

A sword with a crown on top, set against a background of green grass. The sword is positioned vertically on the left side of the image. The hilt is ornate, featuring a crown at the top and a crossguard with intricate designs and red gemstones. The blade is silver and has a decorative pattern near the base. The background is a soft-focus green field of grass.

The Trustworthy Word

God's Truths for Your
Daily Battles

Dr. Jonathan Carl

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www.TrustworthyWord.com

I am so thankful to God for His strength and truth in Jesus!
I love and am so grateful for my amazing wife Brittney and her loving, tireless support. Together we are blessed with some amazing daughters in Sophia, Lydia, Alia, and Mia! Our church family at South Fork has been incredible in their encouragement :) *Thank you all for putting up with my many hours of studying & writing for this work!*

Ephesians 6:10–12 (ESV) “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

ISBN-13:

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www.TrustworthyWord.com

TRUSTWORTHY WORD

Titus 1:9 “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.” (ESV)

Trustworthy Word was born out of a desire to equip churches with free, downloadable handouts as a resource for biblical teaching on various topics. We wanted to see the people of God think deeply about the Word of God and realize the implications that come about as a result.

One of the great things that we have seen happen though is that members of our church (South Fork Baptist Church in Hodgenville, KY) have begun to use the site as a mobile resource when they are sharing the gospel or having bible-centered conversations. Trustworthy Word has become a digital filing cabinet where with a few taps of the finger, we can quickly locate helpful resources both for our own spiritual growth and to engage those with whom we are having Christ focused conversations.

Our hope is that you too will find Trustworthy Word as a digital discipleship and evangelism resource you can utilize in moments when you have your phone, tablet, or computer with you. You may enjoy using some of the free handouts to help guide your small group into a deeper walk with Jesus in Bible study. With just a few clicks we hope you begin to think deeply about the Word of God and see how that impacts your life.

www.Bible.video - “The Video Bible”

@TheVideoBibleChannel



Bible.Video

“Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.” - 1 Timothy 4:13

Did someone read to you growing up? Did that time impact you? Help you? Grow you? Comfort you?

We feel that reading the Bible visually and audibly to one another is important and helpful too! What a joy it is to see print Bibles reaching the ends of the earth (through amazing groups like the Gideons and The International Bible Society and especially www.NetBible.com). How incredible it is that translations are made (Wycliffe) and digitally distributed (Bible.com and BibleStudyTools.com) all over the world! In the past few decades, audio Bibles have also become numerous and more accessible through wonderful ministries like Faith Comes By Hearing.

Unfortunately, there isn't much of a presence currently of someone visually reading the Bible to another. We hope to help provide this through the “The Video Bible”!

We feel this is a needed resource for evangelism and discipleship and we pray that it will be extremely effective! The biblical origins of both visually watching someone read and listening simultaneously is important to how we process and respond to the Word.

We hope to have the opportunity to help get complete bible translations free into the ears, eyes, minds, and souls of millions more over the years ahead via video.

www.SpiritualWarfare.blog



Ephesians 6:10–12 (ESV) “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

Life is hard. Life is full of struggles and suffering. We need the reminder that our primary battles are not physical, financial, emotional, or mental, but spiritual. We ultimately are in an ongoing spiritual battle.

What is “spiritual warfare”? Spiritual warfare, based on Ephesians 6:12, is “the battle of the followers of Christ against the unseen spiritual forces of evil.”

This resource is designed to help you find God’s answers about the battle of the followers of Christ against the unseen spiritual forces of evil.

Visit our website to find freedom and victory in your daily battles through Christ’s finished work on the cross. Share our free resources with others to help them as well!

www.Catholic.blog

The **CATHOLIC BLOG**

www.catholic.blog

Ephesians 2:8–9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (ESV)

What does the Catholic Church really believe? Many people have their opinions, experiences, or second-hand information on Catholic beliefs but a true understanding of the Catholic faith is found in its *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The Catholic Blog simply presents portions of the Catholic Catechism with relevant Bible verses and introspective questions to consider. This free resource will help you on your journey to consider the beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church and examine for yourself, through tough questions, whether The Catechism of the Catholic Church is biblically valid and trustworthy.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is a substantial document of significant history and tradition. If you have yet to read it, I encourage you to read it in its entirety. This guide should be a helpful start and reference! As you consider the “essential and fundamental contents of Catholic doctrine” (CCC, 11), I hope you will be like the Bereans of Acts 17:11 who always put the Bible first to test what they were learning.

The Bereans are described as “noble” after hearing the teaching of the Apostle Paul for two reasons: 1) getting into the Bible with “eagerness” 2) testing the teaching of the Apostle Paul in light of Scriptures to verify his truthfulness. Similarly, may we evaluate what we see in The Catechism of the Catholic Church in the light of the Bible to “see if these things were so.”

Acts 17:11 “Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” (ESV)

A 3 Part Approach: Here is the approach you will find to this Bible study.

1) Interesting highlights and quotes - Due to the massive volume of writings in The Catechism of the Catholic Church, I have picked quotes from the text that I think you will find most useful and fascinating.

2) Relevant Scriptures - Likewise, I selected passages of Scripture that I thought particularly helpful in evaluating and understanding the Catholic teachings. Both The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Bible passages should be considered in their original context and setting. There are many more possible Catholic teachings and Biblical passages to consider but I hope this is a helpful start to your studies.

3) Helpful Questions - I have chosen not to insert opinions and assertions but instead propose tough questions that help us to think critically for ourselves about what we are reading.

My end goal and hope is that we all follow God's directive to us in 2 Corinthians 13:5 to "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" (ESV). May we all have the joy of an eternity in the presence of Jesus!

Here are the top 10 Catholic questions answered in this book with biblical answers:

1. What is the Catechism of the Catholic Church?
2. What is Sin According to the Catholic Catechism? Do Different Sins Need Different Sacrifices?
3. Does Salvation Come through Catholic Mass? Does Giving Money to Church Help Us?
4. Is Catholic Baptism Necessary for Salvation? What about Confirmation?
5. Is Catholic Eucharist Necessary for Salvation? What about Penance?
6. Was Mary Always Saved? Did Mary Never Sin? Is Mary the Cause of Salvation? Was Mary a Virgin Her Entire Life? Did Jesus Have Any Brothers? Is It True that Mary Never Died? Did Mary Ascend to Heaven?
7. Are Images of Jesus, Mary, Saints, or Angels Helpful or Harmful? Do Relics & Rosaries have Power?
8. Should We Pray to Mary and Saints? Is it OK to Pray to Angels?
9. Will I Go to Purgatory? Do Indulgences Help Us?
10. Can Marriages Be Annulled? What about Catholic Divorce and Remarriage?

Whether you are Catholic, considering Catholicism, or just curious to understand the Catholic Church better, this Bible study will be a great help to you. Download *A Biblical Study of The Catechism of the Catholic Church* free at www.Catholic.blog

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Introduction

Titus 1:9 “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.” (ESV)

This book is different than many others that you might read. The vast majority of the content is Bible verses and references. This approach, with lots of bullet points, is intentional in order to help you clearly hear and see God’s truths and not merely human opinion. May this work be a helpful resource for your study of God’s Word. May it help you increase in your love and awe of your Savior. If you aren’t yet a follower of Christ, may the Lord save you through the reading of His Word throughout it!

