies in to win the war for the Protestants. Peace came in 1648. The German population was reduced from 15 million to 5 million in the 30 Years War.
There have been no major boundary changes since the treaty of Westphalia in 1648 between Protestants and Catholics. "I saw the woman drunk with the blood of saints." Revelation 17:5,6.

12. OLIVER CROMWELL.

Cromwell led English independent Christians in a war against Charles I who had persecuted Puritans after Elizabeth's death. Cromwell's 21,000 cavalry went into battle singing psalms. When not fighting they studied the Bible, prayed and sang hymns. They were never defeated. The King surrendered and was beheaded in 1649.

13. WILLIAM OF ORANGE.

In 1685 James II a strong Catholic came to the English throne, aiming to restore England to Catholicism. James II plotted with Louis XIV of France to attack England. The English in their distress appealed to William III of Orange (Holland) to help them. William with his army crossed the sea in 1688 and drove out James II. William and Mary were then crowned King and Queen of England.

As a result of William's bravery he saved England, Holland and America for Protestantism and liberty against Catholicism. There were no more Protestant/Catholic wars after 1689.

14. COUNT VON ZINZENDORF.

He was born in Czechoslovakia, in 1700. As a child he saw a picture of Christ on the cross saying: "This I did for you. What do you do for me?" This made a great impression on him and his entire life was controlled by a love for Jesus and a burning desire to win souls for Christ. When aged 10 years old he started a club to promote personal holiness and the evangelization of the world.

When aged 15 he and his classmates promised on every occasion to confess Christ and to seek the conversion of men. He bought a large area of land near Dresden. In 1722 he gave Christian David permission to let the Pietists come and live on his estates. He devoted his life to reorganise this group of 300 people to win the world to Christ. Where they lived was called Herrnhut, meaning the Lord's lodge. They were later called Moravians. Zinzendorf looked on the members of the Moravian church as soldiers of Christ who were to go to all the world to conquer it for Christ.

The Moravians were the first Protestant body to take seriously the Great Commission. They established missions in Africa, Asia, Greenland, Lapland, to the American Indians, and home mission work. There are 70,000 Moravians today in United States. They had an impact on other denominations to soul winning, entirely beyond proportion to their small number. They first lit the torch of Protestant missionary zeal. "Go and preach the Gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15.

A Moravian asked Wesley if he knew Christ. This triggered Wesley's desire to be saved.

CONCLUSION:

Will you be like the Moravians?

Will you stand up for Christ like Protestants in Europe?

Will you deny Christ as Cranmer did only to feel shame afterwards?

Will you seek to win Countries for Christ like Knox?

70b. THE CHALLENGE OF MISSIONS

Bible Reading: Revelation 3:7-13.

Aim: To challenge us with opportunities that exist to be soul winners and Bible teaching missionaries.

Introduction: What will you do with your God-given life? Each of us are faced with many opportunities to serve God, yet we often don't notice them. We can be greatly inspired by stories of missionaries in the Bible. These became the basis for missionaries over the last 2000 years.

We have the Great Commission of Christ in Matthew 28:18-20. God calls all of us to be a missionary either at home or overseas.

a) If you are a **young man** pray and ask God if he wants you to be an overseas or home missionary. Then get prepared by learning Soul Winning and Bible teaching here and now. You say "I need a job to provide money." Then get a trade or source of income while you are preparing for missionary work. Trust God to supply your needs. He will not let you down. He hasn't let anyone else down yet.

b) **Mothers:** Train, equip and encourage your children to be missionaries. If I had 100 children I'd want them all to be missionaries here or overseas. God had one begotten Son and He made him a missionary.

c) **Men:** God may be calling you to train to be a missionary somewhere one day. Your life isn't finished when you retire from your secular job. Aim to retire early so that you can be a missionary until you die.

d) **Young ladies:** Train to be a Soul Winning, Bible Teaching missionary. Marry a man who has the same goals.

- 1) The Philadelphian church in Revelation 2 was a missionary church that God gave an **open door**. Today, God has given us open doors all over the world.
- 2) They had a **little strength**. So do we. God uses those with a little strength.
- 3) They **kept Christ's Word**. Avoid modern Bible versions that omit much of God's Word.
- 4) People **hated this church**, because Christ says that he will make their enemies worship before their feet, and to know that I have **loved thee**. That Christ loved this church is what mattered.
- 5) This church will be **kept out of the Tribulation**. Why? Because they kept God's Word.
- 6) This church had a **crown** reward in heaven.
- 7) Overcomers in this church will become a **pillar** in God's heavenly temple.
- 8) "He shall go no more out" means no more rejection as you get in soul winning, visitation and persecution. I go soul winning/door knocking each week so that I won't get scared of doing it.
- 9) I will **write** on him my new name and the city New Jerusalem's name.

Note: This Philadelphian Church is represented by the church from around 1700 to the Second coming who hold the truth of God's Word out to a lost world. Let us look at some well-known missionaries of this period and be encouraged to follow their example.

15. DAVID BRAINERD. 1718-1747. To American Indians.

Brainerd was born in Connecticut, USA. He was saved in 1739 and entered Yale College to study for the ministry. He was expelled from Yale for criticising a tutor and for attending a revival meeting forbidden by the rector. He was later appointed missionary to the American Indians and ordained in 1744. That year his health was poor and he saw little success among the Indians. But on 3 January 1745 he prayed and fasted all day for God to pour out his Holy Spirit on his work. The Lord laid John 7:37 on his mind: "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink."

He preached this verse continually among the Indians. A key breakthrough occurred that year when his interpreter **Moses Tautamy** and his wife received Christ as Saviour and asked for baptism. Moses was a constant drinker and often had been drunk while interpreting.

After being saved, the change in Moses was dramatic. He interpreted differently and would often continue on preaching after David Brainerd stopped, exhorting the Indians to come to Christ.

Wherever David Brainerd went, revival broke out and many received Christ as their Saviour all that year. In 1747 tuberculosis compelled him to abandon his work. He went to Jonathan Edwards house and became engaged to his daughter, but died in October 1747. Jonathan Edwards later published his work and it inspired many to follow his work among the Indians. Missionaries such as William Carey, Henry Martyn and others were inspired by him.

16. WILLIAM CAREY. 1761-1834.

He was called the "Father of Modern Missions." His vision was to take the gospel to the entire world. He was saved at age 18 in a shoemaker's shop where he worked. He mastered 5 languages. He was ordained by the Particular Baptists in 1787 and began to urge that worldwide missions be undertaken. An older Calvinist preacher rebuked him for this, saying, "When God is ready to convert the heathen, he will do so without your help or mine."

One of Carey's famous quotes was: "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God."

In 1792 the Particular Baptist missionary society was formed and they sent Carey to India as their first missionary.

Carey took a job as a manager of an Indigo plantation to pay for the work. He founded 26 churches, 126 schools (with 10,000 students enrolled), translated the Bible into 44 languages, produced dictionaries, organised India's first medical mission, savings bank, Bible College and newspaper. He performed many agriculture experiments. He helped eradicate suttee (the practice of burning a widow when her husband died). He formed India's first printing company, paper mill and steam engine. He baptised his first Hindu convert in 1800. He inspired the formation of the: London missionary society in 1795, Netherlands missionary society in 1797, American missionary society in 1810, and the American Baptist Missionary Union in 1814. He sparked the entire Christian World to carry out the Great Commission.

17. JOHN WESLEY. 1703-1791. Founded Methodism.

Born in Epworth, England, the 15th child of Susanna and Samuel Wesley, a non-conformist pastor. At age 6 the house burned down and he was rescued from death. He saw himself as "a firebrand plucked out of the burning." They started the "Holy Club" at Oxford University and were called Methodists, meaning one that lives according to the method laid down in the Bible. He valued a "clean heart, a single eye, a soul full of God." John and Charles sailed to Georgia, America to convert the Indians, but failed miserably. On the way home, the ship almost sank and he saw how 26 Moravians sang and trusted God, showing no fear of death. Spangenburg asked Wesley, "Do you know Jesus Christ?" Wesley did not know Christ yet. Wesley found no peace with God, because he sought it not by faith in Christ, but by the works of the Law. "I went to America to convert the Indians, but who shall convert me?" In England, they met Peter Bohler, a Moravian who taught a faith of complete surrender, instant conversion and joy in believing. Wesley while reading Luther's preface to his Romans Commentary regarding the change which God works in us through faith in Christ, then trusted Christ alone for salvation, and received assurance that his sins were taken away and saved. He believed that one should be able to tell the exact circumstances, time and place of their conversion.

Wesley's life spanned the entire 1700's. England was in a contest with France for world supremacy. England then laid the foundation of her empire in India, North America, Australia, South Africa and Africa. England then became an industrial manufacturing power. Most preachers did nothing for Christ, and morals were low at the time.

In 1739 George Whitfield, an Anglican minister began preaching outdoors to Bristol miners. He invited Wesley to join him. Wesley then began 50 years of outdoor preaching in England, Scotland and Wales. The Anglican church closed its doors to Wesley. "I look upon the world as my parish," he said. He gathered those who were saved into "Societies". He issued society tickets to be renewed quarterly to weed out people of false conversion. Each society was divided into classes of 12 members, who paid one penny weekly to pay off the property.

He divided areas into circuits where travelling preachers spent 8 weeks in one place. Charles Wesley wrote thousands of Christian songs. John Wesley urged his lay preachers to study at home and he published many cheap, short, plain books for Christians, which made him wealthy, yet he gave it all away. He worked with Wilberforce to abolish slavery. On ordaining his own preachers, he broke from the Church of England. They forbade him to preach in their churches. So he first preached on his father's tombstone to a large crowd. He believed that people accepted Christ of their own free will. He was not a Calvinist as was Whitfield. He breathed new life into many other churches. Those influenced by him were **John Newton**, **William Wilberforce** who helped stop slavery, **John Howard** who reformed bad prison conditions, and **Robert Raikes** the father of Sunday Schools. He preached his last outdoor sermon in 1790 on Isaiah 55:6 "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." He died on March 2, 1791 and memorial services were held throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. It is said that he stopped the French Revolution from spreading to England.

18. HUDSON TAYLOR. 1832-1905.

He founded the China Inland Mission. Born into a Methodist family, his parents and grandparents had entertained John Wesley in their home. His father had a deep concern for China. At age 5, he wanted to become a missionary to China. He was **home-schooled** because of his ill health. In 1849 he was saved at age 17 while reading a tract on the finished work of Christ in his father's study. That year he offered his life to Christ for full time missionary service. The Lord called him to China. He began to prepare his life to go to China. He learned the Mandarin language, Medicine and Theology. He learned to depend on God for everything. One day he was out visiting the poor, when a man asked him to come and pray for his wife. In the house, he found that it was full of starving children, a sick mother and her baby near death. He gave the last coin he had to buy medicine and food for the family resulting in the mother's life being saved. Later that day a package of money arrived unexpectedly for him. In 1853 he set sail for China. No one met him on arrival. He travelled inland, which was dangerous but he preached the gospel, and handed out tracts and gospels to many people. He dressed as the Chinese do, winning him great respect. In 1858 he married Maria Dyer. In 1859 he took over the London Missionary Hospital in Ningpo. By 1860 the work was growing, but the labourers were few. He had to return to England to recover his health. Here he recruited many more missionaries who went with him to China. He founded the China Inland Mission. The work soon spread over much of China. His wife and son died in 1870. He remarried in 1872. More workers came to China from 1876-78. He died in 1905.

What so greatly influenced Hudson Taylor to become a spiritual giant for God?

- 1) A **Spiritual Home**. His father was an evangelist and his mother a woman of prayer. His father began to pray for China two years before Hudson was born. The family always honoured Christ, the Bible and prayer.
- 2) A **definite call from God**. Today, teenagers are not expected to get serious about God's will for their lives. Hudson dared to seek God's will for his life. "I asked God to give me some work to do for Him, because Christ had done so much for me." God then convinced him to become a missionary to China.
- 3) **God prepared him at home to sacrifice and serve**.

He trusted God to meet all his needs, he did away with all material comforts, he exercised, lived on a plain diet, he economised and learned how to do without. He therefore had extra funds to share with others.

4) A **love for all God's people** and a **desire for wide usefulness**. He prayed "Lord give me wide usefulness."

5) He **depended wholly on the Lord**. He discovered the secret of the exchanged life in Galatians 2:20. Three Scriptures were the key to his life:

- 1) Mark 11:22 "Have faith in God." He sought the will of God through prayer and Bible study. He then committed the matter to God, and trusted God to work.
- 2) I Samuel 7:12 "Ebenezer.....hitherto hath the Lord helped us."
- 3) Genesis 22:14 "Jehovah Jireh.....the Lord will provide." The Lord will see to it.

CONCLUSION:

Will you surrender to be somebody for God? Will you trust God with your future as a missionary? Surrender today for God's purposes to be achieved in your life.

70c. FAMOUS MISSIONARIES LIVES

Bible Reading: Ezekiel 3:16-21; Romans 10:14,15.

Aim: To be challenged by the lives of missionaries to win people to Christ through missions.

Introduction:

One thing common in all greatly used people of God is that they had very little material resources, but they were strong in faith and set out to serve God not knowing how God would work things out.

Missionaries encountered many obstacles such as:

- 1) People they spoke to were suspicious of another culture.
- 2) Local superstitions.
- 3) Dislike of foreigners.
- 4) They wanted to cling to the religion of their fathers.
- 5) Modernist missionaries and cults giving a false Gospel.

19. HENRY MARTYN

He topped mathematics at Cambridge University and said "I was surprised to find that I had grasped a shadow." He obeyed God's call to India in 1806. He translated the Bible into Hindustani and Persian. His journals and letters appeared in 1837. These motivated many young men to missionary work. He died of illness at age 31.

20. ADONIRAM JUDSON 1788-1850.

He was an American missionary who sailed to India in 1812. He adopted Baptist views on board ship and severed his Congregational ties. In 1814 he went to Burma. He mastered the Burmese language and learned Buddhism so that he could interact with the people. He translated the Bible, made a dictionary and wrote many tracts. He trained evangelists and pastors informally.

He was unwillingly caught up in the British Burmese War. He was imprisoned, bound with 5 pairs of fetters and suffered fever, heat and hunger. He miraculously survived. He baptised his first convert after 6 years. His first two wives died. He later died at sea.

21. JOHN GEDDIE 1815-1872 New Hebrides.

He encouraged his Presbyterian Church in Canada to send a missionary to the New Hebrides but no one volunteered. So he went himself in 1847. He learnt the language, translated the Bible and other books and Bible study aids. "When he landed in New Hebrides there were no Christians. When he left in 1872 there were no heathens." Praise God.

22. JOHAN KRAPP 1810–1881.

He established a mission in Mombasa 1844 (Kenya) to reach 8 million Gallas people. His wife and newborn child died of fever. He studied languages and explored East Africa. He translated a Swahili New Testament, grammar and dictionary.

23. ROBERT LAWS 1851-1934.

This Scottish missionary established missions in Malawi and Tanzania. When he left in 1927 there were over 700 primary schools, a 60,000 member Christian community, 13 ordained African Pastors. He aimed for a Bible reading, self extending and self supporting evangelizing church with national leaders.

24. ERIC LIDDELL 1902-1945.

He was born in China of missionary parents, but educated in England. He represented Scotland in International Rugby. In the 1924 Paris Olympics he disqualified himself from the 100 metres heat because it was held on a Sunday. He went on to win a gold medal in the 400 metres race. A note of 1 Samuel 2:30 was slipped into his hand which read: "Them that honour me, I will honour." He went to China as a missionary and died of a brain tumour in a Japanese concentration camp in 1942.

25. D. L. MOODY 1837-1899.

Moody was an independent, non denominational evangelist. He was saved as a shoe salesman and started the YMCA for evangelising youth. His independent stance greatly influenced later American Fundamentalism. From 1873-75, he and Sankey (his song leader) held a crusade in England with immense success. He returned to the US as a national hero and was invited everywhere to preach.

His message was as simple as 3R's:

RUIN by sin
REDEMPTION by Christ
REGENERATION by the Holy Spirit.

He majored on saving souls. He said: "I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, Moody save all you can."

He believed: Get people saved first, then all else will be added later. He promoted Dispensational Premillennialism. Torrey and Schofield were his associates. He took over and renamed "Moody Bible Institute" to train gapmen to do soul winning. He started the Student Volunteer Movement in 1886. His motto was "evangelization of the world in this generation."

26. GEORGE MULLER 1805-98.

He was born in Russia and became a British citizen. He was saved in 1825 at a home prayer meeting. He set out to train to be a missionary to the Jews, but ill health led him to Pastor Ebenezer Chapel which grew from 18 to 227 in 3 years. He believed and taught that God would supply material needs by believing prayer alone. He founded a Bible institution

to spread Bible truths. He copied Franke faith orphanage in Germany for Bristol. He eventually housed, educated, and trained 2000 children in 5 houses at Bristol. At age 70 he set out with his wife on a worldwide mission lasting 17 years. He blessed many by testifying to the prayer answering God. A well known incident was how at his orphanage, he thanked God for food, with nothing on the table. Then came a knock on the door with bread coming from a bakery from a broken down cart.

27. R. A. TORREY 1856-1928.

In 1889 Moody asked Torrey to head up Moody Bible Institute. From 1894-1906 he pastored Chicago's Moody Memorial church. From 1902-06 he did mass evangelism with Charles Alexander in Australia, New Zealand, India, China, Japan, Germany, Britain and Canada. In one tour of England he saw over 70,000 people saved in 4 years. He wrote many books against liberalism and how to serve God.

28. BOB JONES 1883-1968.

He was a famous evangelist and founded Bob Jones University, South Carolina. Bob Jones opposed the worldliness of Christians. He opposed the atheist drift in educational institutions. He upheld Bob Jones University doctrine and moral standards. Billy Graham trained here.

29. CHARLES FINNEY 1792-1875.

He was the father of modern revivalism. He studied law in 1818, being saved in 1821, and ordained in 1824. He was against Calvinism. An estimated 1 million people were saved in his revivals in New York, Philadelphia, Boston and the United States. He stressed the ability of people to repent.

30. MARY SLESSOR 1848-1915.

She was born in Scotland. She received a meagre education. She became a Sunday School teacher and a mission helper. In 1876 she was sent to Calabar, West Africa, which was uncontrolled by any colonial power. It was divided into warring tribes. It was ruled by witchcraft and barbarous customs such as killing twins at birth. She was in constant danger all her life. Slessor won the confidence of tribal chiefs and peoples by her fearlessness and dedication, medical and language skills, and sense of humour.

She opened Africa to the Gospel and to trade. She opposed slavery. From 1903 she opened up new territory to the north and west. She died at age 66, worn out by service to Africa.

71. WHAT IS LOVE?

Bible Reading: I Corinthians 13:4-7.

Rebuke: By seeking the 'showier' gifts, you are not exhibiting love. I Cor.13 describes true love. Paul now lists fifteen qualities of true love in action. Each is a verb, and focuses on what true love does or does not do. Paul is trying to change their habits by measuring their lives against fifteen qualities of true love in action. This is a portrait of Jesus Christ, whose name is not mentioned in I Corinthians 13, but who is described as the personification of love.

1. Love is PATIENT (longsuffering).

It is the ability to be inconvenienced or taken advantage of by a person over time, yet not be upset or angry. Patience never retaliates, never takes revenge for being hurt, and refuses to pay back evil for evil (Romans 12:17). If God is so patient with rebellious men, ought not we be patient with each other? Jesus prayed while dying on the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

2. Love is KIND.

Just as patience will **take** anything from others, kindness will **give** anything to others. It means to be serving, gracious, useful, generous and showing active goodwill. A Christian husband, wife and children must be kind and helpful to each other. Paul challenged the Corinthians to show kindness by repenting of their selfish, jealous, proud and childish attitudes, and to humbly use their gifts.

3. Love ENVIES NOT.

Here begins eight descriptions of what love is not. Don't confuse jealousy with envy. Jealousy is wanting what is rightfully yours, such as your spouse. God is a jealous God. Envy is wanting what is not rightfully yours. Envy comes in two ways:

- a) I want what someone else has, for example, a better boat, etc.
- b) Wanting evil for someone else that you don't like.

Examples include:

- a) **Eve** was envious of God's greater knowledge, to which Satan successfully appealed.
- b) **Cain** was envious of Abel's better sacrifice.
- c) **Joseph's brothers**, being full of envy, sold him as a slave.
- d) **Babylonian officials**, being envious of Daniel, threw him into a lion's den.
- e) **Pharisees** crucified Jesus for envy.

"Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?" Proverbs 27:4.

A loving person is never envious, but is glad at the success of others, even if it disadvantages them. For example, Jonathan still loved David when David was more popular and likely to take Jonathan's throne.

4. Love DOES NOT BRAG (vaunts not itself), or **boast**.

When a loving person succeeds, he does not boast of it or talk conceitedly. Love does not parade its achievements. Bragging is the other side of envy. Envy wants what others have, while bragging tries to make others envious of what we have.

Envy pulls others down, bragging brings us up. We dislike bragging in others, yet we brag ourselves.

The Corinthian believers were spiritual braggers, constantly seeking the spotlight of public attention. They wanted the showier gifts. They all wanted to talk at once, especially when speaking ecstatically. Most of their tongues-speaking was counterfeit, yet they bragged about it, like many Charismatics today. They cared nothing for Church harmony, order or edification, only for flaunting themselves.

"How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying." I Cor. 14:26.

Each did his own thing, as publicly as possible, to draw attention to himself, while disregarding what others were doing.

5. Love is NOT ARROGANT (is not puffed up).

The Corinthians believers thought that they had arrived at perfection. None of us have any reason to boast because every good gift comes from above. They were arrogant and proud about their spiritual gifts. John the Baptist said of Christ, "He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30.

"pride, arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward (bragging, arrogant) mouth, do I hate." Prov. 8:13. Pride & arrogance bred strife, filling the Corinthian church. Arrogance is big-headed, love is big-hearted.

6. Love does NOT BEHAVE ITSELF UNSEEMLY or RUDELY.

The loveless person is impolite, bad mannered, crude, careless of people's feelings or sensitivities. When the Corinthians came to the love feast, they were greedy to eat first, and became drunken (11:21). During worship services, each one tried to outdo the other in speaking in tongues, each speaking at once. Many Christians have forfeited the privilege of sharing the gospel by being rude to an unbeliever who offends them. The rude messenger can become a barrier to the gospel.

In Charismatic churches, women are "slain in the Spirit," sprawled on the floor, while altar workers cover their thighs and underwear with rugs to minimise their indecent exposure. The Holy Spirit would not endorse indecent exposure in God's people. "Love does not behave itself unseemly." (13:5). God is not the author of confusion (14:33), nor of indecent behaviour. When present, these are not of the Holy Spirit.

7. Love SEEKS NOT HER OWN (not selfish).

An English tombstone reads:

"Here lies a miser who lived for himself, and cared for nothing but gathering wealth.

Now where he is or how he fares, nobody knows and nobody cares."

In contrast, a plain tombstone in St. Paul's Cathedral reads: "Sacred to the memory of General Charles Gordon, who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, his heart to God."

"Love seeks not her own" is probably the key to everything. Fallen sinful human nature wants to have its own way. Adam and Eve rejected God's way so that they could seek their own way. Self replaced God. Love is not preoccupied with its own things, but with the interests of others. Philippians 2:4.

The Corinthian believers were examples of what loving Christians should **not** be. They were extremely selfish. They did not share their food at love feasts. They sued each other in courts. They wanted what they thought were the "best" spiritual gifts for themselves. They should have used their spiritual gifts for the benefit of others, but instead they used them to make themselves feel good, building up themselves. Jesus, however, is our perfect model, living his life for others, never seeking his own welfare, but always the welfare of others.

8. Love is NOT EASILY PROVOKED.

Provoke means to arouse to anger. Love guards against being irritated, upset or angered by things said or done against it. Paul does not include righteous indignation here. Jesus was righteously angry with how the Pharisees mistreated the weak and opposed the Word of God, and how they made His Father's house into a den of thieves. (Matthew 21:11,12,13). But when Jesus was personally abused, He did not become angry. Paul and Christ were only angered by things that angered God. Paul did not become angry or easily provoked at those who beat him, jailed him, or lied about him. Love never reacts in retaliation or revenge. The person who wants his own way is easily provoked. When everyone seeks his own rights, everyone grabs, no one gives, and everyone loses. Love considers nothing its right, but everything its obligation. Telling our spouses that we love them is false if we continually get upset and angry at what they say and do. Telling our children that we love them is false if we often yell at them for doing things that irritate us. Love that seeks the welfare of others is the only cure for self-centredness.

9. Love THINKS NO EVIL, (not keeping record of wrongs suffered).

Keeping record of things done against us is a sure way to our and others unhappiness. "Thinks no evil" in Greek, is "logizomai" meaning "take into account," a book-keeping term for keeping a permanent record. When God pardons those who receive Christ as Saviour, He keeps no more record of their sins. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute (take into account) sin." Romans 4:8.

Love forgives, keeping no books, because it holds no resentment or grudges. If God so completely and permanently erases the record of our many sins against Him, how much more should we forgive and forget the much lesser wrongs done against us?

10. Love DOES NOT REJOICE IN INIQUITY (sin).

Love never gets satisfaction from sin, whether ours or others. Doing wrong is bad, bragging about sin is worse. To rejoice in sin is to make wrong appear right. "Woe to them that call evil good, and good evil: that put darkness for light, and light for darkness...." Isaiah 5:20.