The source of these writings has been from my own studies, counseling with church members, and sermons. These subjects have arisen from some of the most important conversations that I have had in pastoral ministry for over a decade. I hope and pray that this work serves as a tool for the Lord to use in helping His children through His Spirit and Word.

Ultimately, I have written this for the Lord. He has grown me so much through the years and I pray that this work is faithful to honor and glorify Him. I have also always told my wife and daughters that I wrote this for them as well. I love them so much and if they were the only ones to read this, then I would count it a success!

I do hope that this is a useful Bible study resource for many around the world. I have made these chapters, videos, and the book (and other books too) in its entirety, freely downloadable and accessible at www.TrustworthyWord.com . It has been a joy of mine to see so many souls find Scriptural counsel online at Trustworthy Word over the years and I pray that it continues to aid many more until the Lord returns!

In Christ,
Jonathan Carl

Ephesians 6:17 “take the helmet of salvation,
and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”

Christianity Questions

How Can I Become a Christian?

1. Understand and believe that God is the Creator of the Universe

God created us and has authority over us.

- Colossians 1:16-17 "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."
- Hebrews 11:3 "By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible."

We will give an answer for our lives.

- Hebrews 9:27 "And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment"
- Hebrews 4:13 "And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

2. Acknowledge and confess your sinfulness

God's Commandments are His perfect standard of Holiness.

- Romans 3:19-20 "Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin."
- Romans 3:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"
- James 2:10 "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it."

Admit that you are not good. Turn away from you sin and turn towards Christ.

- Psalm 32:5 "I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,' and you forgave the iniquity of my sin."
- Romans 3:10-12 "None is righteous, no, not one; [11] no one understands; no one seeks for God. [12] All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."
- 1 John 1:9-10 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [10] If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

3. Believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave

Realize that Salvation is by Faith (trusting in Jesus, loving and valuing Him more than anyone or anything) and not by works.

- Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast."
- Mark 12:28-31 "And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, 'Which commandment is the most important of all?' [29] Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. [30] And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' [31] The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Affirm that Jesus is God and is the Only Way of Salvation. Salvation is not possible by obedience in Judaism, not through Mohammed's revelation of Allah (Islam), not through Buddhism or Hinduism, not by good works, and not through Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormonism. Salvation is only available through Jesus.

- John 14:6 "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"
- Acts 4:12 "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
- 1 John 2:23 "No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also."

4. Call out to Jesus in prayer to be in charge of your life

Publicly place your trust and faith in Him.

- Acts 16:30-31 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" [31] And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."
- Romans 10:9-10 "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. [10] For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."
- Romans 10:13 "For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

Submit and yield to His Lordship. Let Him be in control of your life.

- Acts 2:37-38 "Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' [38] And Peter said to them,

“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- Matthew 16:24-26 “Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. [25] For whoever would save his life (1) will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. [26] For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?’”

Now What? If you have chosen to believe that Jesus Christ is God, died on the cross, and rose from the grave and have truly yielded control of your life to Him, you are a Christian and follower of Jesus. *Here is what to do next...*

Walk with Jesus in Fellowship with Other Believers

1. Proclaim Christ's Lordship over your life through Baptism

Acts 2:38 "And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

See “What does the Bible say about Baptism?” on TrustworthyWord.com

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-baptism

2. Read your Bible to grow in your knowledge and love of Christ

See “How to Study the Bible?” on TrustworthyWord.com

- www.trustworthyword.com/how-to-study-the-bible

3. Pray consistently and daily to relate more with Jesus

See “What Does the Bible Say God is Like?” and “What Does the Bible Say about Christian Identity?” on TrustworthyWord.com

- <http://www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-god-is-like>
- <http://www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-christian-identity>

4. Connect with a biblically faithful church family

Hebrews 10:25-26 "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

See “What Does the Bible Say about Church Membership?” on TrustworthyWord.com

- <http://www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-church-membership>

5. Speak and Demonstrate God's Love

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

See “What Does the Bible Say about Love?” on TrustworthyWord.com

- <http://www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-love>

6. *Listen to and Obey God's Commands*

Hebrews 10:26-27 "For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries."

1 Peter 1:15-16 "but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"

See “What Does the Bible Say about Sin?” and “What Does the Bible Say about Sanctification?” on TrustworthyWord.com

- <http://www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sin>
- <http://www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sanctification>

Common Objections to the Gospel

- **What about people who've never heard about Jesus? Will they go to Hell?**

What about other religions: Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and tribal religions? A person doesn't go to Hell for failing to hear the Gospel, they go to hell for failing to obey God's law. Consider if a man jumped out of a plane without a parachute. He doesn't die primarily because he doesn't have a parachute. The reason he dies is because he violates the law of gravity...which brings him to his death. If a person dies without Christ, it is because he has transgressed the law of God...ignorance is not excuse. If we really care about those who have not heard about Jesus, we need to first come to Christ, and take His name, the only name which offers hope of salvation....to the ends of the earth.

- **My god is a god of love and forgiveness who doesn't send someone to hell.**

This is an example of idolatry...a violation of the 2nd commandment. Crafting a god of our own imagination, in our own image, or a god we are comfortable with. We cannot separate God's justice from God's love. He does judge the wicked and the immoral by their transgression of the law, and their sentence is eternal death and suffering in a very real Hell. This same God, we learn from Romans 5:8, loved us so much, that while we were still rebels and enemies, sent His son to die for us.

- **Why is there so much suffering?**

We all go through suffering. All of us have been hurt by the sinfulness of others, the consequences of living in a fallen world, and by our own sinfulness. We need to have faith in God, knowing and trusting that He is in control, and that His good plan includes an eternal rescue from sin, suffering, and death. It is good to ask these deep questions, I would recommend www.gotquestions.org to dig deeply into this and similar tough

questions. Ultimately God sent this message here today to help save you from eternal suffering. This is God's love.

- **I'm already saved.**

God tells us to test ourselves to see if we are in the faith. Have our lives changed? Do we desire to hear God's voice through the Bible? Are we obedient to God's commands? Do we see the fruits of God's Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) in our lives? (Galatians 5:22-24) Or do we see the works of the flesh in our lives (sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these)? (Galatians 5:19-21) Do we desperately seek Him in prayer? Do we see righteousness being produced by God in our lives? Are we quick to forgive? Do we love others?

SEE "How Can I Be Sure I Am a Christian?" on TrustworthyWord.com

- <http://www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian>

When you see a doctor and you are sick, what does he do? He assesses the symptoms, shoots straight with you, and tells you about your disease and any possible cures. The Bible clearly speaks to any symptoms of ongoing, unrepentant sin in our lives. Matthew 7:21 "I never knew you." Test yourselves.

- **I don't believe in God.**

Just because we don't believe something doesn't make it disappear. Put on a blindfold and stand in front of a large truck on a highway, saying I don't believe the truck exists. I know there is no such thing as an atheist. No such thing as an atheist at 25,000 ft in crazy turbulence. Look at a painting, do you say, look what coincidentally formed by chance over a ridiculously long period of time? No. You see a painting; you know there is a painter. You see a building; you know there is a builder. You see the Creation and you know there is a Creator.