This is turning God's truth upside down. Many magazines, books and TV programs glorify sin, and rejoice in unrighteousness. They teach that anything goes, and that everyone sets their own standards of right and wrong. They say "Right is doing what you want." Sometimes rejoicing in iniquity takes the form of hoping that someone will fall into sin or trouble. Rejoicing in sin is wrong because:

- a) We are delighting in what **offends** and **grieves** God. When we enjoy sin, we prove our lack of love for God. Gossip reveals others sins and hurts them. Gossip is gloating over others shortcomings and sins. Gossip that is true is still gossip. A person is never helped by spreading the news of his sin.
- b) It produces **harmful consequences** to the sinner. He is out of fellowship with God.

11. Love REJOICES IN THE TRUTH (The Word of God).

Righteousness is based on God's truth. Love rejoices in Bible truth and in sound doctrine. Love cannot tolerate wrong doctrine. What people believe affects their well-being now, their eternal destiny, and their understanding of God's will. Love will not compromise the truth, because it is unkind to mislead people by our failure to stand up for the truth. Love, truth and righteousness are connected. Love looks for the good, hopes for the good, and emphasizes the good. Love rejoices in people living the truth.

12. Love BEARS (covers, supports, protects) ALL THINGS. 13:7.

The four qualities in 13:7 are hyperbole, the "all things" are exaggerations to make a point. Love rejects envy, bragging, arrogance, rudeness, selfishness, easy provocation, evil thoughts, and sin. "All things" means all things acceptable to God's will. "Bear" means to cover, support and protect others from exposure, ridicule or harm. "Love covereth all sins." Proverbs 10:12. We measure our love for a person by how quick we are to cover his faults. For example, when one of our children does something wrong, we cover his faults by saying "He's a good boy, he didn't mean it." When someone we don't like does wrong, we say "That's typical of him." Love does not justify sin, or compromise with error, but love warns, corrects, encourages, rebukes and disciplines. Love doesn't expose readily or broadcast wrongs.

Note: Love feels the pain of those it loves, and helps them carry the burden or hurt. True love is willing to bear the consequences of the sin of those it loves. "He was bruised for our iniquities." Isaiah 53:5.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2.

Fallen human nature has a perverse pleasure in exposing other's faults and failures.

13. Love BELIEVES ALL THINGS, not gullibly, but only on the basis of facts.

Love is not suspicious or cynical. Love believes all things in two ways:

- a) It believes in the **best outcome** for the wrongdoer, that the wrong will be confessed, forgiven, and restored to fellowship.
- b) If there is a doubt about a person's guilt or motivation, love will always conclude the most favourable possibility. Love will consider an accused person **innocent until proven guilty**. When a person fails, let us help them come good. For example:
 - i) **Job's** friends gave him no benefit of the doubt, because they had no true love for him. They were ready to believe the worst about him.
 - ii) The **Scribes** and **Pharisees** showed lovelessness by seeing the worst in others.

When Jesus forgave and healed the paralysed man (Mark 2:1-12), the Pharisees accused him of blasphemy. Hatred believes the worst, love believes the best.

14. Love HOPES all things.

Even when a friend disappoints us, love still hopes. Failure is never final where God's grace is operating. For example, God would not take Israel's failure as final. Jesus would not take Peter's failure as final, and Paul would not take the Corinthian's failure as final. Bible promises give hope to encourage our prayers. We all hope that a rebellious child, a wayward spouse, an erring believer will be restored. Love refuses to take failure as final. "And now abideth faith, **hope** and charity..." (13:13).

15. Love ENDURES all things.

To endure ("Hupomeno" in Greek) was a military term used of an army holding a vital position at all costs. Every hardship and every suffering was to be endured to hold on. Love holds fast to those it loves. Love endures all things at all costs. Love is commitment to each other in good and bad times, for better or for worse.

Conclusion: Let us develop these qualities of love by developing our relationship with Christ.

Let us be givers to God and others, and not just takers.

72. GUIDANCE: HOW TO FIND the WILL OF GOD

Bible Reading: I Thessalonians 5:12-23.

Aim: As Christians, we must renounce our will and be committed to doing God's will all our life. A problem every Christian faces is how to find God's will in daily decision making. Jesus Christ always fulfilled God's will for His life. "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." John 17:4. "I come to do thy will, O God." Hebrews 10:7.

As Jesus was assigned a specific task to perform on earth, so each Christian is also assigned a special task. It is our responsibility to find and obey God's plan for our life.

I. GOD HAS A PLAN FOR EACH LIFE.

1. This plan is **suitied to our talents**, personalities, needs, potential and environment. "For we are his **workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10.
2. There is a **different plan** for each one of us. Paul said, "I have finished my course." II Timothy 4:7. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Hebrews 12:1. "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou should know His will." Acts 22:14. God wanted Paul (and us) to know God's particular will for our lives. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go: I will guide thee with my eye." Psalm 32:8.
3. God's plan is **very detailed**, step by step. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." Psalm 37:23. God doesn't always reveal the distant future, but He leads us step by step, day by day.
4. God's plan is **continuous**. "The Lord shall guide thee continually." Isaiah 58:11.
5. God's plan is **definite** and specific. "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, this is the way, walk ye in it." (Isaiah 30:21). The Lord guides us by His Holy Spirit through His Word.
6. God wants us to **enquire** about His plan and its daily details. "Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk." Psalm 143:8.
7. The will of God for you is always **good, acceptable and perfect**. "That ye may prove what is that good, acceptable and perfect will of God." Romans 12:2.

II. GOD'S PLAN CAN BE MISSED.

Sadly, it is possible for us to miss God's plan in our selfish and stubborn ways to do our own planning. "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, then had thy peace been as a river." Isaiah 48:18.

III. GOD'S PLAN ALWAYS INCLUDES CERTAIN FEATURES.

1. **Sanctification** and **separation** from sin unto holiness. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." I Thessalonians 4:3. God is holy and He wills us to be holy.
2. **Supplication**, prayer and thanksgiving. "Pray without ceasing." I Thessalonians 5:17.
3. Be **Spirit filled**. "Quench not the spirit." I Thessalonians 5:19.
4. Be **submissive** to the Word of God. "Despise not prophesyings." I Thessalonians 5:20.

5. Be **saying thanks**. "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." I Thessalonians 5:18.
6. Be **sexually pure**. "This is the will of God.....that ye should abstain from fornication." I Thessalonians 4:3.
7. Be **sober**. "Let us.....be sober." I Thessalonians 5:8.
8. Be **serene**. "Comfort one another." I Thessalonians 4:18. "Be at peace among yourselves." I Thessalonians 5:13.
9. Be **suffering**. "We told you before that we should suffer tribulation." I Thessalonians 3:3,4.
10. Be **surrendered**. "That ye should walk worthy of God." I Thessalonians 2:12.
11. Be **well doing**. "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." I Peter 2:15.
12. Be **saved**. "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." II Peter 3:9.

IV. METHODS OF GUIDANCE.

Question: How do we find God's will for our life in any situation?

How does God reveal His will to the seeking individual? God's methods are:

1. The **Bible**. Ask: "What Bible verses relate to this question that I need to apply?" Saturate yourself with the Word of God so that God can bring relevant verses to your mind. God's will is never contrary to the Bible.
2. **Circumstances - open or closed doors**. God, by circumstances, closes one door and opens another. "A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." I Corinthians 16:9. "I have set before thee an open door." Rev. 3:8. Nothing happens to Christians by accident. Each item is planned by God. We accept circumstances as guideposts in His leading. In driving, red lights are equally valuable as green lights. When we get a stop sign, we must wait patiently for God.
3. **Prayer**. "Ye have not because ye ask not." James 4:2.
 - i) Don't worry: be careful for nothing.
 - ii) Pray about everything: by prayer and supplication.
 - iii) Be thankful for past and present blessings: with thanksgiving.
 - iv) Let your requests be made known unto God.
 - v) Results: the peace of God that passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6,7.
4. **Peace of God** must be sought before acting. How do we get the peace of God?
 - a) Be **filled with the Spirit** then you'll exhibit the fruit of the Spirit of love, joy, peace. Gal. 5:22.
 - b) **Occupation with Christ**. "He is our peace." Ephesians 2:14.
 - c) Endeavour to keep the **unity** of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:3.
 - d) Be **crucified to the world**, and **glory in the cross**. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. As many as walk according to this **rule, peace** be on them and mercy." Galatians 6:14-16.

- e) **Preach the Gospel of peace.** "Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." Eph. 6:15
 - f) **Prayer** brings the peace of God that passes understanding. Philippians 4:6,7.
 - g) **Think** on things that are **true, honest, just, pure, lovely, good report, virtue and praise**....the God of peace shall be with you. Philippians 4:8,9.
 - h) Be **content.** "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content." Philippians 4:11.
 - i) Put on **mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing and forgiving** one another. **Put on charity.** Be thankful. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts. Col. 3:12-15.
 - j) **Esteem the pastor** very highly in love for his work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.
I Thessalonians 5:13. If church members all submit to the pastor, as the pastor walks with the Lord, you'll have peace in your church.
 - k) **Live peacefully** with all men. Romans 12:18.
 - l) **Don't have fights** with people. Revelation 6:4.
5. **Good Advisors** - "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." Proverbs 11:14.

V. QUESTIONS TO ASK TO DISCOVER GOD'S WILL.

Q1: Will it hinder my service to God? Is it a **weight**? Hebrews 12:1.

Q2: Does it **advance God's plans** for my life?

Q3: Am I **yoking up with unbelievers**? II Cor. 6:14-18. Unbeliever's goals are to make money for themselves. Your goal is to serve God. **Don't ever enter a business partnership or marriage with an unbeliever!** You will lose and have a fight.

Q4: Am I **listening to the advice** of the **ungodly or unbelievers**? Psalm 1:1.

Q5: Is someone telling me a **lie**? Can I trust them? How do I know? How well do I know them? Are they experienced over many years in their field?

Q6: What **future problems** will this action lead to? (eg. who can stop my project, extort money or charge me excessively if a problem arises?).

Q7: How much will it cost EXACTLY? Are there any hidden costs or extras?

Q8: Why must I decide now? **Wait** up to one week after gaining all the facts to make your decision if it will **bind** you, so that you can reflect, get more information and ask more people. Keep your options open. Try to make the deal less binding rather than more binding.

Q9: Is this decision going to **bind me** in some way to other people who can hurt me? eg. they may get me over a barrel and extort money out of me, or do evil things to me.

Q10: Are people putting pressure on me to decide quickly to their advantage? Why?

Q11: Is it the voice of **my desires**, or is it what **God wants** me to do?

Q12: What **other options** exist?

Q13: Have I discussed this with three other expert advisors?

Q14: If in doubt, **DON'T!!!!** Wait on God. You might find a better opportunity shortly.

73. TWELVE “TONGUE TAMERS”

If we memorise these verses and use them to control our tongue, then we will have victory over the consequences of bad words. Ask the Lord to set a guard over our tongue so that we only say things that are pleasing to Him.

1. “He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life; but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.” Proverbs 13:3.
2. “Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him.” Prov. 29:20
3. “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.” Proverbs 18:13.
4. “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” Matthew 12:36.
5. “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.
6. “A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!” Proverbs 15:23.
7. “Whose keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.” Proverbs 21:23.
8. “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger....A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.” Proverbs 15:1,4.
9. “Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.” Proverbs 17:28.
10. “The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.” Proverbs 18:8.
11. “For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.” I Peter 3:10.
12. “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.” James 1:26.

74. 49 CHARACTER QUALITIES

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QUALITY	DEFINITIONS	QUALITY	DEFINITIONS
1. ALERTNESS vs. Unawareness	Being aware of the physical and spiritual events taking place around me so that I can have the right responses to them. (See Mark 14:38.)	13. DILIGENCE vs. Slothfulness	Visualizing each task as a special assignment from the Lord and using all my energies to accomplish it. (See Colossians 3:23.)
2. ATTENTIVENESS vs. Unconcern	Showing the worth of a person by giving undivided attention to his words and emotions. (See Hebrews 2:1.)	14. DISCERNMENT vs. Judgment	The God given ability to understand why things happen to others and to me. (See I Samuel 16:7.)
3. AVAILABILITY vs. Self-centeredness	Adjusting my personal responsibilities around the needs of those whom I am serving. (See Philippians 2:20-21.)	15. DISCRETION vs. Simple-mindedness	The ability to avoid words, actions, and attitudes which could result in undesirable consequences. (See Proverbs 22:3.)
4. BOLDNESS vs. Fearfulness	Confidence that what I have to say or do is true and right and just in the sight of God. (See Acts 4:29.)	16. ENDURANCE vs. Giving up	The inward strength to withstand stress to accomplish God's best. (See Galatians 6:9.)
5. CAUTIOUSNESS vs. Rashness	Knowing how important right timing is in accomplishing right actions. (See Proverbs 19:2.)	17. ENTHUSIASM vs. Apathy	Expressing with my spirit the joy of my soul. (See I Thessalonians 5:16-19.)
6. COMPASSION vs. Indifference	Investing whatever is necessary to heal the hurts of others. (See I John 3:17.)	18. FAITH vs. Presumption	Visualizing what God intends to do in a given situation and acting in harmony with it. (See Hebrews 11:1.)
7. CONTENTMENT vs. Covetousness	Realizing God has provided everything I need for my present happiness. (See I Timothy 6:8.)	19. FLEXIBILITY vs. Resistance	Not setting my affections on ideas or plans which could be changed by God or by others. (See Colossians 3:2.)
8. CREATIVITY vs. Under-achievement	Applying God's wisdom and practical insights to a need or task. (See Romans 12:2.)	20. FORGIVENESS vs. Rejection	Cleaning the record of those who have wronged me and allowing God to love them through me. (See Ephesians 4:32.)
9. DECISIVENESS vs. Double-mindedness	The ability to finalise difficult decisions based on the will and ways of God. (See James 1:5.)	21. GENEROSITY vs. Stinginess	Realizing that all I have belongs to God and using it for His purposes. (See II Corinthians 9:6.)
10. DEFERENCE vs. Rudeness	Limiting my freedom to speak and act in order not to offend the tastes of others. (See Romans 14:21.)	22. GENTLENESS vs. Harshness	Showing personal care and concern in meeting the needs of others. (See I Thessalonians 2:7.)
11. DEPENDABILITY vs. Inconsistency	Fulfilling what I consented to do even if it means unexpected sacrifice. (See Psalm 15:4.)	23. GRATEFULNESS vs. Unthankfulness	Making known to God and others in what ways they have benefited my life. (See I Corinthians 4:7.)
12. DETERMINATION vs. Faint-heartedness	Purposing to accomplish God's goals in God's time regardless of the opposition. (See II Timothy 4:7-8.)	24. HOSPITALITY vs. Loneliness	Cheerfully sharing food, shelter, and spiritual refreshment with those whom God brings into my life. (See Hebrews 13:2.)

QUALITY	DEFINITIONS
25. HUMILITY vs. Pride	Seeing the contrast between God's holiness and my sinfulness. (See James 4:6.)
26. INITIATIVE vs. Unresponsiveness	Recognizing and doing what needs to be done before I am asked to do it. (See Romans 12:21.)
27. JOYFULNESS vs. Self-pity	The result of knowing that God is perfecting His life in others through me. (See Proverbs 15:13.)
28. JUSTICE vs. Fairness	Personal responsibility to God's unchanging laws. (See Micah 6:8.)
29. LOVE vs. Selfishness	Giving to others basic needs without having personal reward as my motive. (See I Corinthians 13:3.)
30. LOYALTY vs. Unfaithfulness	Using difficult times to demonstrate my commitment to God and to those whom He has called me to serve. (See John 15:13.)
31. MEEKNESS vs. Anger	Yielding my personal rights and expectations to God. (See Psalm 62:5.)
32. OBEDIENCE vs. Willfulness	Fulfilling instructions so that God and the one I am serving will be fully satisfied. (See II Corinthians 10:5).
33. ORDERLINESS vs. Disorganization	Arranging my life and surroundings so that God has maximum freedom to achieve His goals through me. (See I Corinthians 14:40.)
34. PATIENCE vs. Restlessness	Accepting a difficult situation from God without giving Him a deadline to remove it. (See Romans 5:3-4.)
35. PERSUASIVENESS vs. Contentiousness	Using words which cause the listener's spirit to confirm that he is hearing truth. (See II Timothy 2:24.)
36. PUNCTUALITY vs. Tardiness	Showing respect for other people and the limited time that God has given to them. (See Ecclesiastes 3:1.)

QUALITY	DEFINITIONS
37. RESOURCEFULNESS vs. Wastefulness	Wise use of that which others would normally overlook or discard. (See Luke 16:10.)
38. RESPONSIBILITY vs. Unreliability	Knowing and doing what both God and others are expecting from me. (See Romans 14:12.)
39. REVERENCE vs. Disrespect	Awareness of how God is working through the people and events in my life to produce the character of Christ in me. (See Proverbs 23:17-18.)
40. SECURITY vs. Anxiety	Structuring my life around what is eternal and cannot be destroyed or taken away. (See John 6:27.)
41. SELF-CONTROL vs. Self-indulgence	Instant obedience to the initial promptings of God's Spirit. (See Galatians 5:24-25.)
42. SENSITIVITY vs. Callousness	Knowing by the prompting of God's Spirit what words and actions will benefit the lives of others. (See Romans 12:15.)
43. SINCERITY vs. Hypocrisy	Eagerness to do what is right with transparent motives. (See I Peter 1:22.)
44. THRIFTINESS vs. Hypocrisy	Not letting myself or others spend that which is not necessary. (See Luke 16:11.)
45. THOROUGHNESS vs. Incompleteness	Realizing that each of our tasks will be reviewed and rewarded by God. (See Proverbs 18:15.)
46. TOLERANCE vs. Prejudice	Viewing every person as a valuable individual whom God created and loves. (See Philippians 2:2.)
47. TRUTHFULNESS vs. Deception	Earning future trust by accurately reporting past facts. (See Ephesians 4:25.)
48. WISDOM vs. Natural Inclinations	Seeing and responding to life's situations from God's frame of reference. (See Proverbs 9:10.)
49. VIRTUE vs.	The influence God is having on others through my life regardless of my past Impurity failures. (See II Peter 1:3.)

75. GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IN TRIALS AND TESTINGS

Bible Reading: Job 23:1-17; Philippians 4:6,7.

Aim: To increase our faith in God and His Word, so that we have peace in all situations of life.

Introduction:

Peace means "knowing what to do whatever comes. It is knowing that every situation and every area of our lives are in God's competent hands."

Peace means that God cannot fail. If we sin against God, we are missing God's best; but as we humbly seek God's will and obey it, we have God's promise that "all things work together for good to them that love God." Romans 8:28.

As we go through the trials and testings of life, let us comfort one another with these promises of God:

1. GOD KNOWS ALL THAT ENTERS OUR LIVES.

"He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Job 23:10.

"I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities." Psalm 31:7.

"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in Him." Nahum 1:7

God loves us in spite of what we are, and in spite of our sins.

"O LORD thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou has beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me." Psalm 139:1-5.

God knows our needs long before we do. He is never surprised. Problems are allowed into our life by God for **our good** and for **His glory**.

"That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know." I Thessalonians 3:3,4.

2. GOD CARES.

God tells us that He cares for us in every trial and sorrow. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, therefore will we not fear." Psalm 46:1,2.

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Psalm 55:22.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me;.....my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30.

"Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." I Peter 5:7.

3. GOD IS ABLE.

People may know and care, but only God is able. How able is God? "Call unto me and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things that thou knowest not." Jeremiah 33:3.

"He will be our guide even unto death." Psalm 48:14.

"Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me." Psalm 50:15.

"Now unto him that is **able** to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Ephesians 3:20.

"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." II Corinthians 9:6-11.

4. GOD HAS A PURPOSE.

God has never done anything without a purpose.

Question: What are some of God's purposes for allowing trials and testings to enter our lives?

Answer:

a) **To draw us to Christ** as Saviour. As long as things run smoothly most adults are complacent and see no need for Christ.

b) **To prove His sufficiency.** When we give our problems to God, we get what God can do.

"Give us help from trouble; for vain is the help of man. Through God we shall do valiantly: for He it is that shall tread down our enemies." Psalm 108:12,13.

"Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Jeremiah 17:5-10.

God allows adversity that we might be aware of our need for Him.

c) **For God and His glory.** "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.

We must praise God when shattering things come into our lives because God is going to teach us something of His greatness.

d) **To draw us to God's Word and to Prayer.** "For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Psalm 84:11.

Question: When testings come, where do we turn for help?

Answer: God's Word.

Question: When do we mean business most in prayer?

Answer: When the pressure is great and the heart is heavy. Jesus Christ is far more precious when we've been through trials, and watched Him deliver us as we trust Him.

"I walked a mile with **pleasure**,
She chatted all the way,
But not a thing I learned from her,
For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with **sorrow**,
And not a word said she,
But oh, the things I learned from her,
When sorrow walked with me."

Question: When have you learned the most?

Answer: When sorrows came.

Question: How are we going to know that we have a God who is faithful?
Answer: By going through testings.
Question: How did Daniel know that he had a God who shut lion's mouths?
Answer: By experiencing the trial of it, and seeing God give the victory.

We need to **know** this
We need to say **with authority**
"God will bring you through.
I tested Him and He brought me through.
I'm convinced He can bring you through."

Question: Why did Job go through all that trouble?
Answer: To be an example for our learning. "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.

Trials are to teach us that we might be convinced of the kind of God we have.

- e) **Chastening.** "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." Hebrews 12:6.
God corrects and trains us.
The results of chastening are:
- i) We give God reverence. "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" Hebrews 12:9.
 - ii) Our profit. So we become holy. "For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure: but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." Hebrews 12:10.
 - iii) Peace and righteousness. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Hebrews 12:11.

Unless God puts His finger on some matter needing correcting, we need not assume that some suffering is chastening. God allows problems even when we are in the middle of His will.

f) **To minister to others.**

Question: How does God prepare us to minister to others?
Answer: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in **all our tribulation** that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." II Corinthians 1:3,4.

Where are you going to get comfort from: God or man? **Comfort** means to strengthen others with the same strength that strengthens us in our need.

Note: If you point people to anyone but Christ, you haven't properly comforted them. God comforts us, not just to make us comfortable, but to make us comforters. The same hand that puts us in the oven controls the heat and the timing also. Sometimes God wants to bring us to **yield to Him** and **allow** Him to have His way.
Then the sooner we submit to God, the sooner the trial can be removed.

CONCLUSION:
Being convinced that God knows, God cares, God is able, and that God has a purpose; how do I apply this to my need? **HOW?**

Don't just pray about it, but give the problem to the Lord.
"Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." I Peter 5:7.

All events are permitted by God.

Realise that:

- a) God has a **perfect plan** for my life.
- b) As I **allow** Christ to **takeover** my life, He's going to bring me through hard places and sunny places.
- c) In either case I'm going to **thank** Him.
God told Paul, "My grace is **sufficient for you**."

Paul's conclusion in all suffering was:

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:11-13.

Job, Elijah, Paul and others learned that God is sufficient in our testings. Sometimes we must be brought to a place where Christ is **all we have** so that we might discover that Christ is **all we need**. Have you reached this point?

76. EIGHTEEN DEVICES SATAN USES AGAINST US

Bible Reading: II Corinthians 2:1-7.

Aim: To know and to reject the main devices that Satan uses against us.

Introduction:

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." II Corinthians 2:11. To grasp victory, we must know the strong points or devices that Satan uses against us.

Notice the 18 Deadly Devices of Satan.

1. DISAPPOINTMENT

We have all been disappointed by not getting what we wanted at times. But to the knowledgeable Christian, ALL disappointments are God's appointments and must be viewed as such, lest Satan gain the advantage. To be disappointed is to forget Romans 8:28 "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."

2. DISCOURAGEMENT

Discouragement is the second stage. Disappointment leads to discouragement.

"Fear not, neither be discouraged...our brethren have discouraged our heart." Deuteronomy 1:21,28.

3. DESPAIR

Despair is the third stage of disappointment and discouragement. Unless checked, it can destroy your Christian life. To despair is to forget II Corinthians 4:8, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair."

To despair is to forget that God is working in our lives.

4. DOUBT

Satan attacked Eve in the Garden of Eden with doubt, by getting her to doubt God's Word. "He said unto the woman, yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Genesis 3:1.

To doubt is to forget to PRAY and to forget I Timothy 2:8,

"I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."

5. DISBELIEF

Disbelief is the final form of doubt. Genesis 3:4,5. To disbelieve is to forget Hebrews 3:12. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

6. DISTRACTION

One can be side-tracked from God's perfect will by family or job. The real enemy of the BEST is not the WORST, but the GOOD. To be distracted is to forget Matthew 14:30, "But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me."

7. DOUBLE MINDEDNESS

A "double minded" man in Greek means to be "double souled." To be double minded is to forget James 1:8 and 4:8, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." Matthew 6:24; Ephesians 4:14; I John 2:15-17.

8. DISHONESTY

We can be dishonest by:

- a) lying or cheating,
- b) holding back certain facts, or
- c) being less than we should be as pastors, parents or workers which is to cheat our people and children.

It is estimated that over \$500 million is raised each year by false "faith healers" who cannot do what they claim. To be dishonest is to forget II Corinthians 4:2, "But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Dishonesty comes by fear or by greed.

9. DECEIT

"With all deceivableness of unrighteousness." II Thessalonians 2:8-12.

"For we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God." II Corinthians 2:17.

"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." II Corinthians 4:1,2.

"For many deceivers are entered into the world." II John 1:7.

To be deceived is to forget Jeremiah 17:9,

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

10. DULLNESS

Dullness means sleepiness to the things of God. The readers of Hebrews suffered dullness. They needed sound Bible teachers to bring them to their senses. Because they were dull, they could not be used by God. He states why: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." Hebrews 5:12-14.

This dullness was also infecting the church of Corinth. Listen to Paul's stern admonition to them: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" I Corinthians 3:1-3.

To suffer dullness is to forget Hebrews 5:11, "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing."

11. DEADNESS

Deadness means unchecked dullness. Don't be dead like the Sardis Church, "I know thy works, that thou has a name that thou livest, and are dead." Revelation 3:1.

12. DEFAME

How often are Christians guilty of criticising or belittling other believers. If we have something against a believer, tell him to his face. To defame someone is to forget Psalm 101:5, "Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer."

13. DISCORD

Far more Bible believing churches have been split over discord than doctrine. Some trouble-maker begins his or her deadly gossip in a local church, raising questions and doubts in the minds of people, doubts that otherwise would have never been

entertained. How effectively Satan uses this tool, and how painful it will be at the BEMA judgment seat of Christ for the carnal sowers of discord. To sow discord is to forget Proverbs 6:16-19, "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

14. DEFILEMENT

Defilement with the things of the world. God insists upon clean vessels. A believer who defiles himself with the things of this world can never be fully used by God, regardless of his education, ability, energy, or experience. To become defiled is to forget I Corinthians 3:16,17, "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."

15. DISCONTENT

One of Satan's favourite lies is to tell people that things will be better if they go elsewhere.

For example, if they:

- a) change marriage partners,
- b) change churches.

Some people are always complaining. God says: "Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Hebrews 13:5.

"Having food and raiment let us be therewith content." I Timothy 6:8.

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Philippians 4:11.

16. DELAY

Delay is used to, (a) postpone salvation; and (b) postpone service to God.

"I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments." Psalm 119:60.

17. DISOBEDIENCE

There are two famous men in the Bible named Saul.

- a) Both were from the tribe of Benjamin (I Samuel 9:2; Philippians 3:5).
- b) One was tall and impressive; the other short and unimpressive.
- c) OT Saul began as God's friend and ended up as God's enemy.
NT Saul started as God's enemy but ended up as God's friend.
- d) OT Saul went to the witch of Endor in his hour of death.
NT Saul turned to the Word of God in his hour of death.

What made the difference between these two men?

The Old Testament Saul was disobedient; the New Testament Saul was obedient.

"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. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." I Samuel 15:22,23.

To disobey is to forget Romans 6:14-18, "For sin shall not have dominion over you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

18. DEBT

"The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender." Proverbs 22:7.

"Owe no man anything, but to love one another." Romans 13:8.

When we borrow money, we make ourselves vulnerable to many evils such as:

- a) Losing our job and being unable to pay the interest.
- b) Dishonest or incompetent business partners may steal or waste our money.
- c) The market price falling in what we are investing in so that we can't pay back the bank. As a result, the bank will take your house or other securities.
- d) Local councils or governments changing the laws to make your investment unprofitable, so that you can't sell the product for what you expected.
- e) Dishonest tradesman or builders who can threaten you by stopping a building project unless you pay whatever they ask. You can't get rid of them because no other builder wants to take on responsibility for another builder's possible mistakes.
- f) You can be tempted to be dishonest with money to bail yourself out.

Hence, great risks are associated with borrowing money. We should avoid debt because the devil can enslave us into working long hours to pay off bank interest and debt, so we have no time or energy left to serve the Lord.

Conclusion: Be sober, be vigilant. Don't be destroyed by Satan's devices.

77. NINE ISSUES THAT CONCERN YOUNG PEOPLE

Bible Reading: Proverbs 1:1-33.

Aim: To give Biblical answers to problems experienced by young people.

Introduction: Youth is a time when our values and future faith are being set. Some of peoples biggest mistakes are made in their youth that can badly affect the rest of their life.

Question: What issues are of most concern to young people?

- Answer:**
1. Whether you are accepted by the peer group.
 2. Trusting God with your future in full surrender to Jesus Christ.
 3. What career to choose?
 4. What church to choose?
 5. How to get on well with parents?
 6. Choosing a boyfriend or girlfriend or spouse?
 7. How to handle money wisely.
 8. How to court Biblically, and reject sex before marriage?
 9. How to cure boredom?

What does God's Word say about each of these questions?

1. PEER GROUP ACCEPTANCE.

Let these issues be your guidelines.

- a) Reject and avoid an ungodly peer group. Psalm 1:1-6.
It is much better to have no friends than to have bad friends who will lead you astray. If you want Godly friends, pray to God and find them at Church. Friends need not be exactly your own age. We should relate well to people of all ages. If you have no or few friends your own age, make friends of older, mature Christians who will be able to teach you wisdom beyond your years. Remember, Jesus Christ is the best friend who sticks closer than a brother. Try to win people to Christ, teach them the Bible in a personal Bible study and you will have more friends than you can handle.
- b) If you are naturally shy, then read the chapter on friendship.
He that hath friends must show himself friendly. Proverbs 18:24.
Be friendly and interested in others and they will be friendly and interested in you.
- c) Remember that when you leave school, you may rarely ever see most of your classmates and peer group again. They go their way, and you go your way on leaving school. So why be so concerned with earning their approval when they will probably never see you again, nor care enough about you to contact you later. Whether the peer group accepts you or not, is not important.
We ought to obey God, rather than men. Acts 5:29.
They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. John 12:43.
Many cowardly Pharisees who believed on Jesus were too scared to confess Jesus openly for fear of being rejected by their fellow Pharisees. Don't you be a coward. When the bad peer group want you to sin by smoking, drinking alcohol, taking drugs, going to the bad movies, going to an unbiblical church, committing immorality or looking at bad magazines, just have nothing to do with them. Go find some better, Christian friends.
Aim to be popular with God, as it is He that we will all have to give account of our lives to. Romans 14:12.
Key: If the bad group want you to do bad things **with** them today, they will do bad things **TO YOU** later on. If they are bad to God or others, they will be bad to you later.

2. TRUSTING GOD WITH YOUR FUTURE.

Many times when we are challenged to obey God, we think that we can't obey God because we may lose something. For example:

- I can't come to church, because I have too much study.
- I can't pray or read my Bible, because I'm too busy.
- I can't say "no" to the bad crowd, because they may reject me.

Key: Whenever we can't see the future, it is an opportunity to trust God and to obey His Word, knowing that He will work things out for **our best**.

Question: Can you trust God to do the right thing by you? Can you trust God enough to even go through some suffering now while you do right, knowing that God is using suffering to teach you some important lessons that you will need later?

It is good that a man bear the yoke in his youth. Lamentations 3:27.

God wants to build character in us and sometimes suffering is the only way to do it. Sometimes we must use the lesson to **delay immediate gratification** in order to receive something better later on. For example, if you delay sex until marriage, you'll have more trust with your spouse. Study God's promises to us about His love, goodwill and provision, then we can be confident that He will guide us properly and do the right things for us in the future.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and **all these** things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33. Memorise it and believe it.

3. WHAT CAREER DO I CHOOSE?

First, we must be absolutely committed to doing God's will for our life. God wants to use us to tell people how to be saved and to teach them the Bible. This should be our priority goal in life. We should aim to be a missionary. We should ask God if He wants us to be a missionary in Australia or overseas. If God wants you to receive some career training, ask Him what that might be and where you should study. It is clearly God's will that you **MUST NOT** study a course that is humanistic and anti-God in it's course content. For example, you would not study social work at Sydney University because of its anti-Bible values.

"Learn not the way of the heathen." Jeremiah 10:2.

"Cease, my son, from hearing the instruction that causes to err from the words of knowledge." Proverbs 19:27.

If a lecturer teaches evolution, don't believe him on this subject.

Consider becoming self-employed, because greater freedom comes to serve God when you are your own boss. Aim to earn enough money to meet your own needs. Whatever God gives extra, give it to God's work to start fundamental, soul winning churches here and overseas. No matter what career you follow, you should consider **BIBLE COLLEGE TRAINING** either part-time or full-time so that you can properly understand and teach the Bible. Do not attend a non soul winning Bible College, or a para-church Bible College, or one that is not under your Pastor's authority, or one that teaches from a Modern Bible Version. Bible Colleges are the most dangerous places for you to get proud, backslide, hate your Pastor, leave your church, destroy you faith, and to apostatise. **BEWARE!!!!** Every Hebrew King had to write out a copy of the Bible in order to learn how to rule well. Deuteronomy 17:18-20. If the Bible is good enough for a King to learn, it's good enough for us to learn. Your life's goal should be to win or help win as many people to Christ as possible, to teach the Bible and to start many churches all over the world. This is the only thing that will last as having eternal value that we can invest our lives in.

4. WHAT CHURCH DO I CHOOSE?

A church must be an "ecclesia" meaning "called out of the world." If a church tries to be like the world to win the world, it is not a Biblical church. A true church must hold to the six principles of the doctrine of Christ in Hebrews 6:1,2 which are:

- a) **Repentance** from **dead works** - the prerequisite to salvation is that a sinner must forsake ALL hope in any works of his own as being able to earn salvation, such as baptism, good works, church attendance, etc. Ephesians 2:8-10.
- b) **Faith** towards God - salvation is by grace (God's undeserved favour), through faith in Christ (believing and claiming God's promises in the Bible), not of ourselves, but is a GIFT of God. It must be received, not earned. The act of receiving Christ as Saviour is the act of faith.
- c) **Baptisms** - of the Holy Spirit at salvation (1 Corinthians 12:13). and in water after salvation. Acts 10:47,48.
- d) **Laying on of Hands** - setting apart of men for a ministry. Acts 13:1-3.
- e) **Resurrection of the dead** - Second Coming teaching must be premillennial, literal and visible return of Christ to the earth, along with the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust.
- f) **Eternal Judgment** - the unsaved upon dying go to a literal hell fire where they remain in torment (Luke 16:19-31) until the end of Christ's 1,000 year reign on the earth (Revelation 20:1-7). They are then resurrected, judged according to their works, and cast into a literal, never-ending, tormenting Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:10-15) prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41,46).

II John 9,10,11 states that if anyone has not the doctrine of Christ, he has not God. Some churches do not hold to these teachings. We should not attend a church that breaks one of these six doctrines.

Some churches hold the following wrong doctrines:

- a) Some think that **baptism** makes a **baby a child of God**. See the extract from the Anglican Prayer Book Catechism. "...in my baptism; wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." John 1:12 refutes this heresy.
- b) Some **baptise babies**. Nowhere in the Bible do we see a baby being immersed.
- c) Some **sprinkle babies** and call it baptism, yet baptism in Greek clearly means "to immerse".
- d) **Confirmation** at age 7 or 14 by a minister laying hands on a person's head. Where is confirmation mentioned in the Bible? It arose because the false doctrine of infant baptism led to the false doctrine of confirmation.
- e) Some churches are **Amillennial** meaning that they don't teach prophecy or the second coming of Christ, not believing that Christ will return to earth to rule for 1,000 years of peace (Revelation 20). 25% of the Bible is prophecy of Christ's premillennial second coming before the 1,000 years. To reject this is to reject 25% of the Bible. How can you fellowship with a group that rejects 25% of the Bible?
- f) Some churches have ministers who wear **BLACK ROBES**. Where is this in the Bible? It is a carry over from the Roman Catholic Church, **which received it from paganism**.
- g) The **High** Anglican Church is 95% Roman Catholic.
- h) Some churches think it is all right to **ordain women** as Pastors. Yet Paul forbids this in I Timothy 2:12. "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."
The male Pastor has authority in the church, not a lady.
- i) Many churches do not maintain **high standards** of behaviour. They allow a wide range of false beliefs and wrong doctrines in order to keep a large crowd attending. They are

afraid to preach too hard against sin, error and false doctrine in case people leave their church, yet God wants us to be a holy church that is separated from error.

- j) Many churches tolerate the false **charismatic doctrines** of tongues, slaying in the spirit, false healings and false prophecies, etc.
- k) Many churches promote **modern versions** of the Bible which take verses out of God's Word. This doesn't seem to worry them, yet Christ states in Luke 8:12, "Then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word...". The NIV removes about 2% of the New Testament. Most don't notice or care.
- l) Many churches confuse the gospel of salvation by saying that people don't have to call on Christ for salvation. See John 4:10; Romans 10:13; Isaiah 55:6,7; Jeremiah 29:12,13.
- m) Some churches are **Modernist**, meaning that they deny the miracles in the Bible. Some Bible Colleges have lecturers who deny the Bible's miracles and think that the Bible is not the 100% inspired Word of God. They say that the Bible has mistakes, and thus place themselves as a higher authority than the Bible. Some Baptist and Uniting Churches are plagued with these errors.
- n) Some churches, wishing to win young people, play **rock music** in their churches and **have dances**. Love not the world. Avoid worldly churches.
- o) Many churches are **not fervently soul winning**. If you got saved in an Independent Baptist Church, be loyal enough to stay where you got saved. Don't go off to another church that doesn't hold these values, hoping to find a girlfriend or boyfriend, or greener grass on the other side of the fence. Be content to stay where you are and work through any problems that you may have. Many people think they are running away from their problems, yet they are carrying their problems with them and unpacking them at their next stopover.

Question: What is wrong with Charismatic Churches?

1. Tongues - which are not for today. See the chapter explaining this.
2. False healing - they say "Come and be healed." If you don't get healed it's your fault because you haven't got enough faith. Yet dead Lazarus had no faith to be healed when dead. False advertising is lying.
3. Slaying people in the spirit - This is not in the Bible.
4. Word of prophecy - where some person comes and tells you a message supposedly from God to you. It's very hard to argue with God. This is his way of putting himself in an elevated position so that you find it hard to argue with God. He has privileged information that normal mortals don't have. Many of these "prophecies" prove to be wrong.
5. Modern versions of the Bible - because of their thousands of omissions.
6. Weak on standards and separation from evil. They'll join up with Roman Catholics any day of the week, as long as the priest speaks in tongues.

5. HOW TO GET ON WELL WITH PARENTS.

We have a problem today called the generation gap. Why? How did this develop?

Answer: It developed through the public school system, where children rebel against their parent's values and follow peer pressure to adopt their peers values in order to remain popular. Young people so much want to be accepted by their friends, or not to appear foolish in front of their peers that they will do almost anything to gain peer acceptance. When parents protest, they are called old fashioned and teens rebel even more.

Solution:

1. Teens must decide to **please God first** and not worry if their peers like them or not.
2. Young people must **trust God** to provide Godly friends

3. Young people must at all costs **reject** and **avoid** ungodly and bad friends from influencing them. See Psalm 1:1-6.
4. Young people must obtain their **ideas** and values from the **Bible** as they study it daily.
5. Children, **Obey** your parents in the Lord: for this is **right**. Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20.

Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be **well** with thee, and thou mayest **live long** on the earth. Ephesians 6:1-3.

Three reasons are given why children should obey their parents:

1. This is **right**.
2. That it may be **well** with thee.
3. That thou may **live long** on the earth.

Young people, if you can submit to your parents and have a happy relationship with them, it is very likely that you will easily be able to submit to your spouse and have a happy marriage relationship.

Young men, if you want a good wife, watch how a young lady treats her father, because she'll treat you the same way.

Young ladies, if you want a good husband, watch how a young man treats his mother, because he'll treat you the same way.

Remember, young people, God's unchangeable law:

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man **soweth**, that shall he also **reap**." Gal. 6:7.

If you rebel against your parents now, your children or someone close to you will rebel against you later and break your heart. You may sin and get forgiveness from God, but you face two other problems:

- 1) **People** may not forgive you or trust you after you're sinned.
- 2) You may still have trouble with **bad consequences** years later for your sins, such as those people in jail, those who are addicted to drugs.

The world teaches rebellion, and the Bible teaches obedience. When we obey God, parents and pastors, we are safe, because we are protected within their wall of authority. When a person rebels, he goes outside the wall of protection. He may feel freedom for a while, but the downside is that he is now in great danger to the many enemies that await him to destroy him such as drugs, AIDS, crime, or false ideas that ruin people's lives. So, how can you get on well with your parents?

- a) **Obey** them. When parents see that you obey them, they see that they can **trust** you, so they begin to relax the rules and give you more freedom, knowing that you are maturing in wisdom and are less likely to do silly things and ruin your life.
- b) **Respect** them. They are probably 30 years older than you which means that they have 30 years more experience than you. Because they love you and have given birth to you, have given you everything you have, and done everything for you, and fed, clothed and schooled you, you should respect, love and honour them in return.
- c) **Love** them, because they love you. It is right that we should love those who love us. Be thankful.
- d) **Communicate politely** with them. Many parents protest because their children spend so much time with their friends that they never talk in depth with their parents. This causes parents to insist that their children stay at home. You must sit down and have a good talk with your mum and dad daily or weekly, just so that they know what you are doing.

- e) **Help them around the house**. This prepares you to manage your own house later. They have a big job cooking, ironing, paying bills and looking after you. So ask them what you can do to help.
- f) **Thank** them for what they've done for you such as cooking meals, ironing, etc. This helps you to develop a thankful attitude all through your life, especially to your future spouse. Then your children will be thankful and appreciative to you later.
- g) **See God speaking through their advice**. God gave you your parents to mould your character. God can use any faults that you think your parents have to teach you lessons for life. For example, if your father is easily angry, you learn not to be angry. God can reveal His will to you through your parent's advice.

6. CHOOSING A BOYFRIEND OR GIRLFRIEND OR SPOUSE.

Make a list of what you want in a spouse. They must be:

1. Saved.
2. Committed and dedicated to winning people to Christ and teaching the Bible.
3. Sound in doctrine and loyal to a fundamental, Biblical church.
4. Love and respect their parents.
5. Dress modestly.
6. Respect their pastor.
7. Not soon angry. "Make no friendship with an angry man, lest thou learn his ways and get a snare to thy soul." Proverbs 22:24.
8. Patient.
9. Wise, loving the Bible, loving God and wanting to serve God.
10. Hard worker, not lazy, and not silly.

Do not let **physical attraction** blind you to the lack of other important qualities. Remember, you marry their brains as well as their bodies. When you are married, their problems become your problems. So marry a Godly person who will help lift your problems, not add to your problems. If you fight and argue a lot before you marry, you are sure to fight and argue a lot more after you are married. So marry someone that you don't fight and argue with.

Build the **spiritual** side of your relationship first as you both serve God together and study Bible issues together. Then develop **mental communication** and understanding as you get to know each other without interference of the physical side racing ahead.

Lastly, after you are married the **physical, sexual** side can have freedom to develop. Warning: if you allow the physical side to develop during courtship, it tends to hinder the growth of the spiritual and communication aspects, which so often leads to breaking up or divorce later.

7. HOW TO HANDLE MONEY WISELY

Money can be a good servant, or a very bad master. Money can bring great freedom to spread the Gospel, or money can be a great tyrant that enslaves you and hinders your work for the Lord. The love of money is the root of all evil. 1 Timothy 6:10.

Money is a gift from God, whereby **God tests our stewardship**, entrusting it to us to use to win people to Christ here and overseas.

Here are some key lessons to learn about money:

- a) Honour God with it by **giving God 10% of your income** and He will bless you in many different ways. Malachi 3:7-10; Luke 6:38; Leviticus 27:30,32.
- b) God entrusts some people with large sums of money for the purpose of spreading the Gospel all over the world. Should God entrust you with large sums of money, always remember that God has given it to you to use for **His purposes**. "It is he that giveth thee power to get wealth." Deuteronomy 8:18.

You will have to give account to God in heaven as to how you have used this money to win people to Christ and build churches all over the world. If God can trust you with small amounts of money, He may trust you with large sums of money later. Luke 16:9-13.

- c) After giving 10% of your income to God, regularly and weekly, **save another 10% for later**, like the ant that saves food for later. Proverbs 30:25.
- d) Be willing to **get a job** and work hard, but never work on Sunday, except for a very good reason. Aim to attend two church services on Sunday. Don't let working for money keep you out of church. Ask God for a job that does not require working on Sunday. Exodus 20:8-11.
- e) Don't put a great percentage of your money into **depreciating assets** like cars.
- f) Aim to be **independent financially** and self-supporting so that you can retire from secular work early and serve the Lord as a full-time occupation.

8. HOW TO COURT BIBLICALLY, and WHY REJECT SEX BEFORE MARRIAGE

The movies and peers have greatly influenced the pursuit of immorality and having a physical relationship during courtship. We have to reject this as CONTRARY to God's ways in the Bible. God says: "It is **GOOD** for a man **NOT TO TOUCH** a woman. But to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife...." 1 Corinthians 7:1,2.

Treat the younger women as sisters, with **ALL PURITY**. 1 Timothy 5:2.

"This is the will of God... that ye should abstain from fornication... that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because the Lord is the avenger of all such ... For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness...." 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8.

Fornicating is defrauding or robbing the girl's future husband of a pure bride (v.6). If you steal a girl's moral purity, God will take revenge on you for it with undesirable consequences. How?

God has many ways of disciplining humans.

If you don't like these moral standards, you are despising God. (v.8).

Keys to Biblical Courtship:

1. Pray for God to lead you to the girl of His choosing.
2. Go out in groups to minimise temptation.
3. Pray before each time you see her so that you will conduct yourself in a Christ-honouring manner.
4. Don't touch the girl, or you are likely to start the physical slide into fornication.
5. Develop good spiritual and mental communication.
6. Get home early.
7. Serve the Lord together, trying to win people to Christ and to teach the Bible together.
8. Be cheerful and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Why Reject Sex Before Marriage?

Within marriage, sex increases the commitment that binds two people together. Sex outside marriage has the opposite effect, becoming a wedge, a stumbling block, a hindrance to the development of mature love, very often breaking up the friendship altogether. Why does this happen?

1. Sex before marriage prevents other aspects of the relationship from developing.

Anybody can learn to kiss, but not everybody can learn to communicate meaningfully. Physical attraction is insufficient glue to build or maintain a lasting relationship. The qualities that hold a relationship together are **trust, honesty, respect, openness, deep friendship, and spiritual intimacy** which take time and effort to develop. When you focus on the sexual/physical side, you short circuit building these qualities and you end up with a poor foundation, without the spiritual communication developing first.

2. Sex injects fear and guilt into the relationship.

"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will **judge**." Hebrews 13:4.

Guilt comes because premarital sex violates our God-given conscience. Fear comes because the male gets the **privilege of sex** without the **responsibility of commitment in marriage**. The female fears that he may leave her. She pesters him to get married. Since it may cost \$10,000 to get married (reception, ring, honeymoon, hire cars, dresses, hire suits etc), the male says that he **cannot afford** to get married right now so that she must wait till some indefinite time in the future. This is a subtle form of rejection. She worries and fears that he may never get around to marriage. She feels insecure, so she pesters him more to get married. He finally gets so sick of her nagging him that when he meets another likeable lady he finds an easy reason to leave lady number one. Then the family court enters the picture and there may be a splitting of his and her assets into 1/3 for him, 1/3 for her, and 1/3 for the solicitor. If there are any children, he must pay \$200 per week maintenance for his ex-partner to support the children and rent. This is how pre-marital sex can lead to financial hardship. Very often when couples live together without marrying they break up around age thirty and the girl finds that she has "missed the boat" and is unlikely to get married.

3. Sex lays a foundation of distrust and lack of respect.

She thinks that if he has sex with me outside of marriage, he may later on leave me to have sex with someone else if the opportunity presents itself. Mature love is based on the security of **exclusivity and permanence** of the relationship. If two people stay morally pure before marriage, each person feels a greater degree of security, trust and respect.

4. Sex causes you to compare one person with previous partners.

5. Sex deceives you into thinking that you are in love.

It is such an emotional thing that it can convince you that you are in love while overlooking other important factors that later on, when logic prevails, may make you dislike the person. Sex love can cause you to overlook his laziness, violence, drug addiction, lying, unfaithfulness, etc, all of which are a recipe for a disastrous relationship.

6. The facts are against you:

- a) Pre-marital sex tends to break up couples before marriage takes place.
- b) Those who have pre-marital sex are more likely to have their marriages end in divorce. For example, practising Christians' divorce rate is 1 in 1500, yet the community divorce rate is 700 in 1500. This is 700 times worse.
- c) Persons who had pre-marital sex are more likely to have extramarital affairs as well.
- d) Having pre-marital sex may fool you into marrying a person who is not right for you. Sex can blind you to a person's faults.

9. HOW TO CURE BOREDOM

- a) Get busy serving God. Teach a Sunday school class, run a Bible study, learn how to share the Gospel better and attend a doctrinally sound Bible College.
- b) Study the Bible and pray daily.
- c) Help your parents around the home and talk to them.
- d) Ring people to invite them to church.
- e) Pick people up and bring them to church.
- f) Work out the Bible, so that you really understand it well.
- g) Go out to share the Gospel weekly.

You think up a few more. Aim to prepare yourself for the Lord's work.

78. BARRIERS TO OBEDIENCE

Bible Reading: 1 Samuel 15:1-35.

Key: Faith is tested in the life of a Christian when obedience seems hard. After we are saved, faith and works are very closely linked. All disobedience is due to lack of faith.

WHEN IS OBEDIENCE HARD?

1. Sacrifice: Obedience is hard, when you think you'll lose out in some way. For example, Abraham sacrificed Isaac, his only son, at God's command. Sacrifice was a barrier to obedience, but faith overcame the barrier. Examples for us today are things like:

Purity in dating. It is a sacrifice not to touch, but I Corinthians 7:1 says "It is good for a man not to touch a woman."