- **I don't believe the Bible is God's Word.**

You are right the Bible was written by men. When you write a letter, do you write, or does the pen? Men are God's instruments to write the Bible. The Bible is the most accurate piece of literature in all of history...scientifically, historically, prophetically, archaeologically, and documentary or manuscript evidence. Find an error. We've searched. We can't find any.

- **I confess my sins and say I'm sorry all the time.**

Consider civil law. If someone is guilty of a serious crime, when they come to trial, if they just say "I'm sorry" to the judge, do you think he'll just let her go? That's not fair. Only a corrupt or unrighteous judge would let a guilty person free without a penalty. The law has been broken. Justice demands a punishment. We can't just say we are sorry. We can't be "good enough" to overcome our crimes. We need Jesus to pay for the penalty for our sin.

- **I've lied, but that doesn't make me a bad person.**

On moral issues...it only takes one commission of a crime to be labeled a criminal. One murder = a murderer. One lie = liar. One theft = a thief. One lust = adulterer. It is

human nature to trivialize sin, but sin is serious. God tells us in James 2:10 that anyone who is guilty of one sin is guilty of all sin.

- **Christianity is narrow-minded.**

The Bible is clear that there is only one way. Jesus says in John 14:6, “I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me.” In Acts 4:12 we learn that there is only one “name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” I you don’t have the Son, don’t have the Father. You’re right, without Jesus, no hope for your transgression of the law. Jesus has the power to forgive sins...He openly offers that exclusive path to salvation to all who hear...would you reject Him? Put your faith in Him?

- **I don’t agree with you.**

No one knows when they will face death. Did you know that 150,000 people die every 24 hours? That is not a scare tactic, that is reality. And after death there is guaranteed judgment. Jesus speaks of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man who is in Hell becomes desperate to tell his family about Jesus. Read Romans 2:4 – We plead with you to realize you are storing up wrath for yourself for the day of judgment...don’t presume upon God’s patience and kindness. Get right with the Lord. Consider our motives...we just want you to know and love Jesus and find eternal life. Paul in Romans 9 explains that he wishes he could sacrifice his own salvation for the salvation of someone else...but it doesn’t work that way. You must decide.

THE BOTTOM LINE? There is no good objection for failing to follow Christ as your Lord. Do you have a good reason for putting Him off any longer?

Check out these resources for more answers!

- needgod.com
- gotquestions.org
- “Evidence for Jesus” on TrustworthyWord.com www.trustworthyword.com/evidence-for-jesus

How Can I Be Sure I Am a Christian?

“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?— unless indeed you fail to meet the test!” (2 Corinthians 13:5, ESV)

1. Did a work start in you? if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

1. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)

2. Have you experienced God’s Spirit in you? In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

3. Is there fruit of God’s Spirit growing in you? (*Read the book of 1 John*)

1. Do you enjoy having fellowship w/Christ & Christians? (1 John 1:3)

2. Would people say you walk in the light or darkness? (1 John 1:6-7)

3. Do you admit and confess your sin? (1 John 1:8)

4. Are you obedient to God's Word? (1 John 2:3-5)

5. Does your life indicate you love God or the world? (1 John 2:15)

6. Is your life characterized by "doing what is right"? (1 John 2:29)

7. Do you seek to maintain a pure life? (1 John 3:3)

8. Do you see a decreasing pattern of sin in your life? (1 John 3:5-6)

[i.e., not continuing in sin as a way of life, not a total absence of sin.]

9. Do you demonstrate love for other Christians? (1 John 3:14)

10. Do you "walk the walk," vs just "talking the talk"? (1Jn 3:18-19)

11. Do you maintain a clear conscience? (1 John 3:21)

12. Do you experience victory in your Christian walk? (1 John 5:4)

4. Do you endure in the faith? They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. (1 John 2:19)

Works of the Flesh vs. Fruits of the Spirit: What best describes you?

The “works of the flesh” are evidence for unbelief and an eternity in Hell.

The “fruit of the Spirit” evidences God’s saving work and eternity with Christ.

(Galatians 5:16-24)

[19] Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,

[20] idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions,

divisions, [21] envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

[22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. [24] And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Parable of the Sower:

What category of “soil” best describes your response to the good news about Jesus?

(Matthew 13:19-23 ESV)

1. [19] When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.
2. [20] As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, [21] yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.
3. [22] As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

Only the fourth ("good") soil below describes a genuine Christian.

1. [23] As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.

Do You See These Three Characteristics in Your Life?

The Book of 1 John Helps Us to See Characteristics of Truly Converted and Saved Souls.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)

1. Obedience to God's Commands?

- If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. (1 John 1:6)
- Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. (1 John 2:4-6)
- If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination. (Proverbs 28:9)

- No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. (1 John 3:6)
- By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:10)
- For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3)

2. *Forgiveness?*

- Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. (1 John 2:9)
- For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matt 6:14-15)

3. *Love?*

- If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)
 - No one who denies the Son has the Father. (1 John 2:23)
 - But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:8)
- Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8)

Evidence for Jesus

INTERNAL EVIDENCE (inside the Bible)

Attests to Jesus' Deity, Existence & Death

Scriptural Consistency, Prophetic Claims, Eyewitness Accounts, Internal Consistency, Corroborating & Circumstantial Evidence Archaeological Congruence & Evidence, Scientific Evidence, Jesus' Claims of Deity, Disciples Claims of Deity Jesus Predicts His Death & Resurrection – Mk 8:31-33, 9:30-32; Mt 20:17-19

Prophecies and Fulfillment of Christ

1. Offspring of a Woman – Genesis 3:15, Luke 2:7, Revelation 12:5
2. Offspring of Abraham – Genesis 18:18, Acts 3:25, Matthew 1:1, Luke 3:34
3. Offspring of Isaac – Genesis 17:19, Matthew 1:2, Luke 3:34
4. Offspring of Jacob – Numbers 24:17, Genesis 28:14, Luke 3:34, Matthew 1:2
5. Descended from the Tribe of Judah – Genesis 49:10, Luke 3:33, Matthew 1:2-3
6. Heir to the Throne of David – Isaiah 9:7, 11:1-5, 2 Samuel 7:13, Jeremiah 23:5, Matt 1:1,6, Luke 1:32-33
7. Born in Bethlehem – Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1, Luke 2:4-7
8. Time of Birth – Daniel 9:25, Luke 2:1-2, 2:3-7
9. Born of a Virgin – Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:26-35
10. Slaughter of Infants – Jeremiah 31:15, Matthew 2:16-18
11. Escape into Egypt – Hosea 11:1, Matthew 2:14-15
12. A PROPHET, LIKE MOSES – Deuteronomy 18:15, John 1:45, 16:15, Acts 3:19-26
13. Ministry in Galilee – Isaiah 9:1-2, Matthew 4:12-16
14. Priest Like Melchizedek – Psalm 110:4, Zechariah 6:12-13, Hebrews 6:20, 5:5-6, 7:15-17
15. Rejected by Jews – Isaiah 53:3, Psalm 2:2, John 1:11, 5:43, Luke 4:29, 17:25
16. Characteristics – Isaiah 11:2, Psalm 45:7, Luke 2:52, 4:18
17. Triumphal Entry – Zechariah 9:9, Isaiah 62:11, John 12:13-14, Matthew 21:1-11
18. Betrayed by a Friend – Psalm 41:9, Mark 14:10
19. Sold for 30 Pieces of Silver, Potter's Field – Zechariah 11:12-13, Matthew 26:15, 27:6-7
20. Judas' Position Replaced – Psalm 109:7, Acts 1:18-20
21. False Witnesses' Accused Him – Psalm 27:12, Matthew 26:60-61
22. Silent When Accused – Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 26:62-63
23. Struck and Spit Upon – Isaiah 50:6, Mark 14:65
24. Hated Without Cause – Psalm 69:4, John 15:23
25. Suffered Vicariously – Isaiah 53:4, Matthew 8:16-17
26. Hands and Feet Pierced – Psalm 22:16, John 20:27
27. Crucified With Sinners – Isaiah 53:12, Matthew 27:38
28. Mocked and Insulted – Psalm 22:6-8, Matthew 27:39-40
29. Given Gall and Vinegar – Psalm 69:21, John 19:29
30. Hears Prophetic Words Used As Mockery – Psalm 22:8, Matthew 27:43
31. Prays for His Enemies – Psalm 109:4, Luke 23:34

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. (1 Corinthians 15:19 ESV)

but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, (1 Peter 3:15 ESV)

- Baptism – Mark 1:9-11
- I AM Statements – Mark 14:62, John 4:26, 8:58, 18:6, Exodus 3:14, Isaiah 4:45
- Immanuel – Matthew 1:23
- See God – Matthew 5:8
- Seen Me, Seen Father – John 14:7
- Image of the Invisible God – John 1, Col 1:15-16
- Father and I Are One – John 10:30
- Alpha and Omega, Beginning and the End – Revelation 1:8, 22:20
- Making Self Equal with God – John 5:18
- Shares God's Glory – John 17:5-6
- He Is the New Temple – John 2:18-19
- He Is the Law Giver – Matthew 5-7
- Great High Priest – Hebrews 4:14

Was Jesus More Than Just a Good Man?

1. Virgin Birth – Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:26-35
2. Fulfillment of Prophecies – Ps 22, Isaiah 53:1-12
3. Angels Worship Him – Hebrews 1:6
4. Reception of Worship – John 9:38, 20:28
5. Transfiguration – Matthew 17:1-13
6. Claim of Disciples – John 20:28-29 – Thomas
7. Without Sin – Hebrews 4:15
8. Forgives Sin – John 9:2-6
9. Raising Others from the Dead – John 11:1-46
10. Resurrection and Ascension – Mt 28:1-15, Acts 1:4-11, Luke 23 & 24

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE (outside the Bible)

Attests to Jesus' Deity, Existence & Death

Manuscript & Bibliographical Evidence, Eyewitness Accounts, Corroborating & Circumstantial Evidence, Archaeological Evidence, & Scientific Evidence
 Below quotes from: Paul Maier in *Did Jesus Really Exist? & Joseph and Josephus*
 www.4truth.net , also: *The Case for the Real Jesus* by: Lee Strobel

“there is more evidence that Jesus of Nazareth certainly lived than for most famous figures of the ancient past” Paul L. Maier, The Russell H. Seibert Professor of Ancient History, Western Michigan University

The Manuscript & Bibliographical Evidence: Ancient Works vs. Bible

Author	Work	Date Written	Earliest Manuscripts	Time Gap	Number of Manuscripts
Homer	<i>Iliad</i>	800 BC	c. 400 BC	400	1,757
Herodotus	<i>History</i>	480–425 BC	10th C	1,350	109
Sophocles	Plays	496–406 BC	3rd C BC	100–200	193
Plato	Tetralogies	400 BC	895	1,300	210
Caesar	<i>Gallic Wars</i>	100–44 BC	9th C	950	251
Livy	<i>History of Rome</i>	59 BC–AD 17	Early 5th C	400	150
Tacitus	<i>Annals</i>	AD 100	1st half:850, 2nd: 1050 (AD 1100)	750–950	2 + 31 15 th C
Pliny, the Elder	<i>Natural History</i>	AD 49–79	5th C fragment: 1; Rem. 14–15th C	400 (750)	200
Thucydides	<i>History</i>	460–400 BC	3rd C BC (AD 900)	200 (1,350)	96
Demosthenes	Speeches	300 BC	Some fragments from 1 C. BC. (AD 1100)	1,100 + (1,400)	340
God	New Testament	AD 50–100	AD 130 (or less)	40	5,795

NOTE: This does not even show the Old Testament manuscript evidence (Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Massoretic, etc) or the thousands of other New Testament manuscripts available in other languages and ancient time periods (24,000+ total NT manuscripts, 5795 Greek mss, 8,000–10,000 Latin mss, 8,000 Ethiopic, Slavic & Armenian).

www.equip.org/articles/the-bibliographical-test-updated/#christian-books-2
www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/bib-docu.html

“We have more than 14,000 manuscripts and fragments of the Old Testament of three main types: (a) approximately 10,000 from the Cairo Geniza (storeroom) find of 1897, dating back as far as about AD. 800; (b) about 190 from the Dead Sea Scrolls find of 1947-1955, the oldest dating back to 250-200 B.C.; and (c) at least 4,314 assorted other copies. The short time between the original Old Testament manuscripts (completed around 400 B.C.) and the first extensive copies (about 250 B.C.) — coupled with the more than 14,000 copies that have been discovered — ensures the trustworthiness of the Old Testament text. The earliest quoted verses (Num. 6:24-26) date from 800-700 B.C.”
www.equip.org/articles/bible-reliability-m-a-p-s-to-guide-you-through-bible-reliability

"The interval, then, between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established." -Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Bible and Archaeology*,
former director and principal librarian of the British Museum

CHRISTIAN HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Early Church Fathers (ccel.org) all of the early church pastors and leaders establish consistency of the message and personal testimony and witness of the apostles and disciples of Christ

Justin Martyr (early Christian convert): “Born of pagan parents around A.D. 100 in Nablus (between Judea and Galilee), Justin tried and abandoned various philosophical schools until he found in Christianity the one true teaching. As a native of the Holy Land, Justin mentions sites associated with Jesus, such as the Bethlehem grotto in which he was born, and even such details as Jesus working as an apprentice carpenter in the shop of his foster father Joseph, where they specialized in producing such agricultural implements as yokes for oxen and plows.” (Paul Maier from <http://www.4truth.net>)

JEWISH HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Sacred Jewish Writings spell Jesus' name accurately in Amaraic (the spoken language of the day, “Yeshua Hannotzri”—Joshua (Jesus) of Nazareth), writing of his arrest warrant in the *Mishna* (earliest collection of writings in the *Talmud*) “He shall be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and lured Israel to apostasy. Anyone who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf. Anyone who knows where he is, let him declare it to the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.”

The Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin 43a) “confirms Jesus' crucifixion on the eve of Passover and the accusations against Christ of practicing sorcery and encouraging Jewish apostasy.”