Tithing. It is a sacrifice to tithe 1/10 of our income to God, thinking that we can't afford it because we have too many bills. People don't tithe because they have not the faith to trust God to bless them for giving. "Give and it shall be given you....." Luke 6:38.

When Israel did not keep the Sabbath for 490 years, God got all His Sabbaths at once in the 70 year captivity. God also can and will get His tithes, even if we don't tithe. "All the tithe...is the Lord's." Leviticus 27:30.

2. Reason: Obedience is hard when obedience **seems unreasonable**.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and **my thoughts** than **your thoughts**." Isaiah 55:8,9.

"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.

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Prov. 14:12 "And be not conformed to this world, but be **ye transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Romans 12:2.

3. Peer Pressure: Obedience is hard when obedience means doing something that nobody else is doing **or** not doing something that everybody else is doing. For example, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego stood against the peer pressure of not bowing down to an image. They did this by faith. When a minority opposes a majority, peer pressure becomes an obstacle.

We all like to be liked, and therefore so many Christians compromise in order to be liked by the peer group. It takes someone with character to stand against the crowd. The majority is usually wrong. "Broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." Matthew 7:13.

4. Suffering: "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." Acts 7:54.

God wanted Stephen to preach the Gospel to the Jewish leaders. Stephen had to preach conviction of sin while he had the opportunity. This message made them very angry. Now someone may have advised Stephen to cut his message so that he didn't offend anyone, but then no one would have been convicted of sin and Saul may not have been

saved. Stephen could have said, "Now let's cool it, I didn't mean to offend you." Stephen looked at God through the circumstance of suffering and he obeyed God. Faith overcame suffering as a barrier to obedience.

For example, the Reformers were burned at the stake rather than compromise with Roman Catholic error. "We ought to obey God rather than men." Acts 5:29.

God gave Jeremiah a promise for his faith to grasp. "I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee." Jeremiah 1:18,19.

For every barrier you face, there are promises that we can grasp to climb the wall. Faith grasps the promise-handles on the wall. "If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him." God proved faithful to Noah, Daniel, Jeremiah, the Reformers.....God's faithfulness helps us **overcome barriers to obedience**.

79. STAIRWAY TO HELL

Bible Reading: Revelation 9:13-21.

Aim: To warn teens and parents of Satan's tactics to destroy teens. To show parents how to rescue or prevent children from going to Satan.

INTRODUCTION:

Many parents have rebellious children and ask, "Where did I go wrong?"

Answer: You didn't realise that Satan was after your child and you didn't know how to rescue him God's way. Satan destroys people's lives using basically the same plan. God says that we are in a spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:12). Teen, Satan is aiming at your eternal destruction. He's counting on you being stupid enough not to know what he's up to. There's only one reason why anyone would willingly stay on the stairway to hell - they've been tricked, eg: the idea that "I want to go to hell".

1. WHY CAN'T PARENTS AND TEENS GET ALONG?

Teens say, "Lay off me. You don't understand me. Why don't you leave me alone?" Then follows - yelling, screaming, doors slamming, tempers flaring and red faces. There are two types of parents:

- a) **Parents who are totally unfit to raise children**, eg: Those parents guilty of incest, kids hooked on drugs through their parents, children physically beaten, children put onto the streets for prostitution.
- b) **Parents who really do care.** Satan makes teens think that their parents don't care about them when they really do. Satan is doing all he can to destroy parent - teen relationships.

2. STEPS TO HELL.

STEP 1: BREAKING UP THE PARENT - TEEN RELATIONSHIP.

"Honour thy father and thy mother..." (Exodus 20:12). When parents see their teens going the wrong way, they try to warn them. To stop the young person from listening to their warnings, Satan convinces the teen that the parents just **don't understand** or **care** for them. Once Satan has you believing that lie, he can keep you on his deadly path. You will **ignore your parents'** warnings and stumble further, convinced you are doing the right thing. Cutting off communication is the first step. Your death and entry to hell are the last. Teens, realise that when thoughts enter your mind like:

- a) "My parents don't care about me", or
 - b) "They don't want me to have any fun", those are not **your** thoughts, they are lies from demons.
 - c) "I want to do my own thing" – you are really doing Satan's thing.
- Teen, you take your first step onto the devil's stairway when you let Satan ruin your relationship with your parents. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord." (Ephesians 6:1-3). "My son hear the instruction of thy father and forsake not the law of thy mother." Proverbs 1:8.

Teens, if your relationship with your parents is in bad shape, it's because Satan is at work. Go to your parents, ask their forgiveness for your wrong attitude and make things right with them.

STEP 2: GETTING YOU TO REJECT GOD.

To persuade you to reject God's warnings and open you up for destruction, the devil has another convincing lie. He plants the thought in your mind: "Don't listen to God. He doesn't want you to have any fun."

STEP 3: REBELLION.

The themes of rock groups are **REBELLION, SEX, DRUGS, FALSE RELIGION** and **DEMONS**. For example, rock music encourages rebellion against parents, law, school and society.

A teen who submits to any kind of authority today is treated like a weirdo. It isn't cool to obey others. Their reasons are "I'm old enough to decide for myself" or "I got to do what I feel is right." When you rebel against authority, you are disobeying the instructions that God gave to protect you from Satan and demons. "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." 1 Samuel 15:23.

Rebellion against God is just as bad as Satan worship.

"Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; Because they rebelled against the words of God." Psalm 107:10,11.

God's commands of obedience are for your protection, not to stop you having fun. Movies and TV push rebellion, except rebellion against rock music. They say "Don't let anyone tell you what to do. You have your rights. It's your life". Satanists love rebellious teens. Rebellion always leads to ruin.

STORY.

Tim swallowed that lie at age 9 and grew more rebellious as he grew older. For a while he thought he had it made - total freedom. His life then began to fall apart. He was expelled from school and kicked out of home. He hated his boss telling him what to do. As a result, he couldn't keep a job. Getting cold and hungry, he turned to homosexual prostitution. His dreams turned to nightmares. He lived in slimy, rat-infested, run down holes. A never-ending parade of lust-filled perverts poured through his room, each vile experience leaving him feeling sicker and dirtier than the one before. The last time I heard from him, he was still walking the streets of a major city as a homosexual prostitute, dressed as a female. He said he was afraid that he had **AIDS** and wished he could die. His life was ruined. He rebelled and did what he wanted. But it didn't turn out the way he thought it would. It never does when you listen to the devil's lies.

STEP 4: PEER PRESSURE.

"My life really took a nosedive when I started hanging around with the wrong crowd." Satan will use bad friends to get and keep you on the stairway to hell. What your friends are today, you will be tomorrow.

- a) Hang around with the drug crowd and you'll be taking drugs before you know it.

- b) Become friends with thieves and you'll soon be stealing.

"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Proverbs 1:10,15,16; Psalm 1:1,6; Proverbs 4:14,15;

Teens and adults are hopeless followers (like sheep) searching frantically for someone to lead them. Satan will provide leadership for you by using your peers who have swallowed his lies to suck you down also. Peer pressure is the glue that holds Satan's plan together. Everyone wants to be liked, accepted and popular. No-one likes to be **laughed** at, or to be an outsider or rejected. Some teens will do anything to belong. Watch a teen inhale their first cigarette. They choke, turn blue, get sick, and vomit sometimes, but, to impress their friends, they keep at it. Watch a teen first drinking booze. It tastes terrible. He wants to spit it out. "But what will my friends think?" He drinks one, two, three beers, feeling miserable. Next day he tells his friends what a great time he had last night. Everyone was jealous. If only they knew the truth.

FOUND OUT A LITTLE TOO LATE.

Denise wanted to be accepted. Her parents were wealthy and she had everything except a rich and handsome boyfriend. She couldn't adequately impress her friends without one.

When a potential "Mr Wonderful" came along, she couldn't bear the thought of letting him get away. "Anything to keep him", she thought. Before she knew it, she was pregnant. Things were not going the way she had planned. They never do when you buy Satan's goods. Her mum pressured her to have an abortion. Since she didn't want to be "tied down" with a baby and give up her "fun", she did.

When she awoke after the abortion, she began weeping uncontrollably. All at once it hit her like an exploding atomic bomb. She had taken the devil's bait. She realised she had been gravely deceived and knew she had murdered a precious and innocent little life, her own baby. She found out what Satan was up to, but it was a few minutes too late. Her little baby was already in a garbage bag and on it's way to the dumpster. The devil was laughing happily that he had snuffed out another young life.

I MUST IMPRESS MY FRIENDS.

Tom had a problem. He wanted to have friends. He watched some kids at school who were really "cool." They seemed to be having a lot of fun and everybody wanted to be part of their group. Tom heard that to be accepted by that group, you had to smoke, so he started smoking. Then he heard you had to drink, so he did that too. Next he learned to be really "cool", you had to run away from home. He did that too. Then, to really impress them, he began smoking pot. The "cool" kids responded and soon he was one of the "cool" one's too. He was "Mister Popular." Now that he had a reputation, he had to keep it. More powerful drugs, dealing drugs and crime followed. Everybody was very impressed. He was extra cool. Little did Tom or any of his friends realise that Satan was using peer pressure to destroy another young life. When Tom died of a drug overdose, the devil had the last laugh. Tom wasn't cool. He was a fool. Peer pressure had killed another one.

Teenager, if Satan has got you hanging with the wrong crowd today, he will use peer pressure tomorrow to drag you down his stairway to hell.

STEP 5: DECEPTION - "IT LOOKS FUN".

Whenever Satan sets the trap for you, he will always make it look like fun in the beginning. Many teens are in Satanism because it looks like fun. The first step is fun. The last step will leave you screaming forever.

A former heroin addict was asked how he ever got himself to drive a needle into his arm and risk his entire life. He told me it wasn't like that when he started. In the beginning it was fun. He smoked pot and had a great time. The problem was that the fun soon ended and misery took it's place. Once he was addicted he'd do anything to get high. It wasn't for fun anymore. Now it was survival.

An ACDC song states that: "Satan's gonna get you, gonna drag you to hell, no one's putting up a fight, you get into evil, you're a friend of mine, I'm gonna take you to hell, gonna get ya, Satan's got ya, Hells Bells." A boy who read porn who molested an 8 year old girl, said that he didn't want to hurt her, but something came over him that he couldn't control. Afterwards he hated himself and wanted to die.

Question: Why couldn't he just stop if he didn't want to do it anymore?

Why can't teens stop taking drugs and heroin when they know that they may die?

Why can't boys leave the homosexual scene?

Answer: Everyone of Satan's teasers (drugs, rock music, immoral sex, etc) were designed to open people up so that demons could be placed in them and eventually control them.

The devil will use rebellion, peer pressure and deception to prime you, then he'll apply one of his tried and tested tools to get his demons inside you. The stairway to hell now gets painful and you start to pay. These fun things you used to enjoy are now a cruel master.

STEP 6: ROCK MUSIC.

If you love rock music, the devil's claws are already firmly wrapped around your neck. The longer you listen to it, the tighter his grip gets. Almost every teen on the stairway to hell is addicted to rock music. Rock stars are sold-out servants of Satan, preaching to get you to hell. Only a grossly deceived person would idolise and worship people who are leading them to hell.

Ozzy Osborne: "Will he (demon) escape my soul, or will he live in me?"

Iron Maiden (song called "Number of the Beast"): "I'll possess your body and I'll make you burn."

Grim Reaper (song called "See you in Hell"): "I will take you to the very gates of hell."

Ozzy Osborne (song called "Nativity in Black"): "Now I have you with me under my power...You'll see who I am, my name is Lucifer, please take my hand."

KISS (song called "God of Thunder") says those who are enslaved by his music are under a satanic spell that will destroy their souls.

The purpose of rock music is to get demons inside you to destroy you and to drive you to hell.

ACDC admit that demons live in them, "Tearin' me apart, got the devil in me." One rock song is the actual oath of allegiance to Satan that is recited when a person becomes a satanist. Every time a person sings those lyrics, they are renewing their total allegiance to Satan.

Led Zeppelin: "The devil mocks their every step."

Lust: "The devil wants to stick you, wants your body, wants your spirit."

Backmasking: When played backwards, "In league with Satan" says "Satan, raised in hell, I'm gonna burn your soul."

Grim Reaper: "See you in hell."

Bonn Scott of ACDC died shortly after he sang, "I'm on the highway to hell."

DON'T TOUCH MY MUSIC.

If you want to prove that teenagers that are hooked on rock music are demon infested, just try to take their rock music away from them. Many things will cause a teenager's blood to boil, but mess with their music, and you have a war on your hands. Why? Because now you've got their demons riled up. When that happens, look out. There's no telling what the demons will drive them to do.

A 13 year old mother from Osaka, was so "obsessed" (another word for "possessed") with the satanic Heavy Metal rockers, Iron Maiden, that she sold her newborn twin baby girls to buy tickets to an up and coming Iron Maiden concert. The newspaper reported that when she was arrested, she was wearing a "baseball cap and T-shirt displaying the rock band's eerie, 'Satanic like' logo. The article also said that her "belief in Iron Maiden is so strong, she threatened to kill herself unless she was allowed to wear her hat." Is there any question that demons controlled this young girl.

STEP 7: DRUGS.

An anti drug slogan is "Just say no to drugs." People just can't, because by taking drugs they have opened a doorway for demons to enter their body.

Revelation 9:20,21 speaks of people worshipping devils and refusing to repent of sorcery (drug taking) "During a horrible experience with LSD, I had a shocking introduction to the spiritual realities of life. The devil was inside of me and quite systematically taking control of my will. As I resisted the ever increasing pressure within me to take my control away.....a voice inside of me kept saying, "This time I will have you fully! "I was completely terrified! Somehow I knew that this was Satan." The demons that entered this young man through

his LSD "trips" began talking to him. This is not uncommon. Many drug abusers hear voices, but most don't know that they are the voices of demons. Hard core Satanism is on the rise, and experts are continually finding drug abuse directly linked to this growing demon possession problem.

New Agers view drugs as a way to draft soldiers into the New Age army. Drugs are tools to get demons inside young people. Drugs then transform them into blind servants of Satan. Everybody who is on heavy drugs started on marijuana. Demons don't let people quit drugs. People will steal, go into prostitution, and do anything to get drugs. Many people kill themselves while high on drugs, because that is what demons drive them to do.

STEP 8: DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS.

Purpose of D and D: When a player begins worshipping a new deity (Satan) in the game and asking help of characters (demons) in the game, they are doing exactly what out and out Satan worshippers are doing. They just don't realise it.

You say, "I don't believe D and D has anything to do with Satan and religion."

Page 25 of Deities and Demigods says: "Serving a deity is a significant part of D and D, and all players should have a patron god."

A 16 year old D and D player shot himself just hours after a D and D curse was placed on him.

STEP 9: ILLICIT SEX.

Illicit sex causes problems: - Risk of AIDS, herpes, VD.

- Unwanted pregnancies.
- Abortions.
- Emotional problems.
- Fights with parents.

People think that God is mean, old fashioned and a kill joy who hates sex and punishes anyone who dares enjoy it. People think that Satan is in favour of sex. This is false. God ordained sex: "Marriage is honourable in all and the bed undefiled." Hebrews 13:4.

God created sex only for married couples: Galatians 5:19,21; Revelation 21:8; I Cor. 6:9-10,16,18;

"He that doeth it (committed adultery) destroyeth his own soul." Proverbs 5:3-5,8,11; 6:32; II Peter 2:19

Homosexuality is forbidden in the Bible in Leviticus 20:13 and Romans 1:24-28,32.

God gave the minds and bodies of homosexuals to the control of demons, resulting in a reprobate mind. Once sexual demons enter your body they will never be satisfied. They will drag you to disgusting lows that you never thought you'd sink to.

STEP 10: SUICIDE.

One boy suicided because he had pimples. Another boy suicided because his girlfriend broke up with him. Rock groups sing of suicide. The MASH theme song is "Suicide is Painless."

STEP 11: HELL.

This is the final and irreversible step: Matthew 8:12; II Thessalonians 1:8,9.

"Satan....deceiveth the whole world." Revelation 20:10; Revelation 12:9.

Jesus Christ is your only hope of salvation. Renounce rock music, drugs and all other steps on the stairway to hell.

SOLUTION: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." II Corinthians 7:1.

Right Steps:

1. Receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour.
2. Cleanse your house spiritually by burning rock records and other bad things.
3. Read God's Word, "Thy Word is Truth." John 17:17.
4. Talk to God. Pray without ceasing.
5. Make new Christian friends.

Don't get fooled again by:

1. Wrong Christians.
2. Wrong churches.
3. False teachers and preachers.
4. False Christian music.

"Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" James 4:4.

8 PRINCIPLES FOR MUM AND DAD

1. Set a Godly example.
2. Live a consistent life. If it's wrong today, then it's wrong tomorrow.
3. Communicate with your children.
4. Provide spiritual training (Deuteronomy 6:6,7). Pray with them.
5. Love your children.
6. Discipline them (Proverbs 13:24).
7. Be honest. Don't tell lies to teens.
8. Home School your children using the ACE Curriculum. Don't give them to a ungodly state school to train. "Learn not the way of the heathen." This will separate your children from ungodly peers.

I remember a mum and dad who told me their 14 year old son blasted rock music on his stereo while locked in his room in the basement. They hated it and knew it was wrong, but said that there was nothing they could do about it because he kept his door locked. They were both totally shocked when I suggested they get a sledge hammer, smash the door down, then take the hammer to smash his stereo and records.

Parents, stop letting your kids run your home. Rise up and take the leadership position that God commands you to take. The Bible says that if you will not discipline your children, then you don't really love them. You hate them:

"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth (disciplines) him betimes (early)." Proverbs 13:24.

Note: Parents, if you suspect that your children are being influenced for wrong in the school they attend, then pull them out and home school them using the internationally acclaimed, tried and tested Accelerated Christian Education program. This has proven successful in rescuing thousands of children from bad peers, teachers who promote error, and from fear of ridicule and bullying. They will definitely receive a much higher quality academic education. Obey this command of God:

"Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." Proverbs 19:27

80. HOW TO BE WISE

Aim: To make us wise in all our dealings with God and man.

Bible Reading: Proverbs 4:1-27; 8:1-9,18.

Introduction: People can learn wisdom in three ways:

- a) From the Bible - this is the best way.
- b) From other people's mistakes - a good way.
- c) From their own mistakes - the worst way.

A great problem existing today is that:

- many people lack wisdom.
- this leads to situations being handled badly.
- this leads to conflict.
- this leads to broken relationships.
- this leads to loss of productivity, and loss of happiness.

What is the solution? Get wisdom from an early age, from church, parents, the Bible and from other's mistakes. "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." Proverbs 22:15. We all start out foolish. We all must learn wisdom.

There are five crowns in Proverbs:

- a) Wisdom (4:9) gives a crown of glory.
- b) Virtuous Woman (12:4) is a crown to her husband.
- c) Riches (14:24) is the crown of the wise.
- d) Hoary (grey) head (16:31) is the crown of glory.
- e) Grandchildren (17:6) are the crown of old men.

1. FACTS ABOUT WISDOM

- a) **Definition:** Intelligent, sensible, judicious, using facts and reason carefully and correctly, skilful to judge, insight into problems, knowledge and love of the will of God. Handling life and its problems from the Bible's point of view; moral insight. Skill in the affairs of life, sound judgment, good sense, prudent with others and knows how to regulate circumstances.
- b) "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding." Proverbs 4:7.
- c) "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Proverbs 9:10. Reverencing God is where wisdom starts.
- d) "Wisdom is better than rubies." Proverbs 8:11. It is very valuable and important to have wisdom, because if you have wisdom, you can achieve many other useful things.

- e) "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." James 3:17.
- f) Four things are exceeding wise in Proverbs 30:24-28.
 - i) Ants - they prepare their meat in the summer. **Plan Ahead.**
 - ii) Conies - they make their houses in the rocks. **Shelter from enemies.**
 - iii) Locusts - they go forth by bands. **Strength is in Organisation and in Numbers.**
 - iv) Spiders - they are found in King's palaces. **Get to the top. Get eternal life.**

2. HOW TO GET WISDOM

- a) **Come to Jesus** for salvation. "In whom (Christ) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Colossians 2:3.
- b) **Fear God** - respect God and be afraid of sin and its consequences.
"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Proverbs 9:10.
- c) **Read the Bible** - "From a child thou has known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." II Timothy 3:15.
- d) **Ask God for wisdom** - "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." James 1:5. "For the Lord giveth wisdom." Proverbs 2:6.
- e) **Be righteous** - "He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous." Proverbs 2:7.
- f) The **rod** and **reproof** give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." Proverbs 29:15.
- g) **Seek understanding**- "Wisdom rests in the heart of him that has understanding." Prov 14:33

3. WHAT A WISE PERSON DOES

- a) **Is keen to learn.** "A wise man will hear and increase learning." Proverbs 1:5. "Wise men lay up knowledge." Proverbs 10:14. Be keen to learn, open to God teaching us, study, learn from other's mistakes and from circumstances.
- b) **Listen to Wise Men and Avoid Fools.** "Hear the words of the wise." Proverbs 22:17.
"A wise son hears his father's instruction." Proverbs 13:1.
"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Proverbs 13:20. Listen to your father, mix with wise men and avoid fools.
- c) **Be humble** - "With the lowly is wisdom." Proverbs 11:2. Don't think that you are too great to help people and mix with people. Be a servant, putting yourself out to help people.
- d) **Know what to say and when to say it** - "He that hath knowledge spareth his words. Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise." Proverbs 17:27,28.
"He that refraineth his lips is wise." Proverbs 10:19.
"There is.....a time to keep silence and a time to speak." Ecclesiastes. 3:7.
Think before you speak. It can be very humbling to take back wrong words.

- e) **Be a Soul winner** - live for eternity. "He that winneth souls is wise." Proverbs 11:30.
A wise man looks at people and life from an eternal viewpoint. He invests for heaven.
He lays up treasure (people) in heaven. Let us rescue people from hell.
- f) **Be a teacher** - "The lips of wise men disperse knowledge." Proverbs 15:7.
Pass on God's truths to others. "Righteousness exalteth a nation." Proverbs 14:34.
The more people who know God, the better any nation is.
- g) **Be a peacemaker** - "Wise men turn away wrath." Proverbs 29:8.
"A wise man will pacify (anger)." Proverbs 16:14.
Live peaceably with all men, try to keep friendships.
- h) **See the consequences of events** - "A prudent man **foreseeth the evil** and **hideth himself** but the **simple** pass on and are **punished**." Proverbs 22:3.
Many Jews fled Europe to the U.S. before World War II broke out when they saw Hitler's anti-Jewish policies. Many Jews stayed in Europe, ignored the signs & died in gas chambers.
How well do you see the consequences of your actions on you and on your children? This is a reason to live righteously and wisely.
- i) **Be an achiever** - "Through wisdom is an **house builded**." Wisdom achieves things.
"A wise man is strong." Proverbs 24:5. He is unlikely to fall in time of trouble.
"By wise counsel thou shalt make thy war; in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." Proverbs 24:6. Wisdom wins a war, in particular the spiritual war with Satan.
- j) **Wise men get rewarded** - "The wise shall inherit glory." Proverbs 3:35 and 24:14.
- k) **Wise men don't touch alcohol** - "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Proverbs 20:1. Alcohol destroys wisdom.
- l) **Wisdom shows in your face** - "A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine." Ecclesiastes 8:1
- k) **A Godly wife is wise and kind** - She opens her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." Proverbs 31:26.
- l) **Wise men often become rich** - "The crown of the wise is their riches." Proverbs 14:24.

CONCLUSION

Much more is spoken of wisdom in Proverbs. Read it, search it and do it. You will then become a wise person, you'll have a happy life, and your children and grandchildren will be wise, happy and blessed.

Wisdom starts at salvation. It is grown in an environment of humility, where we avoid wrong companions, admit our sins, learn from our mistakes and pick ourselves up to carry on pleasing God.

81. HOW TO HAVE JOY

“Yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” 1 Peter 1:8.

Aim: To know how to experience joy unspeakable.

Introduction: Many people today are unhappy and without joy. It seems that the more things that people have, the more they want, the more unhappy they are, and the less joy they have. Satan will always try to rob us of joy by getting us to sin. He offers us a swap: sin and reap a perceived benefit, which will cost us our joy and peace. Yet some people with very little material things have great joy. Why? Because joy is not based on having material goods.

Joy is **inner contentment, calm delight, cheerfulness** and **gladness**.

This joy that we receive at salvation is described as “unspeakable” (412) which means unutterable and inexpressible. It is so wonderful that it cannot be described fully. The next verse (v.9) describes heaven, so this joy that we have continues to heaven. We rejoice with so great joy that words cannot describe it (now), and this joy is full of glory (later when we get to heaven). This joy is only available to believers in Jesus Christ, so the obvious first step is to receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour.

Question: How can we experience this joy unspeakable?

Answer: We experience this joy as we do or think on the following:

1. STAY IN GOD’S PRESENCE

“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.” Psalm 16:11.

Joy is found by: a) following the path of life that God sets out for us, and
b) staying close to God in His presence,

then we experience fullness of joy, pleasures forevermore and sweet fellowship with the Lord.

“Unto God my exceeding joy.” Psalm 43:4. “I will joy in the God of my salvation.” Habakkuk 3:18.

When we draw close to God we experience the exceeding joy of His Person. Habakkuk 3:17,18,19. Even in economic hardship we can rejoice in the Lord. Inner joy and peace does not depend on outward prosperity. Joy comes from staying close to the God of my salvation.