Jewish History: Flavius Josephus a famous Jewish historian mentions "Jesus who is called the Christ" twice in his *Jewish Antiquities*. In the second of these, he tells of the death of Jesus' half-brother James the Just of Jerusalem (20:200). In the longest first-century non-biblical reference to Christ,

Josephus writes: “At this time there was a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have reported wonders. And the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has not disappeared to this day.” (18:63)

SECULAR HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Cornelius Tacitus, “one of the most reliable source historians of first-century Rome, wrote in his *Annals* a year-by-year account of events in the Roman Empire under the early Caesars. Among the highlights that he reports for the year A.D. 64 was the great fire of Rome. People blamed the emperor Nero for this conflagration since it happened ‘on his watch,’ but in order to save himself, Nero switched the blame to ‘the Christians,’ which is the first time they appear in secular history. Careful historian that he was, Tacitus then explains who ‘the Christians’ were: ‘Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus’ (15:44). He then goes on to report the horrors that were inflicted on the Christians in what became their first Roman persecution.”

“Tacitus, it should be emphasized, was not some Christian historian who was trying to prove that Jesus Christ really lived, but a pagan who despised Christians as a ‘disease,’ a term he uses later in the passage. Had Jesus never even existed, he would have been the first to expose that pathetic phantom on whom such cultists placed their trust. Were no other references to Jesus available, this passage alone would have been sufficient to establish his historicity. Skeptics realize this, and so have tried every imaginable means to discredit this passage—but to no avail. Manuscript analysis and computer studies have never found any reason to call this sentence into question, nor its context.”

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus also recorded events of the first century in his famous *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*. He, too, regarded the Christians as a sect "professing a new and mischievous religious belief" (Nero 16) and doubtless cited "Chrestus" (Claudius 25).

Pliny the Younger “was the Roman governor of Bithynia—today, the northwestern corner of Turkey—and about the year 110 he wrote the emperor Trajan (98-117 A.D.),

asking what to do about the Christians, a ‘wretched cult’ whom he mentions eight times in his letter. Christ himself is cited three times, the most famous instance referring to Christians ‘...who met on a fixed day to chant verses alternately among themselves in honor of Christ, as if to a god...’ (Letter No. 96). Trajan's response, interestingly enough, suggests that Christians not be hunted out. (Ibid., No. 97). But again, if Christ were only a mythical character, these hostile sources would have been the first to emblazon that fact in derision.”

Below references are from: www.gotquestions.org/did-Jesus-exist.html

Julius Africanus “quotes the historian **Thallus** in a discussion of the darkness which followed the crucifixion of Christ (Extant Writings, 18).”

Lucian of Samosata “was a second-century Greek writer who admits that Jesus was worshiped by Christians, introduced new teachings, and was crucified for them. He said that Jesus' teachings included the brotherhood of believers, the importance of conversion, and the importance of denying other gods. Christians lived according to Jesus’ laws, believed themselves to be immortal, and were characterized by contempt for death, voluntary self-devotion, and renunciation of material goods.”

Mara Bar-Serapion “confirms that Jesus was thought to be a wise and virtuous man, was considered by many to be the king of Israel, was put to death by the Jews, and lived on in the teachings of His followers.”

“Then we have all the **Gnostic writings** (The Gospel of Truth, The Apocryphon of John, The Gospel of Thomas, The Treatise on Resurrection, etc.) that all mention Jesus. ... In fact, **we can almost reconstruct the gospel just from early non-Christian sources:** Jesus was called the Christ (Josephus), did “magic,” led Israel into new teachings, and was hanged on Passover for them (Babylonian Talmud) in Judea (Tacitus), but claimed to be God and would return (Eliezar), which his followers believed, worshiping Him as God (Pliny the Younger).”

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

www.bibleplaces.com – photographs & descriptions of archaeological sites that evidence and corroborate the Bible

www.blog.bibleplaces.com – ongoing discoveries and archaeological updates

“TOP TEN BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY DISCOVERIES”

from the Biblical Archeology Society by James Brashler, Jane Cahill West, Ze’ev Meshel, John Monson, Hershel Shanks, Suzanne F. Singer, Lawrence E. Stager, James F. Strange

(Available from <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/free-ebooks/>)

- The Nag Hammadi Library - Codices Shed New Light on Early Christian History

- The New ‘Ain Dara Temple: Closest Solomonic Parallel
- The Tel Dan (“David”) Stela
- Mona Lisa of the Galilee
- “Yahweh and His Asherah” The Kuntillet ‘Ajrud Ostraca
- St. Peter’s House: Has the House Where Jesus Stayed in Capernaum Been Found?
- The Siloam Pool: Where Jesus Cured the Blind Man
- Ashkelon’s Arched Gate: When Canaanites and Philistines Ruled Ashkelon
- Jerusalem’s Stepped-Stone Structure: Jerusalem in David and Solomon’s Time
- Jerusalem’s Babylonian Siege Tower: Remains of the Babylonian Siege

More Amazing Archaeological Discoveries

A Common Flood Story, The Code of Hammurabi, The Nuzi Tablets, The Existence of Hittites, The Merneptah Stele, Biblical Cities Attested Archaeologically, Shishak’s Invasion of Judah, The Moabite Stone, Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, Burial Plaque of King Uzziah, Hezekiah’s Siloam Tunnel Inscription, The Sennacherib Prism, The Cylinder of Cyrus the Great

(Available from: <http://www.equip.org/articles/biblical-archaeology-factual-evidence-to-support-the-historicity-of-the-bible/>)

RESOURCES FOR FUTURE STUDY

What does God say through the Bible?

www.gotquestions.org – almost 400,000 answers to life, spiritual, and Bible questions.

Is Christianity True?

- *I Don’t Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist* – by Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, shows how there is more evidence for Christianity than evolution/naturalism
- *The Case for Christ* – by Lee Strobel – simply explains much of the evidence for Christianity
- *Scientific Facts in the Bible: 100 Reasons to Believe the Bible is Supernatural in Origin* by Ray Comfort
- *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell

Creation vs. Evolution

- www.evolutionvsgod.com – A 38-minute video, with over 1.7 million views, of interviews with atheist professors and scholars concerning their beliefs in evolution.
- www.answersingenesis.org - Provides answers to questions about the Bible regarding issues such as creation, evolution, science, and the age of the earth
- www.reasons.org - explains scientific discoveries and shows how they continue to evidence the truthfulness of Scripture
- *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion & Naturalism* by Alvin Plantinga

Archaeological Evidence

www.bibleplaces.com – www.blog.bibleplaces.com -
www.biblicalarchaeology.org/free-ebooks

Comparison of Christianity with other World Religions

www.4truth.net – A reasoned approach to Christianity

Additional Resources

- *Life's Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy* by Ronald H. Nash
- *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics* by William Lane Craig
- *Reasons for Faith: Making a Case for the Christian Faith* Norman L. Geisler and Chad V. Meister

How to Study the Bible

For helpful resources, download one of our free books like *Week by Week Bible Reading* at www.trustworthyword.com/free-books

10 Reasons to Read and Study the Bible

1. **Encounter God** - The Bible is where we meet God and hear His voice and truth!
2. **Know God** - We don't just seek to know about God, but to relate to and grow in love for Him.
3. **Glorify God** - We desire to grow in holiness and imitation of Christ in order to honor God.
4. **Experience God's Past Work** - We learn from God's revealed historical work among humanity.
5. **Understand God's Present Work** - We hear how God desires to work in & through us today.
6. **Look Forward to God's Future Work** - We trust in His promised future return and work.
7. **Protect from Satan's Attacks** - We remember our real enemy in Satan, his demons, the world, and our flesh and are reminded that His truth is a spiritual weapon of offense and defense.
8. **Share True Hope with Others** - We evangelistically speak God's hope, love, and Gospel truth.
9. **Live Life According to God's Wisdom** - We submit to our Father's loving instruction for life
10. **Obedience** - God has commanded us to listen and obey His voice through the Bible.

10 Ways to Read the Bible

As you seek to read the Bible, ensure to prioritize time to take the Bible for study and meditation: understanding, absorbing, internalizing, memorizing, and applying the Scriptures.

1. **Through the Bible** - Read the whole Bible from beginning to end or in some other order!
 - Try about.esvbible.org/resources/reading/ or www.biblestudytools.com/bible-reading-plan/
2. **New Testament** - If you read a chapter per weekday, you can read the whole Bible in a year

3. **Proverbs** - There are 31 Proverbs, so seek to read the one corresponding to the calendar day (i.e. read Proverbs 17 on the 17th day of the month, Proverbs 18 on 18th day of the month, etc.).
4. **Psalms** - There are 150 Psalms, so choose a Psalm each day to help guide your prayers (i.e. on the 17th day of the month select either Psalm 17, 47, 77, 107, or 137 to read and instruct you in prayer).
 - See Don Whitney's *Praying the Bible*
5. **Read slowly through Romans** - Go deeper and digest and study theology.
 - Use a resource like Wayne Grudem's *Christian Beliefs* or *Systematic Theology* to help you!
6. **Pick a single Bible book to read** - John: learn the basics of Jesus' life and death. James: know and apply God's wisdom. 1 John: ensure you are a believer.
7. **Subscribe to a faithful devotional aid to compliment your Bible reading**
 - Try www.biblestudytools.com/devotionals
8. **Study a character. Search and read wherever their name appears.**
 - Check out *The Baker Encyclopedia of Bible People*
9. **Study a place. Search and read wherever that place is mentioned.**
 - Check out www.bibleplaces.com/sites for some incredible descriptions and pictures!
10. **Study a topic. Search and learn about what God teaches about key issues.** Check out GotQuestions.org

Where did the Bible come from? What is the Bible?

The Bible was spoken and revealed from God into the hearts of men that the Scriptures might be written and shared among God's children. Some of these writings are historical descriptions, prophetic writings, poetry and songs, wisdom, and letters. Although written by the hands of men, these writings were not written by the will of man, but were inspired and given by the power and will of God's Spirit. The Bible is the specific revelation by God about Himself, His work, and His plan for all of humanity so that we may love, trust, and obey Him. The whole Bible is breathed out by God, to make His people wise for salvation and to equip His people to lovingly teach, train, correct, and confront with God's truths (2 Timothy 3:10-17)

"And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes

from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1:19-21

"For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." 2 Peter 1:16

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."
Deuteronomy 29:29

Can we expect more books to be discovered or added to the Bible?

No. God has clearly spoken in the Scriptures and across early church history such that the current collection of recognized biblical books (canon) is complete. This process of recognizing the words of God comes through the recognition of the authorship as a biblical prophets or apostle, the self-attestation of the book within the Scriptures themselves, and their continuity with other books of the Bible.

Does the Bible have errors?

The original writings (autographs) have no errors at all. The ancient copies (manuscripts) we possess have small differences between them. These differences have primarily arisen from those who were copying and translating them. These differences have been recognized, described and corrected via a modern-day comparison of the thousands of manuscripts to produce reliable Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) compilations that have been reliably translated into many languages. None of the manuscript differences affect or speak to major theological issues but are most commonly mere grammatical issues. Comprehensive resources are available to explain the process of translation and decisions made concerning the compilation of manuscripts.

Is the Bible trustworthy?

Yes. The Bible shows its own trustworthiness through its self-attestation in the lives of believers and its internal consistency over thousands of years at the hands of many writers. The Bible is clearly seen to be the most accurate book in all of human history through archaeological, historical, scientific, and documentary evidence. The biblical content clearly reveals that its author is God Himself. The Bible has the most and best manuscript evidence, seen in its thousands of copies that were written soon after its original writing and discovered in a multiplicity of geographic locations. No literary work in all of human history is comparable to the trustworthiness of the Bible.

"He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it." Titus 1:9

"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts

and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account." Hebrews 4:12-13

"The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces." Psalm 119:72

Is the KJV the best translation?

The King James Version (KJV) of the Bible is a good translation of the Bible. When it was written only a few manuscripts had been discovered, which limited the scope and accuracy of its translation. Since its translation hundreds of years ago, many additional archaeological discoveries have been made which provided thousands of more trustworthy manuscripts in the twentieth century. Many modern day translations have been written since the KJV translation, providing plenty of accurate biblical translations. Many people prefer the KJV because of their personal familiarity with it. Many others struggle with the KJV since it uses Old English, a language that is antiquated, no longer spoken, and difficult for many modern day English speakers to understand.

Many teachers give the false impression that the KJV is the only accurate Bible to be used. This is a touchy issue, one which must be handled with great care and humility. Such teachers may have genuine motives in preventing any corruption of the Biblical translations, but such opinions are often rooted in human pride and personal ignorance of the translation process and manuscript evidence. Those who prefer the KJV have the joy of continuing in their freedom of this preference but must humbly encourage and accept the fact that many prefer translations based on a more comprehensive collection of biblical manuscripts and translated into the common languages of the day.

Suggested book: *The King James Only Controversy* by James White

Why are there so many translations?

When translating the Bible, the translators must make decisions to translate either literally with a word for word approach (formal) or with a thought for thought approach (dynamic equivalence). These two approaches are both accurate and helpful. Some writings are written with more simple wording to recognize the differences in literary capabilities of different people and communities.

There are also other translations based upon a paraphrase approach. The paraphrase approach is when the Biblical text is not translated but is instead summarized and restated. Although such an approach may be helpful for children's Bibles and chronological Bible storying, it is not a good approach for maturing and literate Christians.

The English language is blessed to have many translations, but some languages possess only one translation. Many languages have yet to have the Bible translated. Although the multiple translations are extremely beneficial, we must recognize and be aware that

there are translations that make unhelpful and heretical changes to the meaning of the biblical text.

There are modern translations that have removed gender specific language (NIV), removed references to Christ's deity (Jehovah's Witnesses' New World Translation), added books to the Bible (Catholicism), or subjugated the Bible to other books and authorities (Catholicism and Mormonism).

"Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son." 2 John 1:9

Which translation is the best?

Assuming the translation is faithful to the biblical text, the best translation is the one that you can easily read and understand. As some grow in their reading and comprehension abilities, they may find that more formal translations are most helpful to them in the process of study.