2. HEAVEN

“He shall see his face with joy.” Job 33:26. “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Matthew 25:21,23

“I will make thee ruler over many things” is a joyful prospect.

As we think of seeing Christ’s face in heaven, this thought fills us with joy now and joy later in heaven.

We will experience great joy when we enter heaven if we have been faithful to Christ on earth. Faithful service now brings great rewards later.

Christ is able to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Jude 24.

3. FAITHFULLY ENDURING TRAILS

“Weeping may endure for a night, but **joy cometh in the morning.**” Psalm 30:5.

When we go through life’s trials, the key is to stay in close fellowship with the Lord. When the trial passes, then joy comes to us as we experience the victory.

“Count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations.” James 1:2,3,4.

This is because testings produce patience, so that we become complete and entire, wanting nothing. We become joyful when we come through trials, victorious in the strength of the Lord.

4. STAY MORALLY UPRIGHT, AVOID SIN

“Shout for **joy** all ye that are **upright** in heart.” Psalm 32:11.

If we are upright morally in our heart, this is a cause for joy. To have joy, be morally upright and forsake sin, because sin robs us of joy.

“Restore unto me the joy of my salvation.” Psalm 51:12.

It is right to avoid sin and to keep our joy. When we sin, we lose our joy as David did through adultery and murder. We must then confess our sin to God and make things right with others, then God can restore unto us the joy of our salvation. Remember, sin robs us of joy, so let’s avoid sin, and stay upright as the way to keeping our joy.

5. GOD PLANS TO PROSPER US

“Let them shout for joy and be glad.....Let the Lord be magnified, which hath **pleasure** in the **prosperity of his servant.**” Psalm 35:27.

As we serve God obediently, it is a cause for joy to remember that God plans to prosper our hard work for Christ. We all like to prosper in the work that God has called us to do. When we go through difficult times, it is good to know that God will prosper our work for Him. This causes us joy.

“Your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 15:58.

6. HOUSE OF GOD

“I went with them to the **house of God**, with the voice of **joy** and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.” Psalm 42:4.

If we want joy we should come to **church**, the house of God on Sunday so that we can be taught God’s Word, to enjoy the **fellowship** of believers, and to rest on God’s Holyday. There is **joy** in God’s house when believers are of one mind in the Word of God and as we praise God in joyful singing.

7. UNITY

(Philippians 2:2 “Fulfil ye my **joy**, that ye be **likeminded**, having the **same love**, being of one **accord**, of **one mind.**”)

There can be no joy in any church unless there is unity of mind and belief. If an entire church all believe the same Bible truths, are of one accord, of one mind, all loving the same things, then there is peace, joy and direction in a church. A church divided against itself cannot stand. Those of different major beliefs should either believe what the church believes, or get out and find another church that believes as they do. Don’t hinder the work of a good church.

True unity can only be based on truth. Then joy can prevail.

8. SOUL WINNING when people are saved.

a) “They that sow in tears shall reap in **joy.**” Psalm 126:5.

When we go out and share the gospel with tears of concern over people’s lost condition then God promises that we shall reap in **joy** as people get saved. There is joy in seeing people saved.

b) "My brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my **joy** and **crown**." Philippians 4:1.
"What is our hope or **joy**, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even **ye** in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For **ye** are our glory and **joy**." 1 Thessalonians 2:19,20.
Those Paul led to Christ were his joy, hope, glory and crown. Leading souls to Christ brings us joy.

c) "There is joy in the presence of the **angels** of God over one sinner that repents." Luke 15:10.

We should share in the angel's joy by trying to lead people to Christ. Events on earth can make heaven rejoice. This proves that those in heaven know much of what happens on earth. Let us be soul winners so as to make heaven's angels rejoice and share in their joy.

9. KEEP CHRIST'S COMMANDMENTS

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love. These things have I spoken unto you, that **my joy** might remain in you, and that **your joy** might be full." John 15:10,11.
If we keep **Christ's commandments**, Christ's joy will be in us and our joy will be full. Those who rebel against God's commands, lose Christ's joy. Thus rebels look angry. Obeying God brings joy.

10. CONVERTS WALKING IN TRUTH

"I have **no greater joy** than to hear that my children **walk in truth**." III John 4.
When we lead people to Christ, it is our greatest joy to see them walk in truth, in true Bible doctrine, taking their place serving the Lord in a sound Bible teaching Church. It is a grief to see new Christians going back to their old ways or following false doctrines. How do new converts walk in truth? By being taught God's Word properly as they sit under a sound Bible teacher.

11. PRAYER

When we ask in Jesus Christ's name, we receive, and our joy will be full. John 16:24.
If you are unhappy, check and see if you have had a good prayer time that morning.
Prayer brings joy. No prayer brings no joy.

12. REVIVAL

"The people with **one accord gave heed** unto those things which Philip spake....and there was great **joy in that city**." Acts 8:4-8. When the Samaritans turned to the Lord, there was great joy in their city.

13. SUCCESS IN MISSIONS

"Paul and Barnabas declared the **conversion of the gentiles**: and they caused **great joy** unto **all the brethren**." Acts 15:3.
We can have great joy by supporting soul winning missionaries. When they report multitudes turning to Christ, we experience great joy with them as we have shared prayerfully and financially in their work. Their blessing becomes our blessing.

14. FINISH YOUR LIFE'S WORK

"That I might **finish my course** with **joy**, and the ministry....." Acts 20:24.
If we finish our life's race with **joy without being disqualified**, we have joy on entering heaven, not having given in to the devil. We must finish the work that God has given us to do on earth.
We lose our joy if we disgrace Christ by sin, and drop out of the ministry.

15. A HAPPY MARRIAGE brings joy

"Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity." Ecclesiastes 9:9.

If we succeed in our career, but fail in our marriage, we lose our joy and have great misery. Men must constantly court and love their wives in order to maintain a happy marriage. Men, watch for the danger signals in your marriage and fix the problems before it's too late.

16. FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"With **joy** shall ye **draw water** out of the **wells of salvation**." Isaiah 12:3.
"Out of his belly shall flow **rivers of living water**. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." John 7:37.
We can be constantly filled with the Holy Spirit as we take in the water of the Word (Eph. 5:26) from the wells of salvation. As we are **filled** with the Holy Spirit, we bring forth the **fruit** of the Spirit of love, **joy** peace,.....(Galatians 5:22,23).

17. THE WORD OF GOD

"Thy words were found and I did **eat** them: and **thy Word** was unto me the **joy** and **rejoicing** of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16. When we read and seriously meditate on God's Word, applying it to our life and obeying it, we experience great joy and rejoicing. Great joy comes from obeying God's Word.

18. THINKING OF THE FUTURE MILLENNIUM

"The joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion..." Psalms 48:2.
When we think about when Christ will return to the earth in person to judge righteously and put down all evil, we are excited to see the **joy** that the whole earth will experience as Christ rules as King from Jerusalem over a regenerated earth.
"Everlasting **joy** upon their heads; they shall obtain **joy** and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isaiah 35:10.
When feeling down, think of the **future joy** that you'll experience when you come to Jerusalem in the Millennium weekly and monthly (Isaiah 66:23), along with everybody on earth, to receive Bible teaching from Christ in a joyful, festival atmosphere.

19. CHRIST'S FIRST and SECOND COMINGS

Wise men rejoiced with **exceeding great joy** as they saw the star over the stable. Matthew 2:10.
So do we rejoice as we see Christ's coming drawing closer. Angels brought the shepherds good tidings of great joy to all people. We experience the joy of Christ's birth at Christmas. Luke 2:10.

CONCLUSION: Joy comes by doing things God's way. Sorrow comes to by doing things man's way. Follow these principles and you will have real joy and purpose in life. Remember the sorrow that Israel experienced because they disobeyed God and did not serve Him joyfully. Deuteronomy 28:47.

82. HOW TO INCREASE OUR FAITH

Bible Reading: Hebrews 11.

Aim: To apply these principles to increase our faith, and to step out to attempt great things for God.

Introduction: We are saved by faith in Christ as Saviour when, believing that He paid in full for all our sins and wants to save us, we then call on Christ to be our Saviour. Romans 10:13; John 1:12.

As believers, we must continue to walk in faith day by day. "For we walk by faith, not by sight." 2Cor5:7

QUESTION 1: What do we have faith in?

ANSWER: We have faith in God's promises in the Bible that they are true, and reliable. God can be counted on to do what is best and right for me, according to the goodness of His character and His loving purposes for me. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Genesis 18:25.

QUESTION 2: How important is it to walk by faith?

ANSWER: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Hebrews 11:6.

"For by it the elders obtained a good report." Hebrews 11:2.

QUESTION 3: How will having faith or trust in God affect my life?"

A:

1. I will not worry, but live in victory.
2. I will attempt more service for God.
3. I will pray more, expecting answers from God.
4. I will sin less, knowing that sin is due to mistrusting God's power to solve my problems.
5. I will wait patiently for God to work out His plans in my life, as I major on serving Him.
6. I will tell more people about Christ, believing that God's Word will not return void, but will accomplish that which he purposes (Isaiah 55:11). "A little faith will bring your soul to heaven.
A great faith will bring heaven to your soul."

I. DEFINITION OF FAITH

"Now faith is the substance (assurance) of things hoped (expected) for, the evidence (conviction) of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1.

It is a confident assurance that God will do what is right and best for us in what we hope and pray for.

II. BIBLE EXAMPLES OF GREAT FAITH

1. **Noah** prepared an ark to the saving of his house, even though he had never seen rain. Hebrews 11:7
2. **Abraham** left Ur at God's command, not knowing where he went. Hebrews 11:8. Abraham by faith, when he was tried, offered up Isaac....accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." Hebrews 11:17-19.
3. **Joseph** kept himself from adultery with Potiphar's wife. Joseph stayed faithful to God in the dungeon jail with no knowledge as to whether he would ever be released.
4. i) **Moses** refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

- ii) **Moses** chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season.
 - iii) **Moses** esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. 11:26.
 - iv) **Moses** by faith forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King.
 - v) **Moses** endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.
 - vi) **Moses** by faith kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first born should touch them." Hebrews 11:28.
5. **Joshua:** By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days. 11:30
 6. **Rahab** received the spies with peace, risking her life. 11:31.
 7. **Gideon** with God and 300 men defeated 135,000 Midianites. Judges 6:1 - 8:10.
 8. **David** by faith faced Goliath, killing him with one stone. 1 Samuel 17.
 9. **Elijah** prayed for God to withhold rain for 3½ years, then prayed for rain. James 5:17,18.
 10. **Job** endured suffering, yet he sinned not with his mouth, nor charged God foolishly. Job 1:22; 2:10
 11. **Hezekiah** by faith promoted a revival. II Kings 18.
 12. **Nehemiah** by faith returned to Jerusalem to rebuild its walls. He faced great danger and opposition.
 13. **Isaiah, Jeremiah** and **Ezekiel** preached God's message to the Jews who persecuted them.
 14. **Daniel** prayed to God daily knowing that he would be thrown to the lions. "He was faithful." Dan 6:3
 15. **Four friends** of a palsied man let him down through the roof to Jesus to be healed. Mark 2:5.
 16. **Paul** and early Christians who started churches all over the world in the face of much opposition.

III. ILLUSTRATIONS OF FAITH

1. When **Hudson Taylor**, the famous missionary, first went to China, it was in a sailing vessel. Very close to the shore of some cannibal's islands the ship was becalmed and it was slowly drifting shoreward unable to move. The savages were eagerly anticipating a feast.

The captain came to Mr. Taylor and besought him to pray for the help of God. "I will," said Taylor. "provided you set your sails to catch the breeze." The captain declined to make himself a laughing stock by unfurling in a dead calm. Taylor said. "I will not undertake to pray for the vessel unless you will prepare the sails." The captain agreed to Taylor's request.

While engaged in prayer, there was a knock at the door of his stateroom. "Who is there?" The captain's voice responded. "Are you still praying for wind?" "Yes." "Well," said the Captain. "you'd better stop praying, for we have more wind than we can manage."

2. This story is told by the captain of a ship on which **George Muller** of Bristol was travelling. During his life he received more than 1,000,000 pounds from the Lord, without advertising. Every penny came as an answer to prayer.
"We had George Muller of Bristol on board" said the captain. "I had been on the bridge for twenty-four hours and never left it and George Muller came to me and said, 'Captain, I have come to tell you I must be in Quebec on Saturday afternoon.' 'It is impossible,' I said. 'Then very well, if your ship cannot take me, God will find some other way. I have never broken an engagement in fifty-seven years; let us go down into the chart room and pray.'

"I looked at that man of God and thought to myself, 'What lunatic asylum can that man have come from, for I never heard of such a thing as this?' "Mr. Muller, do you know how dense this fog is?"

No, he replied, my eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God who controls every circumstance of my life. He knelt down and he prayed one of the most simple prayers. When he had finished I was going to pray, but he put his hand on my shoulder and told me not to pray. As you do not believe He will answer, and as I believe that He has, there is no need whatever for you to pray about it.

I looked at him and George Muller said, "Captain, I have known my Lord for fifty-seven years and there has never been a single day when I have failed to get an audience with the King. Get up, Captain and open the door and you will find the fog has gone. I got up and the fog indeed was gone and on that Saturday afternoon George Muller kept his promised engagement. Sunday School Times.

IV. BARRIERS TO FAITH

1. Sacrifice: When you think you'll lose out in some way.
2. Reason: When God's commands seem unreasonable.
3. Peer Pressure: When obedience means going against the crowd.
4. Suffering: When obedience is likely to bring you suffering.

V. HOW TO INCREASE OUR FAITH

1. Hearing the Word of God.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Romans 10:17.

As we hear God's Word at church, study it privately, and believe God's promises to be true, our faith will increase. We must hear, read, study, memorise and meditate on God's Word.

2. Remember God's Past Answers to Prayer.

David strengthened his faith before he fought Goliath by remembering how God delivered him from the paw of the lion and the bear. I Samuel 17:31-37.

Notice Saul's lack of faith, compared with David's great faith. God's past victories encourage us to attempt great things for God today, and to trust God in the future.

3. Obey God in What you Know Already.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." Luke 16:10.

If you don't do faithfully the little jobs that God has given you to do today, you won't do faithfully the bigger jobs that God may ask of you later in life.

4. Ask God for Great Things Daily.

You will receive what you ask for if you ask in Jesus Name, according to His will. John 16:24 says:

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

Ask in faith for wisdom, nothing doubting. James 1:5-7.

Ask God to give you a mighty impact on the world for Christ.

5. Listen to the Holy Spirit's Leading.

Philip did this in Acts 8:26-31, resulting in the Ethiopian eunuch being saved.

As we listen to the Holy Spirit's leading, we become more used of God, others are blessed, God is glorified, and we are encouraged to attempt more things for God.

6. By Meditating on God's Goodness of Character in the Bible.

Notice how God loves us. He wants to bless us and lead us in the right way. Psalm 34:4-10,17-22. Psalm 37:8 says: "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

"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.

7. By Trusting in the Lord rather than Fearing.

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." Psalm 56:3.

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21.

Job continued to trust God even though he lost his wealth, health and children.

8. Read how God answered missionaries prayers in the past.

9. **Develop a Thankful Attitude**, thanking God for all things, knowing that God is working out His perfect will in our lives. "In everything give thanks." I Thessalonians 5:18.

10. Study facts proving **Creation**, the Bible's **Fulfilled Prophecies**, & proofs of the Bible from **Science** and **Archaeology**. These will convince us of God's Word being true and of God's care for us.

11. **Tackle Giants Courageously** in the Lord's strength. Joshua 1:5-9.

12. Have a **Humble Spirit** seeing **my natural poverty** and **need of God**. God will look to such a man.

"But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, & trembleth at my word." Isaiah 66:2

13. **Attempt New Things for God** to reach more people for Christ and to teach God's Word.

14. **Be content if you are unmarried**, using your time to serve God. God will provide a spouse if He wills in His own time. "Godliness with contentment is great gain." I Timothy 6:6.

15. **Learn to Wait upon the Lord** for Him to provide our needs.

"I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me and heard my cry." Psalm 40:1.

16. **Tithe**, developing our faith in God's ability to provide. Malachi 3:7-12.

As we give money to God's work above what we think we can afford, God continues to abundantly provide our needs. We then have faith to give more.

17. Be a **Clean Vessel**, and God will use you more. II Timothy 2:20,21.

"Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11.

18. Be **Filled with the Holy Spirit** daily. Be aware of God's presence doing great things in our life.

19. Study to **Learn Soul Winning** and **Follow Up** by doing it. As people get saved and come to church through our outreach, our faith will increase.

CONCLUSION: Will you increase in faith? Will you apply these principles today?

"A coloured church congregation had met to pray for rain to release a long dry spell. The preacher looked severely at his flock and said: "Brothers and Sisters, you'll know why we is here. Now what I wants to know is-where is you' umbrellas?"

Will you attempt something in faith for God today, believing that God will bless your efforts? or will you have no faith, and attempt nothing for God?

83. HOW TO UNDERSTAND ADVERSITY

Bible Reading: Hebrews 12:1-15.

Aim: To understand God's purposes for adversity.

Key 1: Our first response to adversity should not be to try to remove it, but to allow adversity to **reveal** our **true weakness**.

Introduction: Adversity can be our greatest motivation for spiritual growth or our deadliest means of discouragement. The difference depends on us understanding God's purposes in adversity.

What does adversity do for us? What does God achieve through adversity?

1. Adversity is God's Way of Getting Our Attention.

The cares of the world can choke out the Word of God and drown out the voice of the Holy Spirit. While we are busy with our plans, goals, projects and friendships, God patiently reminds us in Jeremiah 35:14, "I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto us."

When **adversity comes**, we are suddenly faced with problems and pressures that are **too big** for us to resolve. Our inward response should be, "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not my enemies triumph over me." Psalm 25:1,2.

As **adversity continues** and our human strength is drained, Christ's invitation becomes more attractive, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. God's ultimate purpose in getting our attention is to conform us to the **image of Christ**. Because of this, all adversity works together for **our good** (Romans 8:28,29).

Through it we learn of Christ, who is meek and lowly. His burden is light.

2. Adversity is our Assurance that God Loves Us.

"For whom the Lord **loveth** he **chasteneth**" Hebrews 12:6,7,10,11.

Three results of chastening: 1. We give God **reverence**. 12:9.

2. Our **profit**, to be partakers of God's holiness. 12:10.

3. It yields the peaceable fruit of **righteousness**. 12:11.

When we recognise God's love in adversity, we can:

- i) **Lift up the hands** which hang down and the feeble knees. v.12.
This means to get back serving God with our hands and legs.
- ii) **Make straight paths** for your feet. v.13.
This means to get back on the path of righteousness. "He leadeth me." Psalm 23:3.
- iii) Follow **peace** and holiness with all men. v.14.
This means that right relationships are restored with men and God.
- iv) Avoid failing of the **grace** of God or bitterness will follow. v.15.
Failing of the grace of God means that one can not respond with the grace of God, but with envy, bitterness, nervousness, then carnality.

3. Adversity is God's Call for Self Examination.

"If we would **judge ourselves**, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord." 1 Corinthians 11:31,32.

God requires that we **search out**, **confess** and **forsake** every sin.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper." Proverbs 28:13.

God established the Lord's Table as the time and place for self-examination. If this is neglected, God may give **physical adversity** as a further motivation for self examination. 1 Cor. 11:28-30.

-If things are not going well for us, the reason may be that we **dishonoured our parents** "Honour thy father and mother....that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." Ephesians 6:2,5.

-If it seems that evil will not depart from our household, it may be because we have rewarded evil to those who did good to us, "Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house." Proverbs 17:13.

4. Adversity is God's Way of Conquering Our Pride.

-The adversity of **contention** reveals pride. "**Only** by **pride** cometh **contention**." Proverbs 13:10.

-The adversity of **destruction** is the result of pride in a person.

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." Proverbs 16:18.

-The adversity of **shame** is God's means of **humbling us**.

"When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom." Proverbs 11:2.

"A man's pride shall bring him low." Proverbs 29:23.

"Whoso exalteth himself shall be abased & he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" Luke 14:11

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." James 4:6,7.

5. Adversity is a Reminder of Our Weakness. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

When all is going well, we are tempted to think that we don't need God. If we have a **thorn** in the flesh (v.7), Christ's **grace is sufficient** (v.9) and we learn to **glory** in our unchangeable features (v.9). We then experience the **power** of Christ upon us (v.9). When I am **weak**, then am I **strong** (v.10). I **take pleasure** in **infirmities** (weaknesses), reproaches and necessities (v.10).

6. Adversity Motivates us to Cry Out To God.

God responds to the cry of His children when we are in adversity.

"The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivers them out of all their troubles."

Psalm 34:17.

We should cry out in the right ways:

1. Cry out to God with our **voice**.
"I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill." Psalm 3:4.
2. Cry out to God in **humility**. "He forgetteth not the cry of the humble." Psalm 9:12

Key 2: Our second response to adversity should be: Not to focus on outward circumstances, but to realise that we are dealing with unseen spiritual powers.

7. Adversity is Evidence of Spiritual Warfare.

Note: If we do not recognise when adversity is spiritual warfare, we will be **overwhelmed** and **tempted to give up**. When adversity takes the form of **confusion**, **suspicion**, **division**, and **anger**, then spiritual warfare is on. Paul encouraged Christians to be **strong**, **courageous**, and **prepared** to be **good soldiers**.

8. **Adversity is God's Method of Purifying our Faith.** This leads to Patience. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him." Hebrews 11:6.
FAITH may need to be **tested** in the **fires of adversity**. "the trial of your faith." 1 Peter 1:6,7. Faith is essential for living the Christian life.
 Why? Because the ways of God are opposite to the natural inclinations of man.
 Adversity may come from: 1. Those who **mock** God's principles, or
 2. Because we violate God's principles.
 In either case, adversity will strengthen our faith. **PATIENCE** comes from adversity.
 "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." James 1:3.
 With this kind of **faith** and **patience**, we can obtain the promises of God.
 "Followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Hebrews 6:12.
9. **Adversity Increases our Hatred for Evil.**
 When God exposes secret sin, He allows others to see it's devastating consequences, such as:
 Islamic terrorist bombings, Saddam Hussein; Homosexuality, Aids; Fornication, Divorce; Childhood lying, President Nixon's Lies. In this way, the simple (ignorant) are warned not to be fooled by Satan focusing our eyes on "the pleasures of sin which last for a season." Hebrew 11:25
 God will **not be mocked** with our **sin**. Galatians 6:7,8.
 Our **hatred of evil** should **increase** as we realise how:
 1. Sin (as a thief) **robs us** of our potential for achieving & enjoying what God had planned for us;
 2. Our sins **damage** the lives of those whom we love. We don't hate evil because we don't realise its final cost. Sin brings death. Adam and Eve did not realise the cost of their sin to all mankind.
10. **Adversity reminds us to Pray for our Authorities.**
 God teaches us that a quiet and peaceable life is related to intercessory prayer for those in authority over us. 1 Timothy 2:1,2.
Note: Those who are in positions of responsibility **provide spiritual protection** for those under their care, such as parents, pastors. When there are failures in the life of a leader, the "umbrella of protection" develops "leaks". Satan is given greater freedom to defeat those who are under that authority. Therefore it is important in order to be a good leader to submit to authority yourself. Even a little leak in a roof can let in a great deal of water. Spiritual leaders are judged by a higher standard. James 3:1. When we experience temptations, so do church leaders. They need our prayers.
11. **Adversity is a Signal to Re-evaluate our Priorities.**
 Wrong priorities may result in much painful adversity, not only for us, but also for those who are affected by our lives.
Type 1: When we **fail to spend proper time with the Lord** in memorising His Word, meditating and praying, we rob others of spiritual encouragement and direction. Instead, we become vulnerable to **transgression**. Psalm 107:17,19.
 God saves us out of our distress with His Word. Psalm 107:20.
Type 2: When we try to **do more** than God intended us to do.
 "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work." Exodus 20:9.
12. **Adversity is God's way of Testing Our Work.**
 Every **spiritual house** that is built must be **tested** to prove that it is **founded on truth**. "rain descended (to test the roof), the floods came (to test the foundation), the winds

blew (to test the structure), and beat upon that house, and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." Matt 7:24-27

"The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." 1 Corinthians 3:13-15.

13. **Adversity is God's way of Testing our Friendships.**
 It will reveal which friends are concerned about **getting**.
 It will reveal which friends are concerned about **giving**.
 "A true friend loveth at all times and a brother is born for adversity." Proverbs 17:17.
 For example, The Good Samaritan's commitment to his neighbour, who had fallen among thieves, continued until the man's needs were met. Luke 10:30-37.
 Contrasting example: The Prodigal Son while spending money, had many friends, but when his money ran out, and hardship came, all his friends then left. On the other hand, Jonathan was loyal to David in bad times.

Key 3: Our third response to adversity should be:
 Not to **live for Christ** in our own efforts, but to realise that **Christ must live in us** through the **power and filling of the Holy Spirit**.