Are devotional guides and books ok?

Devotional guides and books can be helpful for Christians as an aid and tool to enhancing their personal study of God's Word. Devotional guides and books can also be a dangerous impediment to spiritual growth if Christians never grow in their own abilities to study Scripture. True Christians seek to mature and should never be content with solely a second hand experience with God as related through others. The Bible is clearly understood (perspicuity of the Bible), which means that it is intelligible through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. If you struggle with your own personal and direct study of God's Word, pray to God and seek help from others in order to enhance and increase your ability to hear God's voice through the study of His Word.

How can I go about reading more of the Bible?

Make a plan. Make time. Be intentional. The reading of God's Word is essential for spiritual growth. The best plan is the one in which you will be able to follow. It could be as simple as picking a Bible book and reading through it one day at a time. It could involve a goal like reading through the entire New Testament in a year by reading one chapter per weekday. Many books, Bibles, and apps have a plan for reading through the entire Bible in a year. We tend to prioritize that which we find valuable. Prioritize and make time for the reading of God's Word, it is of infinite value.

"the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb." Psalm 19:9-10

Is the New Testament more important than the Old Testament?

What is their relationship?

All of Scripture is valuable and trustworthy. The Bible is one big story, not two separate sections (Hebrews 1:1-2, 2 Timothy 3:14-17). God speaks not only through his prophets, but also through the life of Christ. The expression that "the New is in the Old concealed and the the Old is in the New revealed" helps us to understand this relationship. We

need to give equal attention to the study of both the Old Testament and New Testament for "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." James 1:17

"Therefore I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold. Therefore I consider all your precepts to be right; I hate every false way." Psalm 119:127-128

How can I understand the meaning of the Bible?

The best way to understand the Bible is to spend time in it. Study Bibles, commentaries, and online resources (GotQuestions.org , BibleStudyTools.com , and BibleHub.com). Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself, and seek answers to, as you discover the meaning of the Scriptures:

- Who is writing this?
- Who is it being written to?
- What type of writing is this?
- What does the Scripture mean?
- What do we learn about God?
- What do we learn about God's work?
- What do we learn about ourselves?
- Why does this passage matter?
- How do I need to respond to and apply these truths to my life? (Is there a sin to avoid, a command to obey, an example to follow, a prayer to offer, a truth to remember, an attitude to change, or a teaching to share?)

What does it mean to meditate on God's Word?

Meditation on God's Word is the filling up of one's heart and mind with the truths of God. As these truths are internalized, we are to spend more time in mental contemplation and processing over His truth in order to grow in our faith and to share our faith with others. Meditation happens when we read, listen to, pray over, learn, think, speak, write, and share about God's truths.

"Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." Joshua 1:7-8

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Romans 12:2

How can I share and speak God's truths lovingly to others?

Memorizing the Scripture is the best way to prepare to share God's truths. We should pray to God for opportunities and courage to witness. When we pray according to His will we know he hears and answers us (1 John 5:14-15), and we know it is His will that we be His witnesses (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8). The more we meditate, study, and memorize God's Word, the more our hearts and lips will naturally and courageously bear witness to the glory and goodness of God.

We must remember that we have a responsibility to warn others of God's coming judgment (Ezekiel 3:17-19 & 33:7-9). When we share the Gospel we ought to communicate the truths concerning God as Creator (Colossians 1:16-17, Hebrews 4:13, 9:27), mankind's sinful rebellion (Romans 3:23), Christ's sacrifice and gift (Romans 6:23), and our need to respond to God as our Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9). The Gospel must be clearly spoken from our lips but also must be faithfully lived out in our lives, marriages, families, and workplaces (Ephesians 5 & 6).

Here are three great online resources to learn how to share your faith:

- ***The Way of the Master*** (Ray Comfort) www.livingwaters.com [our personal favorite!]
- *Share Jesus without Fear* (William Fay) www.sharejesuswithoutfear.com
- *Steps to Peace with God* (Billy Graham) www.peacewithgod.net

Many people fear the questions that may arise when witnessing, but it is ok to answer that "I do not know, but will find out." A great resource for discovering God's answers to difficult questions is www.gotquestions.org. Finally we must always remember that our calling is not simply to make converts, but to make disciples, connecting believers into church fellowships where they can grow in their love and knowledge of God.

How can I recognize false teachers and false prophets?

The best way to recognize false teachers is to listen to their teachings and watch their lives (Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18:15-22, Matthew 12:33-37, Galatians 1:8-9, 2 Peter 2, Jude 1:1-10, 2 John 1:9, James 3:1). If their teachings and lives do not line up with Scriptural truths, they may be false teachers, false prophets, or immature believers who do not need to be teaching or leading.

"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction." 2 Peter 2:1

"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:8-9

Steps to Studying the Bible

- **Pray** before Studying the Bible - ask God to open your mind and heart to His truths
- **Read** the Bible - follow a plan, be disciplined, seek accountability, use an audio bible such as found from faithcomesbyhearing.com (“Bible.is” as an app)
- **Listen** to Faithful Teachings - commit to regularly listen to your pastor’s and others’ teachings while diligently checking the Scripture to ensure what they say is true (Acts 17:11).
- **Study** the Bible - slowly and intentionally dig deep into the Scriptures
- **Meditate** on the Bible - remove distractions and seek the work of the Spirit for your understanding and application of these truths in your life
- **Pray** through the Bible - use the Scriptures to guide your prayer. The Psalms are the best for this, but you can pray as the Lord leads for conviction and turning from sin as well as for the increased maturity in Christ
- **Memorize** the Bible - write, speak out loud, draw, use games, acronyms, songs, and repetition, recite portions of verses and progress to the whole verse, keep accountability to your memorization goals
- **Teach** the Bible - find someone to mentor and teach, learning how to study the Bible, in teaching you will learn and grow most rapidly
- **Evangelize** with the Bible - the Bible is meant to be shared, focus on Gospel presentation passages to use in witnessing
- **Pray** for God to remind and deepen you into the truths of God, asking Him to help you to obey His Word

Passages Emphasizing the Importance of the Study of the Bible

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. - 2 Timothy 2:15

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. - Isaiah 55:10-11

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. - John 5:39-40

Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?" - Mark 12:24

You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to

me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra - which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. 12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:10-17

Command and teach these things. 12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. - 1 Timothy 4:11-16

Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. - James 1:21-25

take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, - Ephesians 6:17

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. - Revelation 22:18-19

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. - Hebrews 4:12-13

If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, 4 he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. - 1 Timothy 6:3-5

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. - Hebrews 1:1-2

10 Tips for Better Bible Study

"Half our fears arise from neglect of the Bible." Charles H. Spurgeon

1. Pick a Plan

Ever hear the expression, "a goal without a plan is just a wish"? If you want to draw closer to the Lord through the Bible you've got to make a plan that is "SMART" or 1)Specific, 2)Measurable, 3)Achievable, 4)Realistic, and 5)Timely

2. Be Realistic, Keep It Simple

Consider your past and present situations as you evaluate your goals for the future!

3. Set a Time

Are you a morning person or an evening person? Do you need to wake up earlier or block off a particular time of day a little better?