14. **Adversity is God's Call to Identify with Christ.**
 Adversity causes us to **want more of Christ's power in our lives**. Galatians 2:20.
 Paul suffered the loss of all things to win more people to Christ and to experience the power of Christ's resurrection. God's power becomes a reality to us from Romans 6-8.
-Romans 6. We learn to **know** that we are crucified with Christ. We learn how to **reckon** ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. We learn how to **yield** ourselves to God and our members as instruments of righteousness to God. (Romans 6:6,11,13).
-Romans 7. We discover a new problem. We are still overcome by the demands of the Law. We try to live according to God's principles, but we can't do it. We learn that our death in Christ also caused us to die to the Law, so that we are free to be controlled by God's Spirit in order to bring forth spiritual fruit. (Romans 7:1-6).
-Romans 8. We learn our **source of power** over sin. This is the indwelling Holy Spirit of God based on our position in Christ. As we walk in **God's Spirit** rather than in our **own flesh**, God is able to fulfil the righteousness of the Law in us. (Romans 8:2-4).
15. **Adversity is Motivation for Open Accountability to God and Others.**
 Aim to be **blameless** as we will be **accountable** to God. God's key to life, peace, wisdom and achievement is a moment-by-moment awareness of our accountability for all our words, thoughts, actions, attitudes and motives. This awareness is the fear of the Lord. It is the beginning of wisdom. When we lose our continual awareness of God, we think and act as if God did not exist. God responds by allowing adversity into our life. Judges 2:20-22.
16. **Adversity Prepares us to Comfort Others.** 2 Corinthians 1:3-5; 2 Corinthians 4:8-10. Irritations are God's way of increasing our sensitivity to the needs of others, increasing our opportunities to serve God, and developing inward qualities. When God achieves His purposes through an irritation, He is then free to remove that irritation from our lives.
- CONCLUSION:** How do you respond to adversity? Will adversity make you better or bitter? If we continually retreat from adversity, we force God to raise up new irritations or to set aside His best plan for our lives. Permanent irritations have a permanent benefit in our development and ministry.

84. STABLE HOMES PRODUCE HAPPY CHILDREN (or Seven Ways to Have a Happy Marriage)

Bible Reading: Mark 10:6-9; Ephesians 4:18-33.

Aim: To identify, memorise and apply 7 Basic Keys for a strong & happy marriage and secure children.

A preacher, before marrying a couple, once said, "I'd rather have a funeral than a wedding. When you bury someone it stays done." He was a deeply concerned man. He had seen so many marriage break-ups. He asked, "Are these people committed to make it work - no matter what?"

Note: Divorce has reached epidemic stages in the US and Australia. It has happened during our lifetime, for example:

In 1900	1 in 100 marriages ended in divorce.
In 1960	14 in 100 marriages ended in divorce.
In 1987	40-50 in 100 marriages ended in divorce.

Divorce has tripled since 1900.

In an article, *Too Many Divorces, Too Soon*, noted anthropologist, Margaret Mead, showed how selfishness and growing irresponsibility destroys half of all marriages - and many of the children they produce. Writing in the February 1974 *Redbook* magazine, she said:

"In our generation divorce has become a part of the American way of life.....We no longer deeply believe that two people who have made the choice to marry should necessarily try to weather the storms that shake any vital, intimate relationship. Instead, more and more, our answer to a difficulty in marriage is: try it again with someone else."

All too often the motivation for changing marriage partners in such circumstances is the hope of finding someone who will please *me* - do things *my* way - meet *my* standards. If both husband and wife have this selfish, immature "me-first" attitude, someone is certain to be sadly disappointed.

The arrival of a child often triggers the crisis. Immature young couples who have not really learned how to give themselves to "living for the other" cannot cope with the pressure a baby creates. Margaret Mead writes:

"Unprepared for parenthood, two young people who have become very close may see the new baby as an interloper. Or, if they are already restless, the baby may become just one more obstacle to pleasure and freedom. The mother is permanently stuck at home. The father is almost equally confined-or goes out alone. There is no money now for pleasure and almost nowhere the young couple can go for amusement with the baby. Then our current relief that a speedy divorce is the way out of the dilemma begins to take effect..... each accuses the other of things they both fear and long for. These being freedom from responsibility, a chance to get away, longing for better opportunities in life and a way out of their unhealthy situation."

Couples who separate end up with deep hurts. When there are children (and there are millions), they suffer the most. In addition to the millions who actually separate, many couples share a house and children but do not actually have a real home and marriage.

Children from such families suffer in many of the same ways that children do whose parents actually separate. All these tragedies do not have to happen. They can be prevented. Learning and applying seven basic concepts will enable any couple to build a happy, stable and secure home - a home which cannot be destroyed.

These are:

1. The Bible is God's rulebook and instruction manual for marriage.
2. Marriage is a permanent, unbreakable union.
3. Marriage cannot be a 50-50 proposition. Each partner must fulfil his or her own responsibilities 100% whether their partner does or not.
4. Both the husband and wife must recognise they have distinctive personal needs which can be truly satisfied without guilt only in the marriage relationship.
5. At the same time both partners must be committed to recognising and meeting their partner's needs which while different from their own are just as real and deeply felt.
6. All differences must be resolved God's way.
7. Recognise that a stable marriage must be based on trust and that a person can be trusted only as he or she is willing to trust the other completely.

Let us look at and apply these seven concepts in order to have good marriages ourselves, be able to teach others and prevent problems for them.

1. FOLLOW GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS IN THE BIBLE.

God thought up and instituted marriage. Marriages fail when people try to live together by their own rules rather than by God's rules. The tragic results are:

- a) Homes break up.
- b) Lives get shattered.
- c) Loyalties of children become divided.
- d) Children get bruises that hurt them all their lives.
- e) Dreams of the bride and groom become nightmares.

All because a couple ignores the Bible.

When a family regularly attend church together, the divorce rate is 1 in 50 (2%).

When both partners have received Christ as Saviour and faithfully follow God's guidelines for life and marriage, the divorce rate is 1 in 1525. Therefore, a Godly Christian has a 700 times better chance of success in marriage than has an unbeliever. WHY?

Because, by following God's instructions in the Bible, we can succeed. By ignoring God's way, tragedy results.

Principle: For success in any area in life, read and follow the instructions.

Therefore, to improve your chances 700-fold:

- a) Receive Jesus Christ as Saviour now.
- b) Get baptised, testifying that your old life and way of doing things died with Christ and is finished, and that you have been raised to a new way of life to do things God's way.
- c) Commit yourself personally to doing right.
- d) Read your Bible and pray every day with your partner and family.
- e) Be active in and attend every service in a Christ-centred, Bible-believing church, WHETHER IT IS CONVENIENT OR NOT. You will hear God's principles for living explained. You will be challenged to apply them.
- f) Look for opportunities to serve the Lord together. This will make you others-centred. Stable marriages are successful marriages.

2. REAFFIRM YOUR MARRIAGE AS A PERMANENT COMMITMENT and AN UNBREAKABLE UNION.

In the marriage vows, you promised “for better or for worse . . . till death do us part.” This is Bible-based. Today, people see this merely as a ritual, but God says, “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” Matthew 19:6. Because people take their commitment very lightly, many marriages break up for immature and silly reasons. Then the unresolved problems, hurts and conflicts from the first marriage often prevent a second marriage from being really successful. God wants to bless your marriage and use you to bless each other, your children and others.

Challenge: *To give stability to your marriage and security to your spouse, commit yourself now to stay married forever, no matter what. Then, tell the children of this commitment if old enough to understand, as it will give them security when they see their friends parents divorcing. It will also build their foundations in the attitude that their marriage is forever as well.*

3. MARRIAGE IS NOT A 50/50 PROPOSITION.

(Each partner must fulfil his/her responsibilities 100%, whether the other partner does or not!)

Vows, if taken seriously, can keep a marriage together, but vows will not build a happy home. A home which is both secure and happy must be built on a real understanding of what makes a marriage successful. The slogan “marriage is a 50-50 proposition” is heard frequently. It sounds logical. However, the logic behind it can destroy many marriages. The basis of a 50-50 marriage is, “If you will do your part, I will do mine.” It leads to tragedy because there are times in every marriage when someone fails. In a 50-50 marriage, this causes the other partner to step back and refuse to do his 50%. Then the battle rages.

The 50-50 marriage is not God’s way. The husband and wife who start marriage on a 50-50 basis will always be checking to see if the partner is fulfilling his or her 50%. When one partner falls short, bitterness results in the other. The partner who feels cheated will withhold some of his 50% in an attempt to even the score. Things get worse. Even 90%-10% marriages will not work. The partner who is willing to give 90% will have a tendency to check to see if the partner is really fulfilling his or her 10%.

God’s way in marriage is 100% - 100%. Each partner is expected to give his or her 100% even if the other partner fails completely. If only *one* partner in the marriage faithfully gives his 100%, the home cannot be destroyed. God uses right actions and attitudes of the faithful one to straighten out and restore the failing partner.

God’s instructions for the 100% - 100% marriage are found in Ephesians 5:18-33. Different instructions and responsibilities are assigned to both husband and wife:

Wife:

- a) Submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. (Note that it does not add “if he does right and fulfils his responsibilities.”)
- b) A wife should not nag, complain, lecture or teach her husband. She will win him to Christ by her behaviour. 1 Peter 3:1. When a man fails to be what he should be in marriage, God deals with him. Too often, the man does not hear the Lord or feel the Lord’s pressure because he hears his wife too much and feels her pressure too much.

Husband:

- a) Head of the home. This does not mean that the wife is inferior, as seen from 1 Corinthians 11:3, “The head of Christ is God.” Being under authority is not a position of inferiority. Jesus is God and is equal with the Father in all ways, yet in coming to earth as a man and dying for us, He submitted Himself to His father in all things. (Note: In submitting to His Father, He did not become inferior. He did all things because His Father wanted it, and He loved His father. Submission is not a mark of inferiority.)
- b) Love your wife enough to die for her. God, after telling wives to submit, severely limits the man’s right to do anything that he pleases. God takes away man’s right to use his authority irresponsibly by telling him, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” Christ loves us as in Romans 5:8, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Seeing Christ’s love transform our hearts and brings us to love Him, so too a husband’s patient, long-suffering love will finally win the wife’s heart and change her behaviour. Christ does not cleanse and perfect us by beating on us. He uses His Word. God has no 50/50 marriage arrangements. Each partner is called upon to fulfil his/her own 100%, even if the other does nothing. God is not calling us to a life-long martyrdom, but will use these qualities to change the partner.
- c) Be filled with the Holy Spirit and be not drunk with wine (Eph. 5:18). As we are constantly filled with God’s power and love, we can be the husband and wife He calls us to be.

What if we have not been giving 100%?

- a) Confess these failings to the Lord in detail.
- b) Ask your spouse for forgiveness for failing to be the spouse that God wants.
- c) Start submitting sweetly and lovingly.

4. RECOGNISE THAT EACH HAS DISTINCTIVE PERSONAL NEEDS.

These needs can be truly satisfied without guilt only in the marriage relationship. Meet each other’s needs. If you do not, then the security and stability of your home will be endangered. Both husband and wife have different but real needs.

Question 1: What is one big reason for marriage break-ups here?

- A: When someone else outside the marriage begins to meet the emotional needs of the other. When this happens, the spouse is drawn almost irresistibly to the outsider. Then comes divorce.

Many fine people get caught in this trap without realising why. They do not understand that the strong attraction they feel for someone other than their partner is just the result of the other person meeting an emotional need which should be fulfilled by the marriage partner. When two people are meeting one another’s basic emotional needs there is a strong and growing desire for a complete physical relationship. Recognising our basic emotional need and seeing that it can be fulfilled without guilt only within the marriage relationship is a vital protection against tragedy.

Question 2: What are these basic emotional needs of the husband and wife?

- A: God tells husbands and wives how to meet each others needs. “Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband.” Ephesians 5:33

Question 3: What does a wife need?

- A: a) Love.
 b) To hear that she is loved.
 c) To receive regular evidence and reassurance of her husband’s love, such as the thrill of little gifts, remembering important dates and events, and tokens of love.
 d) Security, protection, home maintenance, etc.

Question 4: What does a husband need?

- A: a) To be respected and revered.
 b) To know that his wife really thinks that he is the greatest.
 c) To be assured of her respect, especially when he fails in some way.
 d) To know that his wife is dependent on him, just as the church is dependent on Christ.

When the husband and wife do not recognise and work to meet the needs of their partners, grave dangers result. For example, a man who on the job is competent in accomplishing his assignments, and is polite, courteous and appreciative of the help of others, will find a woman respecting him (especially if she works for him). Because the woman is meeting his need for respect, he will be drawn to her. He will start desiring to meet her needs.

Soon he will compare the respect of the woman on the job with the nagging of his wife. The woman at the office or in the plant does not know that he does not take out the garbage and leaves his dirty socks or underwear on the bathroom floor. The woman on the job will not point out his failings (particularly if he is her boss) as his wife does. The woman on the job is in danger also. She does not realise that this very competent, appreciative man at work has all the shortcomings of her own husband. In the casual relationship at work (or wherever) these two people do not have to share unpaid bills, sick children, the need for a new washer, a second car, etc. Without realising it, they soon find themselves meeting one another’s basic needs. The man at work will be supplying the attention and kindness the woman needs. She will be giving the man the respect that he desires. Where two people are meeting these very basic needs for love and respect, the desire for a complete physical relationship becomes overpowering. Soon there is another broken marriage. It is happening all the time.

Recognising your own basic need for reverence and respect (men) or love and attention (women) is an important safeguard against slipping into a relationship where these needs are met outside of marriage.

5. MAKE IT YOUR LIFE’S GOAL TO MEET YOUR SPOUSE’S NEEDS.

Their needs are just as real and deeply felt as yours. Husbands cannot know from their own experience how much wives need to be loved. They cannot really understand how wives need regular assurance and evidence of that love. Wives, from their own experience, cannot comprehend how their husbands need reverence and respect. The only way a husband or wife will ever come to realise that their partner has a real and deeply felt need, is to recognise his or her own personal needs.

The Husband. By seeing and admitting how much he needs respect and reverence from his wife, the husband is then able and prepared to understand that his wife also has a real, but deeply felt need.

The Wife. The only way a wife can really experience, feel or share the great need her husband has to be revered and respected, is to recognise her own deep hunger for love and the assurance of it.

When they see their own need, they are prepared to realise that a partner’s need, while different, is just as deep and real.

Lesson: Recognising our own emotional needs and seeing that our partner also has needs which are just as real and deeply felt as ours, will bring us a willingness to give ourselves to meeting the needs of our partner. As we do so, God will see to it that the partner begins to meet our needs.

The key to blessings in marriage is: Make it your life’s goal to meet the needs of your partner.

In doing so, you will see your own needs met by God. “Give, and it shall be given unto you.” Luke 6:38. This verse reminds people of money, but the principle goes much deeper than money.

God implies that we will get much more than we give. This principle applies in every area of life:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| If we give LOVE..... | we will get LOVE. |
| If we give HELP..... | we will get HELP. |
| If we give ENCOURAGEMENT... | we will get ENCOURAGEMENT. |
| If we give A SMILE..... | we will get A SMILE. |
| If we give HATE..... | we will get HATE. |

Therefore, when we give ourselves to meeting the needs of others, we will find others meeting our needs. This is especially true in marriage, and also true in Christian work, soul winning and disciple-making. Therefore, when both partners satisfy the other’s needs, they become more and more important to each other, every part of the relationship blossoms and becomes fruitful. Problems which brought division will now bring husband and wife closer together. The physical relationship in marriage becomes completely fulfilling, and once other basic needs are met, then a life-long commitment can be made to satisfy the other’s longings.

6. RESOLVE DIFFERENCES GOD’S WAY.

Eight Downward Steps Toward Divorce:

1. Long before a man or woman “puts away” his or her partner in divorce, there is always a “putting away” of the person from real companionship, communication and oneness.
2. When real closeness and union in marriage is broken, they are forced into a subtle form of adultery. This means that they seek to have their needs for companionship, meaningful conversation, oneness, attention and respect fulfilled by someone other than their marriage partner. This is “adultery” - diluting of marriage. Adultery has a broader meaning than just illicit sex outside marriage. God described Israel’s worship of false gods and seeking help from them as adultery. Adultery (in a broad sense) = seeking to have one’s needs met and fulfilled other than through the God-ordained channels method. Therefore if a man “puts away” his wife from real oneness with himself and she seeks a substitute in soap operas, books, materialism, a job, or other things, he has forced her into a form of adultery. This type of “adultery” always precedes the actual illicit physical union outside marriage.

Such “putting away”..... the breaking of real oneness and communication in marriage....results from unresolved differences, unhealed hurts and unforgiven offences. Often the differences are very small. If they are not resolved, however, they will destroy real communication and oneness in marriage. The couple may continue sharing a house, smiling at each other, and having a physical relationship (although it will not really satisfy). However, the real union is ended. Because some hurt has not been healed, one partner “puts away” the other from the very centre of his life and existence. The “putting away” is done when one partner’s expectations are dashed again and again.

3. To avoid further hurts, the offended partner withdraws and erects a wall of protection.
4. The hurt person may seek to “get even”. This hurts, offends or irritates the other person.
5. He or she then erects a barrier or wall also.
6. Even if divorce does not result (and it does not, in many cases), the marriage relationship becomes a stiff, cold, formal one, without real life, love or meaningful communication.
7. The partners no longer meet one another’s needs.
8. Adultery (physical or emotional) results, as empty people seek fulfilment outside marriage.

What is the solution to this problem? God recognised the danger. It can happen in marriage or in any relationship between people. In two places in the Gospel of Matthew, the Lord Jesus gives procedures and assigns responsibilities through which all wrongs and hurts can be healed. In Matthew 18:15 the Lord says: “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.”

Going to the person who has offended **with a proper attitude** is the key to seeing differences resolved. The proper way to approach a person who has offended is to go quietly and say “I need to ask your forgiveness. I got very upset with you because of.....It was wrong for me to react in this way. Will you forgive me?” In 99 cases out of 100, the other person will grant forgiveness and seek forgiveness for their own wrongdoing. The offender may or may not acknowledge his own wrongdoing immediately. Give God time to work on him, once you have confessed your own wrong attitudes or reactions.

Taking the blame in this way, without looking at the wrongs of the other party, is God’s way of reconciliation. The Lord Jesus, in seeking to restore fellowship between God and man, took upon Himself everything which separated us from God. He took all of man’s sin and shame and guilt. Once He took our sin, we were made free to come back to Him. Our union with Him was renewed. He is to be our pattern. In Ephesians 4:32 we are told to forgive one another as He forgives us, “And be ye kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you?”

How did the Lord forgive?

Christ has done no wrong. Yet He took all of our guilt, blame, shame and punishment. For this reason we were freed to be one with Him again. We should be willing to do the same for others . . . and particularly for our marriage partner. When we truly forgive, we must put ourselves in the place where we can be hurt again. This is what the Lord Jesus commanded in the Sermon on the Mount. He said that instead of getting even (an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth) we should turn the other cheek (expose ourselves to getting hurt again). We have the same obligation when we realise that someone (including our husband or wife)

feels wronged by us. God says that if we realise (or sense) that we have offended someone we should go and get it settled. The surest way to settle any difference is by using God’s way of reconciliation. If we ask God, He will show us our fault.

Once forgiveness is granted, the foundation is laid for restoring communication and an openness in marriage. Without it, little differences and hurts erect high walls between two people who are supposed to be one. In effect, one or both partners “puts away” the other. Even if no divorce results (immediately or longterm), one of two things happen. The home may become an ‘armed camp’ or, where there are few ‘open battles’, the relationship becomes a distant, formal one without the real oneness and blessings which marriage should produce. To avoid this tragedy, marriage partners should really commit themselves to resolving differences in God’s way, rather than just “getting over them”.

7. TRUST ONE ANOTHER COMPLETELY.

A stable marriage must be based on trust. A person can be trusted as he or she can trust the other completely. There must be trust to forgive and to go on when the other person has failed.

The alternatives to trust are (a) jealousy, (b) suspicion, or (c) protective walls built to hide behind.

We can give our partner unconditional trust only if we can trust the Lord to keep him right, and straighten him out if he fails. Husband and wife must commit themselves to earning the trust of their partner. This trust is commanded and demanded by the Word of God.

- a) Husbands must be able to trust their wives. Of woman, God says, “Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her.” Proverbs 31:10,11.
- b) Wives must also be able to trust their husbands. Only by trusting, can a woman obey the Word of God which says, “Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.” Eph. 5:22.

Trusting God or our spouse can’t be based on feelings or what is likely to happen. Trust is the result of a decision which we act upon.

CONCLUSION: Accepting and consistently applying these seven basic prerequisites will build stable, secure homes. Husbands and wives should study and memorise the foundational concepts for a stable marriage. Whenever one partner or the other senses that differences are developing in the home, prayerfully checking the list will show the cause. By faithfully following this practice, either partner in the marriage can be used of God to build a stable, secure home which cannot be destroyed.

Excerpts from “**Growing Up God’s Way**” by *John A Stormer*.

85. SCRIPTURE SWORDS FOR PERSONAL BATTLES

If neglected, the battlefields listed below may give way to enemy strongholds (see Ephesians 4:26-27 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5). When tempted in these areas quote these scriptures to gain victory.

Each sword will force the enemy to make a speedy retreat.

ANGER: “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.

ANXIETY: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:33-34.

BITTERNESS: “Love your enemies... pray for them which despitefully use you.” Luke 6:27-28.

BURN-OUT: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” Matt 11:28-30

COMPLAINING: “Do all things without murmuring and disputing, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” Philippians 2:14-15.

CONFUSION: “Shew me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths... for thou art the God of my salvation, on thee do I wait all the day.” Psalm 25:4-5.

CRITICAL SPIRIT: “Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” Ephesians. 4:32.

DISCONTENTMENT: “For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content....both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Philippians 4:11-13.

DISCOURAGEMENT: “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.”

DOUBT: “Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief.” Mark 9:24. (Isaiah 41:10.

ENVY: “Charity (love of Jesus) suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not...” I Corinthians 13:4.

FEAR: “Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” Joshua 1:9.

GOSSIP: “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.” Romans 14:19.

MATERIALISM: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” Matthew 6:19,20.

GUILT or CONVICTION: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I John 1:9.

GUILT FEELINGS (when you have already confessed): “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:1.

IMPATIENCE: “Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand.” Psalm 31:14-15.

FEELINGS OF INADEQUACY: Hear God say: “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” 2 Corinthians 12:9.

LAZINESS: “Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” Colossians 3:23.

LONELINESS: “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee... when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned... for I am the Lord thy God.. since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.” Isaiah 43:2-4.

LYING: “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour.” Ephesians 4:25.

PRIDE: “And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” Matthew 23:12. (Proverbs 3:5.

RATIONALISING: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart:and lean not unto thine own understanding”

REBELLION: “Father... not my will, but thine, be done.” Luke 22:42.

RESENTMENT: “(Charity) seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.” I Cor. 13:5.

RESTLESSNESS: “Be still, and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10.

SELF-CENTREDNESS: “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” Philippians 2:3.

SELF-PITY: “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not: but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” 1 Peter 2:21-23

WORRY: “The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want (lack).” Psalm 23:1.

86. BIBLE KEYS FOR A HAPPY MARRIAGE

With so many broken marriages, we must know and apply the Bible's principles for a happy marriage in **Ephesians 5:21-33**. These principles can only be applied by Spirit-filled Christians because marriage is a spiritual institution. What are these principles?

1. **SUBMIT YOURSELVES ONE TO ANOTHER.** Ephesians 5:21.
Both husband and wife must submit to meet each other's needs above their own. Each has special needs. Only as we fulfil each other's needs can peace and happiness prevail.
2. **EACH SUBMIT TO GOD.** Ephesians 5:21. "Submitting yourselves...in the fear of God."
Both marriage partners must live by God's ways in the Bible. If one or both partners disobey Bible principles, problems are certain, which lead to frustration and possible divorce.
3. **WIVES SUBMIT TO YOUR HUSBANDS** as you submit to God. Eph. 5:22; I Peter 3:1-6. Don't shatter your husband's ego or self respect, but hold him in high regard, helping him to achieve his goals as a help-meet. Genesis 2:18. God can change his heart if he is wrong. Proverbs 21:1. **Wives** submit to your own **husband's** in everything. (Ephesians 5:24).
4. **UNDERSTAND** that the earthly marriage of a wife submitting to her husband is a PICTURE of the **Heavenly Marriage** of the **Church** submitting to **Christ** as her **Head**. Ephesians 5:23. Aim to have a marriage as good as Christ and the Church.
5. **BOTH MUST BE SAVED.** They must have **received Christ as their Saviour**. "He is the Saviour of the body." Ephesians 5:23.
6. Wives must have a **MEEK & QUIET SPIRIT** which is in God's sight of great price. I Peter 3:4.
7. Husbands **DWELL WITH YOUR WIVES** according to **KNOWLEDGE**, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the **weaker** vessel. I Peter 3:7. Husband, realise that your wife is more vulnerable emotionally. Protect her from emotional stress and discomfort.
8. **PRAY TOGETHER.** "That your prayers be not hindered." I Peter 3:7.
9. **BE OF ONE MIND**, be compassionate, be loving, be pitiful, **BE COURTEOUS**. Don't render evil for evil, but bless when your spouse hurts you. I Peter 3:8,9.
10. **HUSBANDS LOVE YOUR WIFE.** How much? Ephesians 5:25. As **Christ loved the Church** and gave Himself for it. How much did Christ love the Church? Christ **died for the Church**. Husband's should be willing to die for their wife, to meet her needs, even to live for her daily.
11. **HUSBANDS SEEK TO:**
 - a) Keep your wife holy (sanctify her),
 - b) Keep her spiritually clean by the Word of God, as you read it together,
 - c) Make you and your wife without blemish (perfect in character). (Ephesians 5:27).
12. **HUSBANDS** love your wives as you love and look after your **own body** (5:28). If you love your wife and treat her right, she will love you and treat you right, and you will feel better. If you hurt and criticise your wife, she will hurt you. If you love your wife, you are loving yourself.
13. **HUSBANDS NOURISH and CHERISH** your wife and **meet her needs** as much as Christ meets the Church's needs. Ephesians 5:29. **Nourish (1625)** means "to rear up to maturity."
Cherish (2282) means "to warm, to brood, to foster."
14. **WE MUST WORK TOGETHER** as bones in a **body** or **as a team**. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, of his bones." Ephesians 5:30.
15. **LEAVE YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER** when you get married. Don't let parents-in-law interfere. Don't live with your parents. You are no longer under their authority. Ephesians 5:31.
16. **Husbands CLEAVE to your wife** as one flesh. Ephesians 5:33. Achieve oneness spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically.
17. **Wife, REVERENCE your husband.**
Husband, LOVE your wife as yourself.. Ephesians 5:33.

87. REASONS TO OBEY GOD

We live in an age of rebellion where many people care little about God, seek their own pleasure and ignore God. Many Christians are lukewarm. They are glad to be saved and going to heaven, but they don't care much about obeying and serving God. They are too busy having a good time, and living for themselves than to care about living for Christ and rescuing people from hell.

In order to be saved we must see ourselves as big sinners who have lived for self, wronged God and have broken the chief commandment of Matthew 22:37,38 of not loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and not loving our neighbour as ourselves.

When some Christians are asked to come to church they say: "You are always pushing me to come to church." A truly born again child of God with a new nature should find it a joy to come to church to fellowship with believers and to learn more of the Bible.

We should not ask, "How little can I do for God?", but we should ask: "How much can I do for God?" We should find it a joy to serve God. Consider these reasons to obey God:

1. God created us.

God allows us to live in His wonderful world of beauty that He has created for our enjoyment. To not obey God is to not acknowledge His goodness in giving us all these things richly to enjoy. It is selfish and very ungrateful to take all from God and give Him nothing or little in return.

2. God has goodwill towards us.

God wants good things for us, "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Romans 2:4.

3. God knows what is best for us.

God's ways are better than our ways. God is much wiser and smarter than we will ever be. Often our wishes are based on wrong information.

"I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. O that thou had hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." Isaiah 48:17,18.

4. If we obey God today, then God will open up exciting new opportunities for us later.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." Luke 16:10.

Every time we are challenged to obey God, we should view it as a test permitted by God. If we obey God we pass the test and blessing follows. For example, the Abrahamic covenant was given after Abraham passed the faith test in Genesis 13:5-18.

5. If We disobey God in any issue, we fail the test and loss results.

For example, Lot chose the best land for himself near Sodom, but he inherited trouble when he was captured by Amraphel in a war. He later lost everything in the destruction of Sodom.

6. If we disobey God, our children will follow our example and disobey God also.

For example, Lot lost his reputation and testimony before his two daughters and sons-in-law when he asked them to flee from Sodom. "But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law." Gen. 19:14.

Lot's two daughters so disrespected his lack of standards that they made him drunk and committed incest with him.

On the other hand Abraham obeyed God and his son Isaac obeyed God, following his father's good example.

7. If we obey God, our children and grandchildren will be likely to obey God also.

This will bring blessing to our following generations. For example, Abraham was greatly respected for his obedience to God by many generations of people to come.

8. If we obey God, we will be greatly respected by God and Godly people for years to come.

People will remember us with great respect and they will be encouraged to obey God as well.

"The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot." Proverbs 10:7.

9. One act of disobedience leads to more disobedience

This is how bad habits are formed. The devil says "one sin won't hurt." This is a lie, because it is harder to do right after a sequence of giving in to sin. Many people fall into deep sin and trouble after giving in to a lot of small temptations.

10. If we obey god, then God will deliver us from trouble.

"The righteous is delivered out of trouble." Proverbs 11:8.

11. If we obey God, we will prolong our days.

We all like to live a long and happy life. "Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess." Deuteronomy 5:33.

12. Obeying God brings blessings.

"Them that honour me, I will honour." 1 Samuel 2:30.

Our obedience will bless us and our children:

"O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever." Deuteronomy 5:29.

"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God...and a curse if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God." Deut. 11:26-28. Israel's history proves that obedience brings blessing, and disobedience brings trouble.

13. Disobeying God brings discipline.

"My son, despise not thou the chastening (discipline) of the Lord." Hebrews 12:5.

If we remember that sin will bring God's discipline upon us, we will fear God, knowing that He watches everything we do, approving or disapproving of our actions. God is powerful enough to bring trouble to us if we sin. Therefore we are strongly motivated not to sin.

14. Disobeying God stops our prayers from being answered.

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Psalm 66:18.

". . . that your prayers be not hindered." I Peter 3:7.

15. Obedying God proves our love for him.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments." John 14:15. All Christians claim to love God, but we prove our love for Him by obeying Him in difficult situations and in temptations. James 1:12.

16. God owns us now that we are saved.

We should live to please Christ who died for us. "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." I Corinthians 6:19,20

We are redeemed by Christ's blood. This means that we are now bought back to Christ as our owner from the slave market of sin. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say." Luke 6:46

17. So Christ will say to us "Well done thou good and faithful servant." Matthew 25:21.

If we obey Christ now, He will say "Well done" to us in front of all the believers and angels of all history. If we have disobeyed God on earth we will be ashamed later on in heaven.

18. So as not to be ashamed before Christ in heaven.

"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." I John 2:28.

Some believers will be ashamed at Christ's coming because of a wasted life of sin and selfishness. Other believers will have confidence, joy, glory and rewards at Christ's return, because they used their time wisely for Christ and eternity, resulting in many people being saved.

19. Our obedience now, proves that God can trust us with great, exciting opportunities after Christ returns.

"Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Matthew 25:21. Disobedience now will rob us of chances to enjoy heaven to the fullest. In heaven we will suffer loss of rewards for unfaithfulness now. (I Corinthians 3:15).

20. We will have to give account of our life to Christ.

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Romans 14:12.

How will you explain to God why you disobeyed Him? How will this make you feel?

"For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men." Romans 14:18.

Will you happily explain to Christ how your talents brought ten talents? Will you "occupy till I come?" or will you hide God's talents in the earth, wasting what opportunities God has entrusted you with?

21. We obey God so that we will not be wasters of time and talents.

"He that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster." Proverbs 18:9.

"Remember how short my time is." Psalm 89:47.

The prodigal son "wasted his substance with riotous living." Luke 15:13.

To waste our time, talents and money on selfish affairs is so wrong when we see how the fields are white unto harvest, how souls are going to hell, and how so many poor people overseas are wanting the gospel. Time is one of our most valuable possessions. We must use it to win people to Christ and to teach God's Word all over the world.

22. By obeying God, we conquer selfishness and develop a Christlike character.

"Give and it shall be given to you." Luke 6:38.

People who are selfish are difficult to live with. Selfishness is a mark of immaturity. We must become givers, not takers. The more we give, the more we get. To be unselfish is one of the first lessons that we must learn in God's school. When we obey God, we deny ourself, we take up our cross (death to self), and follow Christ (Mark 8:34). Selfish people seeking to "save their lives shall lose it. But whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, shall save it." Mark 8:35.

23. We obey God in order to thwart Satan's planned destruction of our life.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." I Peter 5:8.

Satan is in the business of ruining people's lives by getting them to depart from God, and to go their own way. We should watch, obey God and stay close to Christ lest we fall into Satan's traps set to ruin our usefulness to God and our happiness. Satan wants, at all costs, to stop people getting saved. He does this chiefly by stopping Christians from growing and becoming dedicated soul winners and Bible teachers. Learn to look at life from an eternal viewpoint and to see yourself as playing a key role in changing people's eternal destiny from hell to heaven. If you let Satan defeat you, this means that thousands of people will go to hell. See your life as playing an important, pivotal role in God's plans. You must not desert God's team.

24. We obey God in order to rescue people from hell.

If you fulfil God's plans for your life, you can have a ministry that multiplies millions of disciples for Christ all over the world. These people will **love** you now, and **thank you** forever in heaven **for your obedience** to preaching the gospel.

25. Obeying God brings eternal rewards in heaven. See Chapter 8 on Rewards.

26. To set a good example to others.

We teach by our lips and by our life.

"Your zeal hath provoked very many." II Corinthians 9:2.

We either encourage people to serve God or we discourage people as they follow our example. Godly Hebrew kings encouraged the people to be Godly. Wicked Hebrew kings encouraged the people to be wicked and ungodly. We either bless or stumble others by our example. Let us be the best examples for others that Christ wants us to be.

27. To follow the example of great Christians in the past.

When we remember how the Apostles and many faithful Christians made great sacrifices in the past to advance the cause of Christ, we are motivated to follow their example to win our generation to Christ. In heaven we will meet those Christians and we will be asked: "What did you do for Christ in the spiritual war?" When we think of how many people were martyred for Christ, many of us will be greatly ashamed because of how little we did for Christ, when we had so many wonderful opportunities that others never had.

28. To win our country for Christ.

If we obey God, then our country and other countries can be won for Christ. If we disobey God by being lazy or sinning, then the cults and false religions will spread their lies to win our country for the devil. There is a constant spiritual war going on for the souls of men. We must never give up, but continue in the war for the souls of men. A strong church of obedient Christians will have a mighty impact on the world for Christ. A weak, small church of lukewarm, disobedient, lazy, sidetracked Christians will have little or no impact on winning the world for Christ. What an exciting goal to give your life to. Will you give Jesus Christ your best?

29. We are being watched from heaven by departed Christians who are cheering us on in the war for men's souls.

As in a relay, the past generation of Christians have passed the baton to us for winning our generation to Christ. Today we live at a time where the world's population is larger than it has ever been. We have a great opportunity to win more people to Christ than any previous generation. Believers in heaven are excited by our opportunities today, and are cheering us on to obey God and to win and train more people for Christ.

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight (hindrance or distraction), and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus . . ." Hebrews 12:1,2.

Will you serve God all the more as you read of the cheering in the heavenly grandstands for us to run our race well? Will you be a winner or a loser in God's race of life?

30. You'll be happiest obeying God.

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye **do** them." John 13:17.

"Where there is no vision the people perish: but he that **keepeth the law**, happy is he." Proverbs 29:18.

"Behold we count them happy which **endure**. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." James 5:11.

The aim of life is not to be happy, but to be useful for God. When we are useful for God and accomplish His plans for us, then happiness comes as a by-product. As we make others happy, then we become happy, especially when we see them finding the joy of eternal life in Christ. Those who are constantly seeking happiness for themselves do not always find it. "He that loses his life shall find it." We find happiness and purpose in life as we lose our life in obeying and doing God's will, and in helping others find Jesus Christ.

31. God beseeches or begs us to obey Him.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy**, acceptable unto God, which is your **reasonable service**.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Romans 12:1,2.

It is only reasonable that we present our bodies to God as a living sacrifice, completely burning in zeal to achieve God's good, acceptable and perfect will. Why do people not obey God? Because they want to be conformed to this world. This world will pass away, and only what's done for Christ will last.

"Only one life, it will soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last."

"He that doeth the will of God, abideth forever."

We will be able to obey God if we study the Bible, allowing it to transform us and renew our minds away from the worldly thought patterns of our past. We need to see life from God's viewpoint, not from a worldly, humanistic, false viewpoint.

32. We obey God because of his greatness as God.

An employee who doesn't obey his boss gets fired. "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? And if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, how have we despised thy name?"

a) **Ye offer polluted bread** upon mine altar. v.7. How many Christians today offer God their leftover time, their least effort, their least interest and their lowest enthusiasm?

b) **Ye offer the blind** for sacrifice. v.8. How many Christians give God what they don't want or need, such as 20 cents in the offering.

c) Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? v.10. How many Christians don't serve God unless they get paid. They don't serve God because they don't get paid for it. We should serve God without considering money.

d) Ye said also, **Behold, what a weariness it is**. v.13. How many Christians say how they can't be bothered serving God. They consider it too hard. "**I am a great King**, saith the Lord of hosts." v.14. Malachi 1:6,7,8,10,13,14. We must honour God above all earthly authorities because of the great God, King, Creator and Master that He is. He is God of the universe and we must honour and obey Him as such. It is serious to disobey the God of the universe.

33. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

When Saul disobeyed God in sparing evil King Agag, God described Saul's disobedience as follows:

1. He is turned back from following me. I Samuel 15:11.

2. To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken is better than the fat of rams. I Samuel 15:22.

3. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

4. Stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

5. Because you have rejected the Word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king. v.23. Sometimes when we disobey God, God rejects us or sets us aside from being used to achieve His best plan for us. We get second best or set aside completely. This is called being disapproved, or tested and found unacceptable.

6. The Lord hath rent the Kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine that is better than you. v.28.

When we rebel, God may set us aside and use someone else to do the great work planned for us. When we disobey God it is as serious a sin as witchcraft. We must repent of all disobedience.

34. We obey God so as to keep God's protective hedge in place. This ensures our safety.

When we obey God as Job did, who was "a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil", God places a hedge around us to protect us from Satan's attacks. Satan said to God, "Hast thou not made an **hedge** about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" Job 1:8-10.

If we rebel against God, He may discipline us by removing the protective hedge to allow Satan to attack us. This may be what Paul meant when he said, "To deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." I Corinthians 5:5.

“Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.” I Timothy 1:20.

Hence, a strong motivation to obey God is the thought of losing God’s protection, and being delivered to Satan to beat us up.

35. Obeying God brings us victory over sin and temptation.

“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” I John 5:4.

If we exercise faith in God’s promises, then we will overcome worldly temptations and we will walk in victory over sin. See I Corinthians 10:13.

36. Obedience pleases God.

Our goal should be to please God in everything. We do this by walking in faith and obedience to God.

“But without faith it is impossible to please him.” Hebrews 11:6.

Jesus said: “I do always those things that please Him.” John 8:29.

Paul said, “Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.” I Corinthians 10:33.

“If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” Galatians 1:10.

“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” II Timothy 2:4.

“Enoch . . . had this testimony that he pleased God.” Hebrews 11:5. Do you please God in everything?

37. Disobeying God Grieves the Holy Spirit.

“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.” Ephesians 4:30.

It is a sin not to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18.

38. If we obey God we more easily receive God’s guidance. Proverbs 3:5,6. God opens the windows of understanding God’s will when we tithe. (Malachi 3:10).

39. To Gain Peace Of Mind.

“Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.” Psalm 119:165.

People will do anything to get peace of mind and freedom from guilt and fear. Sin brings guilt and fear. Obeying God prevents sin, guilt and fear. We have peace knowing that we are in God’s will whatever the outcome may be.

40. Obeying God makes us Christlike in character.

It produces character qualities such as humility, wisdom, patience, kindness and all the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22,23. It makes us more aware of our faults, more ready to admit any blame, and much easier to get along with others. We should constantly check our behaviour to see if we are obeying God.

41. Disobeying God Is Sin. “Be Sure Your Sin Will Find You Out.” Numbers 32:23.

A law of the universe is “What you sow, you reap.” Galatians 6:7.

If we sin against God or man, be it by committing a sin, or by neglecting to do what is right, it will have an adverse affect on us. Hence, we avoid sin because we want to avoid the bad consequences that will come back on us. We need to develop a regular habit of always obeying God on every issue, every day. Then we will experience the joy and blessings that come from obeying God.

88. PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Aim: To identify and apply Bible principles that will promote personal spiritual growth.

Introduction:

How does one maintain their spiritual vitality in a world that opposes spiritual things so strongly?

How do we help others to maintain strong spiritual growth, strength, balance and good spiritual sense?

Sometimes we learn so much that we forget to tie together all the important Bible teachings. What are these basic key truths? (Note: these are not in order of importance).

1. Sacrifice for God and for others.

This stops us from being selfish. Let Christ live in us controlling our behaviour and our decisions.

"present your bodies a living sacrifice..." Romans 12:1.

Put yourself out to help others and promote the cause of Christ on earth. Matthew 7:24-28.

"Neither will I offer burnt offerings (sacrifice) unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." II Samuel 24:24.

Notice how the early apostles and early Christians made great sacrifices to plant churches all over the world. How about you? What ministry/service are you doing?

The world is full of selfish people, whose main goal in life is to accumulate wealth and material things for themselves.

God gave Christ to die for us; let us give our lives and time to build God's work all over the world. "Give and it shall be given unto you." Luke 6:38. Sacrificing proves our love for God and for others. God will not forget our work and labour of love in ministering to the saints. He will reward our service now and later.

2. Obey God whether you feel like it or not.

Many Christians **destroy** their lives through disobedience.

Our whole society teaches us to rebel against authority from our earliest age. School's teach rebellion, as do TV, rock music, universities, radio, undisciplined homes, permissive child philosophies, newspapers, books and magazines.

Question: Will you be a disobedient rebel against God, or will you be protected by submitting to God's authority figures, such as Pastors, God's Word, parents, police and your conscience? Suffering teaches us to obey God.

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he **obedience** by the things which He suffered." Hebrews 5:8.

"The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey." Joshua 24:24.

"Bringing into captivity every thought to the **obedience** of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5.

"To obey is better than sacrifice... for **rebellion** is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." 1 Samuel 15:22,23.

Look up these verses on obedience: Nehemiah 9:16,17; Job 36:11,12; Isaiah 1:19,20; Acts 5:29; II Thessalonians 1:8 and 3:14.

"Obey them that have the **rule** over **you**, and **submit** yourselves." Hebrews 13:17.

"ye have **obeyed from the heart** that form of doctrine which was delivered you." Romans 6:17.

Question: How does the devil get you away from a good church?

Answer: A common method is to get you to **believe evil** about the **Pastor**. The devil uses people to spread lies about the Pastor so that you will disrespect him. You then leave the church and rarely ever serve God obediently in a church again. The Pastor is placed there to protect people from wolves and false doctrines. For wolves to attack a believer they must entice him away from the Pastor/Shepherd. You will enjoy great safety in obeying your Godly Pastor who is true to the Word of God. He cares for you more than you think. Millions of Christians have made shipwreck of their faith by disobeying their Pastors. He knows more than you think.

If every Christian disobeyed God and their Pastor, God's work would go nowhere and fall apart quickly. A church must function like an army in obedience to authority. A Pastor is a Bishop which means a military commander. We must obey, because people's eternal souls are heading to hell and **need to be rescued**.

Matthew 7:24-27 teaches that if we **hear** Christ's sayings and **DO** them, we will be **wise** people whose lives will withstand the trouble and difficulties that come. Those who **DISOBEY** Christ's sayings **will** find that they may succeed for a little while, but when the storms of life come, their lives will fall apart with great ruin. Obedience is a matter of the **will** choosing God's ways.

"yield yourselves unto God." Romans 6:13.

"The churches walked in the fear of the Lord." Acts 9:31.

"let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." II Corinthians 7:1.

"Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." I Peter 1:17.

3. Fear God.

The Greek word for fear is "phobou" meaning "reverence, respect, honour, a deep and reverent sense of accountability to God. "So then everyone of **us** shall give account of himself to God." Romans 14:12.

Disobedience comes from pride and arrogance in thinking that we know better than God, pastors, parents, police, etc. It is rebellion, like witchcraft. Rebellion is Satan's problem. When you disobey God, you follow in the same steps as Satan. If you disobey your authority figures, your children will follow your example and disobey your wishes. Galatians 6:7. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Believers should fear God's displeasure at sin. We should follow **JESUS'** example of obedience:

"I do always those things that please Him." John 8:29.

"Children, obey your parents in all things." Colossians 3:20.

"Enoch...had this testimony that he pleased God." Hebrews 11:5.

Obeying God is an act of faith, because often we think that if we obey God we will miss out on some immediate pleasure. Yet God promises that if we obey Him, He will exalt us in due time. **Obedience** and **faith** is choosing God's will instead of our will. It means being prepared to accept loss in order to please God. The obedient Christian is later on pleasantly surprised to learn that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Ephesians 3:20.

God can bless you more for your obedience than what you can arrange for yourself by ignoring God. "Them that honour me, **I WILL HONOUR.**" I Samuel 2:30.

"No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Psalm 84:11.

We must not listen to the World, our faithless, unbelieving peers, nor to our fears, nor to the devil, nor to our own understanding, but to the Word of God as our guide. This is called "walking by faith" and this is the only way that we can please God.

"But without faith it is **impossible to please God**...(we) must believe that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him". Hebrews 11:6.

All through our life we will be tested to see if we will obey God in faith, or take what appears to be a "short cut" against God's Word and thus sin. Which will you choose?

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affair of this life; that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier." II Timothy 2:4. (I Corinthians 10:1-11 (v.10).

"Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer."

"If a man have long hair it is a shame unto him." I Corinthians 11:14.

4. Duty.

Duty is a decision of the will to do what is commanded. We are under the law of liberty, and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:2.

Many Christians have an elastic conscience, like King Saul, who was told to kill the Amalekites. He disobeyed God and as a result he lost the kingdom. **Obey God at all costs.** To obey is an act of faith.

I John 2:28 says that some Christians will be ashamed in heaven because of a life of disobedience to Christ. We should feel guilty and convicted if we disobey God.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments." John 14:15.

Sometimes God may take away the joy of reading the Bible, of prayer, of church, of soul winning etc, so that we'll do them not because we feel like it, but because it is right. "we have done that which is our duty to do." Luke 17:7-10.

Duty is an act of love. Duty does things well, but **LOVE** does things beautifully.

The Christian race is like a marathon, and we sometimes need commitment and determination as well as love for God and others in order to obey God's calling.

So many lazy Christians give up and drop out of serving God. I don't want to waste my opportunities. I want my life to count for Jesus Christ so that people will be in heaven through my life's work and so that God will say to me, "...well done thou good and faithful servant." Will Christ say this to you, or will you be ashamed at His coming because of selfish disobedience?

5. Overlook other Christians faults.

Overlook other Christians faults as much as possible.

"As much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men." Romans 12:18.

If necessary tell them of their faults to help them overcome them.

"and above all things have fervent charity among yourselves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins." I Peter 4:8. Proverbs 10:12; Proverbs 12:16; 17:9.

Where they can't be overlooked, then confront the person in love according to Matthew 18.

6. Obey God whether you feel like it or not.

Say "Yes" to God and "No" to self. I Corinthians 9:23-27; Acts 5:32; 5:29.

We are in a race and we discipline our bodies to do God's will as an athlete for:

- a) the gospel's sake. I Corinthians 9:23.
- b) to save some. I Corinthians 9:22.
- c) to receive the prize. I Corinthians 9:24.
- d) to not become a castaway. I Corinthians 9:27.

7. Maintain the Basics daily of:

- a) Bible reading.
- b) prayer.
- c) confess sin to God.
- d) look for soul winning opportunities.
- e) be filled with the Holy Spirit and show the fruit of the Spirit.

8. If you have a problem tell the Pastor or another Christian.

Cultivate close, Godly friends.

The Pastor can't read your mind. James 5:16.

Don't keep problems to yourself because someone else has already gone through that problem and surely has some answers that will help you to get victory.

9. Help another Christian to grow.

Get a Timothy. Seek to teach what you learn to other people. Don't just take it all in. Your Christian life becomes more exciting when you get a Timothy that you are discipling. Who are you discipling this year? Find someone you can thoroughly pour your life into properly. Hebrews 5:11-14. Becoming a teacher of the Word is a big step to becoming a strong meat Christian. In Acts 9:20-29 Barnabus and other disciples helped get Paul started in his Christian life. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul helped Timothy get started. Who are you helping to get started?

10. Read Good Books, Especially The Bible.

Paul knew the helpful value of good books that teach Bible truths. 2 Timothy 4:13. A good Christian book is often just a sermon in print.

By continually reading good books we:

- a) keep our mind on good things.
- b) we learn much faster.
- c) we can teach the Bible better.
- d) we can tap into others knowledge and experience.

11. Trust God's Love, Wisdom And Goodness in all circumstances of life, especially the bad, to be working out His best plan for us as He guides us in life. If we lose trust in God then we will become very bitter and cynical. This is a problem with many older people. Proverbs 3:5,6; Job 12:15; Psalm 37:25,28; Romans 8:28; Matthew 6:23; Romans 8:32. Believe that God is teaching us and working out His plan in our lives for our and others good, eg: Joseph in Genesis 50:20. Trust God that He knows what He is doing. Just keep obeying God joyfully.

12. Realise that we are in a very intense Spiritual Warfare.

We are to fight to win the souls of mankind for Christ. We fight wrong ideas with the truth of the Bible. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-18. When you understand that life and the history of the world is a battle and war between the forces of God and the forces of Satan, you can more readily see how you fit in and why world events happen, such as WW I and WW II.

Satan and demons oppose your work for God, but God has given you:

- a) the armour of God to put on.
- b) the Holy Spirit indwelling you.
- c) angels to assist you.
- d) fellow Christians to encourage, teach and help you.

We are therefore fighting wrong ideas that take control of people's mind and turn them from the truth of God, eg:

- a) evolution.
- b) lawlessness. The idea that I can make up my own rules.
- c) atheism.
- d) false religions.

13. Be Grateful to God and others. 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

If we are constantly saying thanks to God and to others, this teaches us humility, as we realise our dependence on God for all that we have. It kills pride. It gives us a happy joyful spirit as we constantly live a life of excitement and rejoicing in all the good things that happen to us that we are focusing on. It teaches us not to focus on bad things, but only the good. This is a big secret in living a life of victory. Philippians 4:8.

14. Be Humble.

Jesus first, others second, yourself last. This takes your mind off self. This then gives us mental stability and strength.

Better it is to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. Proverbs 16:19

"I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57:15.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Matthew 5:3,5.

"Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof." Matthew 8:8.

"Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:4.

"Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted." Matthew 23:12.

"I say... to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think." Romans 12:3.

"Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits." Romans 12:16.

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." James 4:6.

If you want peace in yourself and with God and man, be humble.

If you want to be a good father to children, be humble.

If you want to be great, be humble.

If you want people to follow you, be humble.

If you want people to like you, be humble.

If you want God to uplift you, be humble.

If you want your wife to love you, be humble and seek to provide her needs. The way up is down.

15. Tithe.

Abram paid tithes to Melchizedek. Jacob paid tithes. The Israelites paid tithes to the Levites. Tithing is giving a tenth of your income to God's work in the local church.

This is beneficial for several reasons:

- a) God will give you a blessing. Malachi 3:7-12.
- b) God will plug up waste and loss.
- c) People will see that you are blessed of God.
- d) You will get back the same measure that you give. Luke 6:38.
- e) They that preach the gospel should live of the gospel. Therefore the gospel goes out more.
- f) Christ endorsed tithing by the Pharisees. Luke 11:42.
- g) It is our way of acknowledging that all we have comes from God. John 3:27.
- h) It is designed to increase our faith as God blesses us more than we can give back to Him.

16. Get Baptised as soon as possible.

The conditions of Bible baptism are:

- a) Right candidate - believer. Acts 8:35-39.
- b) Right motive - obedience to Christ. Matthew 28:18-20.
- c) Right method - immersion. Mark 1:9-11.
- d) Right authority - local church. Acts 2:41,47.

Baptism pictures:

- a) Christ's death, burial and resurrection that I am trusting in to pay for my sins, as I go down in, under and up out of water.
- b) My death to my old way of life, burial of my old man with his habits, and rising to a new walk with Christ.

We should get baptised because:

- a) Christ was baptised by immersion. Mark 1:9-11.
- b) We can completely obey Christ here.
- c) It greatly helps us to take a confident stand publicly for Christ.
- d) It helps unsaved friends and family to understand the gospel.
- e) It is the answer of a good conscience toward God. I Peter 3:21. Our conscience is eased.

17. Ask Questions about the Bible and think the Bible Doctrine through carefully.

Be a student of the Bible. II Timothy 2:15. Find out what the Bible is saying and work out how to apply it in every life situation. Ask questions of the Bible because:

- a) It helps you understand the Bible better.
- b) You can defend it better.

- c) Questions open up new concepts.
- d) It's not good just to accept everything unquestioningly, but to check it out, because you may be believing something false. People fall into false doctrine when they accept things unquestioningly without checking the Bible. "Prove all things." I Thessalonians 5:21.
- e) You find the Bible to be true and infallible, thus increasing your faith.
- f) You'll teach the Bible better.

Be like the Bereans who searched the scriptures daily to see if Paul's teaching was so. Acts 17:11.

18. **Attend two Church Services per week and one Teaching Study.**

With one service per week you will mark time or backslide, but with two services per week you will grow. Develop a hunger for God's Word and God's house. Matthew 5:6; Psalm 19:7-11; Jeremiah 15:16

- a) The pastor generally spends so much time preparing suitable, helpful, practical teaching that we will miss something very important if we miss one service.
- b) It makes us loyal to God's work and to each other.
- c) We learn things that we can teach to other people.
- d) It makes us disciplined and dedicated to God.

19. **Learn as much as you can, as fast as you can.**

This will allow you to be more useful in getting more people saved earlier in life. When you learn things, find someone that you can teach them to. Collect good messages in a notebook. This helps you to stay enthusiastic for Christ. Ask: What do I believe and why do I believe it?

20. **Hell.**

Problem: All unsaved people at death will go to hell fire, then to the Lake of Fire forever.

What is hell like:

- a) Hell and worms forever. Mark 9:42-48.
- b) Torment, flame, separation, loneliness, bad memories. Luke 16:19-31.
- c) Wailing and gnashing of teeth. Matthew 13:41,42.
- d) Chains of darkness forever. II Peter 2:4.
- e) The Lake of Fire forever. Revelation 20:14,15.

If we love people, we will warn them about hell so that they see Christ as the answer, repent and receive Christ as Saviour.

Question: How can so few people win so many to Christ and eternal life and heaven in a short time? Answer: By multiplying disciples.

21. **Get a World Vision of Multiplication, Missions and Winning the World to Christ.**

Christ gave us all the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 of:

- a) Teaching all nations about salvation in Christ.
- b) Baptise people when they are saved.
- c) Teach them to observe all things I command you in the Bible.

As one person can't go overseas and be in Australia as well, we send MISSIONARIES overseas and to other parts of Australia to plant Bible believing churches which seek to win people to Christ in their area. These churches may start other churches elsewhere. Our aim is to get as many people saved and trained in the fastest way, so they can win and train as many as fast as possible. This is called multiplication of disciples. II Timothy 2:2 describes it. (See Discipleship by Multiplication chapter 57).

22. **Keep Soul Winning as your Main Priority.**

If you do, this will help to keep you from error.

Problem: So many Christians get sidetracked and involved in things that don't help win people to Christ. Luke 19:10; Acts 4:12; Proverbs 11:30.

Ask yourself in everything you do, "How does this action lead to people getting saved?" This is the main reason why God left us on earth. It is to get people saved from the fires of eternal hell. Your efforts to lead people to Christ determines where they will spend the next infinite years. We can't win people to Christ in heaven, only on earth. If you stop soul winning you'll have less joy and may backslide. Speak to at least one person each day about Christ or give a tract out each day or go visiting once a week. If you don't know how to win souls, learn from someone.

23. **Get Eternal Values now.**

Everyone of us is born with earthly values as being important, such as going to school, get a good job, earn lots of money, go on holidays, enjoy life, get married, look out for your own interests, etc. These are good in themselves but they don't lay up treasures in heaven. In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus tells us not to lay up treasures on earth because we can't keep them permanently and forever, but to lay up treasures in heaven because we can never lose them. What are you really living your life for? What is your life's goal? Luke 12:16-21; Revelation 22:12; II John 8; II Corinthians 5:10. After getting saved we must get eternal values, such as living for Christ and for eternity, not just the here and now.

24. **Take Every Opportunity to Serve God**

This is how you develop your spiritual gifts. Don't make up excuses such as: "I can't do that." You'll never know Christ's enabling power if you don't attempt things for God. Give it a go. You may succeed.

- a) There are many people who could win many people to Christ if they only knocked on some doors and spoke to people.
- b) Many could run a Bible study if they asked a new Christian for a study each week.
- c) Many people at Bible College could start a church if they went out and worked at it.
- d) We would have more of God's blessings if we asked Him. "Ye have not because ye ask not." Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 12:42-48; Luke 19:11-27.

Principle: Use what you have got and you will get more. If you don't use it you'll lose it. John 6:1-14; Genesis 12:1-5; Exodus 3:1-14; I Samuel 14:6.

Hudson Taylor went to China and started the China Inland Mission. This mission later on had over 1000 missionaries in China, yet people opposed him and told him he was unsuitable and couldn't do it.

"Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God."

25. Make Best Christians your Best Friends.

If a person is going to be a bad influence on you or pull you down, then don't be close friends with them. Psalms 1:1-6; Proverbs 22:24; 27:17. Seek to win them to Christ but don't let them win you to error.

26. Love God with All your Heart, Soul, Mind, Strength and Love your Neighbour as Yourself. What are we told to love and to love not?

Love: God, Psalms 18:1; Thy Salvation, Psalms 40:16; Thy Law, Psalm 119:97; Thy Commandments, Psalm 119:127; Wisdom, Proverbs 4:6; Judgment, Isaiah 61:8; Good, Amos 5:15; Mercy, Micah 6:8; Truth and Peace, Zechariah 8:19; Your Enemies, Matthew 5:44; One Another, John 13:35; Husbands love your wives, Ephesians 5:25; His appearing, II Timothy 4:8; Wives love your husbands and children, Titus 2:4; Let brotherly love continue, Hebrews 13:1.

Love not or hate: Evil, Psalm 97:10; Vain thoughts, Psalm 119:113; Lying, Psalm 119:163; Sleep, Proverbs 20:13; Robbery, Isaiah 61:8; False Oaths, Zechariah 8:17; Money, I Timothy 6:10.
If we love things other than God we will become bitter and selfish.

27. Don't Be Lukewarm, Be Zealous, Hot, Keen, Not Half-Hearted.

God hates lukewarmness more than being cold. Revelation 3:15-17. Don't leave your first love, Revelation 2:4; Eccles. 9:10, 10:18; Proverbs 22:29; Proverbs 12:24; Proverbs 24:30-34; 6:6-11.

28. Have a very High View of the Local Church.

Do all you can to build it. Be a church planter and builder. Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:25; Psalms 133:1; Ephesians 1:22, 23; Hebrews 10:24, 25; Mark 16:15.

The Local Church by soul winning and multiplying and training disciples is the way to turn the world to Christ. If you or I desert the church, then God's work slows down, sin grows faster and more people have wrecked lives and go to hell. Let us plant churches everywhere before Christ returns.

29. Faithfulness. Revelation 2:10; James 1:12.

A crown of life is awarded to those that: a) Are faithful unto death,
b) Endure temptation,
c) Love God. I Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:9.

Aim: For us to be faithful to God's ways all of our life.

What is Faithfulness? Faithfulness is a continuous, steady, uninterrupted, reliable performance in life with all its responsibilities, without boasting about it.

Who should we be faithful to? God, the Bible's Commands, our spouse, our church, our friends, our employer, our employees, lost people in bringing them to the gospel, training Christians to reach the world for Christ, and in praying for people. I Samuel 12:23.

Faithfulness is my behaving to God and others just as how God behaves towards me. Lamentations 3:23; Hebrews 13:5; Psalm 40:10; Psalms 89:1; 119:75,90.

Faithfulness is God and others being able to rely on us. Six reasons for faithfulness are:

- a) It is **rare** in man. Proverbs 20:6.
- b) It is **reflected** in Christ. Hebrews 3:1,2.
- c) It is the **result** of living by faith in God's promises in the Bible. Acts 6:5,8.
- d) It is **required** of stewards. I Corinthians 4:2.
- e) It is **rewarded** by a crown of life. Revelation 2:10; Commendation by Christ, Matthew 25:21,23; cities in the kingdom, Luke 19:17,19; and reigning with Christ. Revelation 17:14.
- f) We are solemnly warned against failing to be faithful. II Peter 3:17,18.

The Realm of Faithfulness. Where should we be faithful?

- a) In support of the local church. Hebrews 10:23-25; Luke 4:16. Christ was faithful in attending the synagogue every Sabbath and attending every Passover even at death. Acts 2:41,42.
- b) In the basics: Feeding on God's Word, spiritual growth, holy living, fellowship with the Father and Son, warring against Satan, the world and the flesh, giving, following Christ.
- c) In stewardship.
- d) In service.

When you do all these, you are no longer a spiritual babe, but you are progressing to spiritual adulthood.

Conclusion: Will God say to you, "Well done thou good and faithful servant?"

89. 14 MYSTERY DOCTRINES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Mystery: A truth hidden up to this point, but now revealed.

DOCTRINAL:

1. Mystery of the **FAITH**. I Timothy 3:9.
Those things most surely believed among us. Luke 1:1.
The Doctrine of Christ. II John 9; Hebrews 6:1,2.
The Apostle's Doctrines. Acts 2:42.
2. Mystery of the **GOSPEL**. Ephesians 6:19; Romans 16:25.
Christ died shedding His blood on the cross, to pay for our sins, was buried and rose again. Christ offers forgiveness and justification to those who believe and call on Christ to save them.
3. Mystery of **CHRIST**. Ephesians 3:1-12. v.6.
Jew and Gentile are brought into one body, the church.
The distinction has been removed by Christ and we are made fellow heirs of the promises.
4. Mystery of the **BRIDE**. Ephesians 5:21-33, v.31,32 and Revelation 21:9.
As a husband and wife become one flesh, so the church becomes one flesh with Christ.
The church is the Bride and Christ is the Bridegroom.
5. Mystery of the **7 STARS** and **7 CHURCHES**. Revelation 1:20.
 - a) 7 Stars: Represent preachers bringing God's message to God's people.
 - b) 7 Churches: Predict the state of Christendom during each of the 7 different time periods from the Apostles to the Rapture.
6. Mystery of **GODLINESS**. I Timothy 3:16.
The secret of living a Godly life is occupying ourselves with Jesus Christ as seen here:
 - a) God was manifest in the flesh, means that Christ, as God, came as a man.
 - b) Justified in the Spirit, at His Baptism (Mark 1:9-11), Transfiguration and Resurrection.
(I Peter 3:18, Romans 8:11).
 - c) Seen of Angels. Christ is Head of all principalities and powers. Colossians 2:10.
Angels were present at **Christ's birth**, at His **40 days** fasting in the wilderness, at **Gethsemane**, at His **Resurrection** and at His **Ascension**.
 - d) Preached unto the Gentiles, means many Christians missionary labours.
 - e) Believed on in the world, means people who are saved.
 - f) Received up to glory, means His Ascension.

DISPENSATIONAL:

7. Mystery of the **KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**. Matthew 13.

In the Church age, Christendom will include genuinely saved people and false imitators, as shown by these 12 parables of the:

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a) Sower | e) Hid treasure | i) Vineyard labourers |
| b) Wheat and Tares | f) Pearl | j) Marriage feast |
| c) Mustard seed | g) Drag net | k) 10 Virgins |
| d) Leaven | h) Unmerciful servant | l) Talents. |

8. Mystery of **ISRAEL'S BLINDNESS**. Romans 11:25.
This is the temporary setting aside of Israel in the Church Age.
9. Mystery of the **RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH**. I Corinthians 15:51.
This is the coming of Christ to the air, prior to His visible appearing, to remove a select company of His people to Heaven, before judgment falls on an ungodly world. This is a truth never mentioned in the Old Testament. This is taught in John 14:1-3; I Thessalonians 4:13-16; Philippians 3:20-21; I Corinthians 15:51-58.
10. Mystery of **GOD'S WILL**. Ephesians 1:9,10.
God's purpose for man and the universe is that all things shall be headed up in Jesus Christ, and that through Jesus Christ blessing shall be brought to all things in Heaven and on Earth.
11. Mystery of **GOD**. Revelation 10:7.
This is why God has restrained so long for thousands of years in love and patience before judging man for his wickedness. Why has God allowed evil men to continue in wickedness and seeming to get away with it?
It is to allow men time to repent.

DEVOTIONAL:

12. Mystery of the **INDWELLING CHRIST**. Colossians 1:24-29.
God desires to dwell with and among His people, and in us.
"Christ in you, the hope of glory" is the secret of **holy** living, of **power** and **joy** in service. God dwelt with man in Eden, in the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:8); in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:3); the Holy Spirit indwelling believers (John 14:16-17,23), during Christ's life and ministry.
 - a) The secret of bearing fruit is found in John 15:4, "Abide in me.."
 - b) The secret of sanctification, is found in Romans 6:1-19, "Know, reckon,yield."
 - c) Result: Christ governs my thoughts, actions and words. Self will is expelled. I will have constant, intimate communion with Christ as my friend.

DIABOLICAL:

13. Mystery of **INIQUITY**. II Thessalonians 2:1-17, v.7. This means that:
 - a) Apostasy in Doctrine will increase towards the end of the age.
 - b) Development of the deification of man (humanism).
 - c) Deception of those who deliberately reject the Gospel.
14. Mystery of **BABYLON THE GREAT**. Revelation 17 and 18. Note 17:18. This is an evil, false religious system, with its capital at Rome, operating in the Church Age.

90. TITHING

Bible Reading: Malachi 3:8-12.

Aim: To give 10% of our income to God's work in a local church as a conviction and rule of life.

Introduction: Do we believe that all that we have is given to us by God?

'A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven.' (John 3:27).

'Ye are **not your own**....For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' (I Corinthians 6:19,20).

'they which live should **not henceforth live unto themselves**, but **unto him** which died for them, and rose again.' (II Corinthians 5:15). Jesus said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' (Acts 20:35).

Christians who experience the love of Christ and the goodness of God giving us all good things richly to enjoy, will want to give to others to see the Gospel of Christ accepted by people all over the world.

Jesus Christ has left us with a work to do of winning, baptising and teaching all people for Christ. This is to be done by the sacrificial giving of God's people. We are to give of our time, our energies, our finances and all we can to further the salvation of sinners.

I. COMMANDS TO TITHE

1) '**all the tithe** of the land . . . is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord.' (Leviticus 27:30).

2) '**thou shalt truly tithe all the increase** of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.' (Deuteronomy 14:22).

3) '**Bring ye all the tithes** into the storehouse that there may be meat in **mine house**.' (Malachi 3:10).

4) 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for **ye pay tithe** of mint and anise and cummin,

and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: **these OUGHT YE TO HAVE DONE**, and not to leave the other undone.' (Matthew 23:23).

5) 'Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and

they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? **EVEN SO** hath the Lord ordained that **they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel**.' (I Corinthians 9:13,14).

Lesson: As Old Testament Levites lived off the tithes of the people, **EVEN SO** today should pastors

live off the tithes of God's people. Hence, tithing is also a New Testament principle. Grace will motivate us to give more than what the law required. Tithing was practised before the Law as seen

from Abram and Jacob who tithed before the law was given.

II. EXAMPLES OF TITHING

If these Godly believers gave a tenth of their income to God, then surely we should follow their example to advance the cause of Christ:

1) **Abraham** paid tithes to Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God:

'And he (Abram) gave him (Melchizedek) **tithes** of all.' (Genesis 14:20).

2) **Jacob** vowed a vow, saying: 'If God shall be with me....of all that thou shalt give me I **will surely give the tenth** unto thee.' (Genesis 28:20-22).

3) **People** in **Hezekiah's Revival** (II Chron 31:5-12) 'the **tithe** of all things brought they in abundantly (v.5). They also brought in the **tithe** of oxen & sheep (v.6). Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty, for the Lord hath blessed his people'. (v.10). 'brought in the **offerings** and **tithes** and the dedicated things faithfully.' (v.12).

4) **People** in **Nehemiah's Revival** (Nehemiah 13:10-12).

'I perceived that the portions of the **LEVITES had not been given them:**

for the **Levites** and the **singers**, that did the work were **fled everyone to his field** (v.10).

Then contended I with the rulers, and said, "**Why is the house of God forsaken?**" (v.11).

Then brought all Judah the **tithe** of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries.' (v12).

Lesson: Because the Levites and singers had not been paid (due to people not tithing), the Levites had to return to work in their fields to earn a living. When Nehemiah asked 'Why is the house of God forsaken?' people repented and brought their tithes into the house of God. This is like churches today.

5) **Backsliders** in **Malachi's time** (Malachi 3:8-12).

'Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?

In **tithes** and **offerings**. (v.8) Ye are **cursed** with a **curse**: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation (v.9).'

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse (a local church), that there may be **meat in mine house** (that a local church has the funds to do God's work in sending out the Gospel effectively), and prove me now herewith saith the Lord of hosts if:

(1) 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 (v.10), and

(2) I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes (v.11), and

(3) All nations shall call you blessed (v.12).

This is spoken to Israel. It also applies to Christians serving God in a local church today.

6) The **Corinthian** and **Galatian churches** gave money in the Sunday collection as God had prospered them, so as to avoid a sudden gathering when Paul arrived. (I Corinthians 16:1,2).

7) The **Churches of Macedonia** gave beyond their power. (II Corinthians 8:1-9:15).

III. HOW ARE WE TO GIVE TO THE LORD?

1) **Systematically:** I Corinthians 16:1,2. Give tithes and offerings weekly.

'Upon the first day of the week (Sunday) let every one of you lay by him in store.'

2) **Individually:** I Corinthians 16:2 'Let every one of you lay by him in store.'

Not just the father, but the wife and children should tithe what they receive.

3) **Proportionally:** I Corinthians 16:2 'as God hath prospered him.' The tithe did not belong to the person but to God. Under grace, being motivated by love, we should give more than the tithe.

4) **Cheerfully:** II Corinthians 9:7 'not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a **cheerful giver**.'

We should count it a great privilege and joy to give something back to Christ who gave His all for us.

5) **Give as Christ gave:** II Corinthians 8:9 'though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.'

6) **Sacrificially:** (a) They gave out of their deep poverty (v.2). II Corinthians 8:2,3.

(b) They gave beyond their power (v.3).

(c) They first gave themselves to the Lord and unto us (v.5).

The widow gave 2 mites which was all her living. God measures gifts by how much we have left, not by how much we give. God sees the heart of the giver rather than the size of the gift. Let us give to Christ out of a loving heart.

7) **Secretly:** Matthew 6:1-4 'Do not your alms before men, to be seen of them.' (v.1).

8) **Persistently:** II Corinthians 8:10,12. Make a decision how much to give and stick to it. 'Now therefore perform the doing of it.' (v.11). Don't put off giving.

9) **Bountifully:** 'He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly;

and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.' II Corinthians 9:6.

10) **Purposefully:** 'Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give.' (II Cor. 9:7).

IV. WHY SHOULD WE GIVE TO GOD?

1) Because we love Christ. (II Corinthians 5:14-17).

2) It is important that God's work gets done, that souls get saved, that God's Word gets taught to people all over the world, that labourers are sent out, lives transformed, churches started. (Mark 16:15).

3) God promises to reward us openly if we give to Him secretly. (Matthew 6:1-4).

4) If we give to God, He gives more grace and blessings to us. (II Corinthians 8:1).

5) Giving to God brings joy to us. ('the abundance of their joy.' II Corinthians 8:2).

6) Giving beyond our power increases our faith as God provides supernaturally. (II Cor. 8:3).

7) Giving to other churches produces fellowship with those churches we give to. (II Cor. 8:4).

8) Giving proves the sincerity of our love. (II Corinthians 8:8,24).

9) We give to follow Christ's example of giving. (II Corinthians 8:9).

10) To produce an equality between rich and poor believers. (II Corinthians 8:14,15).

11) To show our earnest care for fellow believers. (II Corinthians 8:16) eg: Titus.

12) Our zeal in giving will provoke many others to give also. (II Corinthians 9:2).

13) If we sow (give) bountifully, we'll reap bountifully;

If we sow (give) sparingly, we'll reap sparingly. (II Corinthians 9:6).

14) Give not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. (II Corinthians 9:7).

15) '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.' (II Corinthians 9:8).

16) 'He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth forever.'

(II Cor 9:9). The results of giving will have an everlasting effect, testifying forever to our righteousness.

17) If we give, God will multiply our seed sown and will increase the fruits of our righteousness.

(II Corinthians 9:10). God will enable us to give more later and we will see more people saved.

18) God will enrich us in every thing to all bountifulness. (II Corinthians 9:11).

19) Giving will cause many people to thank and glorify God. (II Corinthians 9:11,12,13).

20) We will be the means of answering other people's prayers. (II Corinthians 9:14).

21) If we are stingy, God can blow on our wealth so that we lose it like as if we put our money into a bag with holes. (Haggai 1:6-11).

V. HOW A CHURCH SHOULD ALLOCATE ITS TITHES and OFFERINGS.

1) 'The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.' II Timothy 2:6. The husbandman is a farmer and Paul applies this to a pastor who pastors a church, preaches the Gospel, teaches the Bible and shepherds church members. If a pastor does these, he should be paid FIRST

before any other bills are paid. Why? Because:

a) 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.' (I Timothy 5:18; I Corinthians 9:9,10).

b) 'He that ploweth should plow in hope; and he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.' (I Corinthians 9:10). This means that a preacher must be financially rewarded for his work, so that he doesn't give up hope of surviving in the ministry because of no pay.

c) 'The labourer is worthy of his reward.' (I Timothy 5:18).

d) 'Who goes a warfare any time at his own charges?' (I Corinthians 9:10). Soldiers don't have to

work at another job to pay for their tanks, guns and bullets. Their government pays them to go to war.

e) Every man who plants a vineyard is permitted to eat his own fruit. (I Corinthians 9:7).

f) Every man who shepherds & feeds a flock of animals is allowed to eat of the flock's milk. I Cor 9:7.

'He (Hezekiah) commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord.' II Chronicles 31:4. If we don't pay preachers properly, new preachers will find it harder to get started in the ministry. This results in fewer churches being started, more churches without pastors, more pastors dropping out to get other jobs, less people getting saved, and more wickedness in society. It is very important to adequately pay pastors.

2) A church must pay the rental on its meeting hall. Paul would have had to rent the School of Tyrannus for the two years that he taught in it daily. Acts 19:9.

3) A church must pay a printer to print 'STOP' tracts as a major priority so that its members can have tools to win people to Christ more easily. 'Multiply your seed sown.' II Corinthians 10:10.

4) A church should then prayerfully consider supporting some soul-winning missionary to start a church in its own city or state. 'In all Judea' (Acts 1:8). A church should have a strategy to train its members to become pastors who can plant churches in their main cities and outlying areas. They can then support each other to start more churches.

5) A church should use some funds to start or grow fundamental churches in other countries.

This may take the form of giving money to:

- Print foreign language STOP tracts;
- Ship or print *Answers* books overseas;
- Help pay pastors in poorer countries, especially church planting pastors.
- Start Bible colleges under a church's authority;
- Start and equip malaria clinics or medical clinics;
- Buy land and build churches on the overseas mission field.

6) A church should buy: a) Inexpensive Bibles to give away to new Christians;

b) Schofield Bibles to those who are serious; c) Mailbox Club lessons to train new Christians;

d) *Answers* books to train its people and to do outreach.

Conclusion: Start tithing this Sunday to your local soul winning church.