4. Pick, Prepare, & Protect a Place

Where is a spot (chair, room, car) where you avoid distractions while being focused on reading or hearing God's Word?

5. Make Reminders

What will help you to remember daily? Leaving your Bible or devotional out in a particular spot? Sticky note? Dry eraser on the mirror or fridge? Phone app notification? Repeating calendar event?

6. Keep Track of Your Progress

Use a bookmark, check off a reading plan, use a chart to see what you've accomplished!

7. Have a Catch-Up Plan, Readjust If Necessary

Block off time (evening, weekend, a day per month) to pick up when you inevitably miss a reading or day. Find yourself getting too far behind, adjust your goals to be more realistic and achievable or stretch out your goal's end date.

8. Create Accountability

Aim for the same goal with a child, spouse, friend, or family member. Share your goal and progress or setbacks online or with others for encouragement. Confess your failures or struggles to receive wisdom or prayer.

9. Use Tools for the Journey

Whether it is highlighters, gel pens, or a commentary, concordance, atlas, or app - find practical resources that make your journey more enjoyable and profitable.

10. Celebrate Small Wins Along the Way

Make celebratory steps and incentives as you keep up for a month, finish a book, or complete your next chapter. Make an end of the year prize that you look forward to using a small reward!

“The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts.” George Mueller

How to Download and Use the Gideon App

What is the Gideon Bible App? The Gideon Bible App (www.gideons.bible.is) offers mobile access to Scripture in a multitude of languages including text and dramatized Audio Bibles so you can read and listen to the Bible in your own language.

Why is a Bible App so important and essential? Mobile digital time (phones, tablets, watches, etc.) is significantly higher than those who use desktop/laptop computers for accessing the internet. 80% of all internet users own a smartphone. Mobile device users access digital media 89% of the time through apps, not through websites, using mobile apps for over an hour per day.

How can I download the Gideon Bible App? Go to iTunes or Google Play via your mobile device and search “Gideon Bible App”

How can I change the language of the Bible? What languages are available? When you initially open the app, click on the “languages” or “country” tab in the top-center of the screen and select one of the 1,100+ available languages. You can also access this from the default page by clicking on “Bibles.”

How can I look up a specific Bible book, chapter, or verse? The easiest way is once you have selected your Bible translation, click on the top center bible book and chapter reference (i.e., “Genesis 1” is the default) and scroll to select the book and chapter. Once you are in the correct book and chapter, you can scroll to select the desired verse or passage. There is also a search bar in the left menu within which you can type the specific verse address.

How can I bookmark or highlight a specific Bible verse or passage? How can I share a specific Bible verse or passage? Press and hold on the desired verse to select the verse or passage you desire. Then select the left red bookmark, yellow highlighter, notebook, or sharing tool

How can I take notes in my Bible app? How can I sync my Bible bookmarks, highlights, and notes? In order to take notes in your Bible app you will need to sign up for an account and log in. Once you have an established account your data will be synced on any logged in platform you use.

How can I search for a particular passage, word or theme in the Bible? Hit the three horizontal line button in the upper left corner to pull open the left menu. In the upper left search bar (next to the magnifying glass) you can type in the passage, word or theme you desire to search.

How can I listen to the Bible? Under the Bible selection, hit the play button (sideways triangle) to play the current text. From the same toolbar you can download (downward pointed arrow), advance or rewind (sideways pointed double triangle) the chapter.

How can I read or listen to the Bible offline? Select “Downloads” from the left side of your screen and select the particular Bible language and translation you want to download for offline use. You then will select to download the “Text” (Old Testament or New Testament in its entirety) or “Audio (selecting the specific book or chapters you want to download). You will need a free account to download the text for offline use. You can click “Edit” in the upper right-hand corner to delete any audio files that you have downloaded (to save memory).

What is the link on “Help in Time of Need” for? This is a topical index of Bible verses that you will find greatly helpful in discovering God’s truths for every time and season of life.

What is the link on “Help with Life Problems” for? This is a selection of common temptations and sins so that you can find God’s truths concerning His will in your life.

What is the link on “Decision” for? Select “Decision” for a biblical Gospel presentation, opportunity to respond, encouragement for church involvement, and biblical assurance for new believers.

What is the link on “Character” for? Select “Character” for a topical presentation of Bible verses concerning the character God seeks for believers to model in their lives as a Gospel witness.

How can I share the Gideon Bible App? Click the “Share the App” feature to select how you would like to share the app (text, email, WhatsApp, social media, AirDrop, etc.)

What is the link on “Settings” for? This area allows you to change the Bible translation you are using, the text size, theme, and font, account setup/login, and some informational links.

What is the link on “Donate” for? The Gideons provide this Bible app free of charge and have distributed over 2 billion Bibles through the generous donations of Christians all over the world.

Who is The Gideons International? The Gideons International (gideons.org) is a non-profit ministry that is dedicated to getting God's word to everyone, everywhere.

Who is Faith Comes by Hearing? Faith Comes By Hearing (www.faithcomesbyhearing.com) is the world leader in Bible recordings, seeking to provide free audio and text access to God’s Word in every language available.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. [5] You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. [6] And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. [7] You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. [8] You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. [9] You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

Top One Year Bibles

“It takes a whole Bible to make a whole Christian.” ~ Alistair Begg

The YouVersion Bible App – www.youversion.com

Installed on over 500 million devices, has numerous reading plans, translations, and audio bibles.

Faith Comes by Hearing Bible App -www.bible.is

The best audio Bible app and website available for free listening to the Bible.

The One Year Bible – by Tyndale House Publishers

One of the most popular approaches to reading the entire Bible in a year. A digital version can be found in the YouVersion Bible app as well. Various translations are available as well.

The One Year Bible Companion – by Tyndale House Publishers

This companion book offers answers to some of the most common questions that come along with your daily readings.

The One Year Chronological Bible – by Tyndale House Publishers

This chronological approach helpfully guides you through parallel passages in a smooth, easy-to-use format. If you’ve never read the Bible chronologically this is the easiest way to start.

Reading God’s Story: A Chronological Daily Bible and **Reader’s Guide to the Bible: A Chronological Bible Reading Plan** – by

George Guthrie

A 52-week chronological Bible coupled with a commentary guide and small group discussion questions.

“The Bible was not given for our information but for our transformation. ... Read the Bible, read the Bible! Let no religious book take its place. Through all my perplexities and distresses, I seldom read any other book, and I as rarely felt the want of any other.” ~ Dwight Lyman Moody

Top Children's Bibles

[The Beginner's Bible: Timeless Children's Stories](#)

One of the most popular story Bibles for younger children.

[The Big Picture Story Bible](#) – by David R. Helm and Gail Schoonmaker

Beautiful illustrations for young children.

[Bible Storybook from The Bible App & YouVersion](#)

Excellent for toddlers through early elementary. Images connect well with the free interactive Bible app that young children will love.

[The One Year Children's Bible](#) – by Rhona Davies

Perfect for elementary school age children and a wonderful length for family devotional time. One for every day of the year.

[Foundations for Kids: A 260-day Bible Reading Plan for Kids](#) - by Robby Gallaty

A workbook-style approach that engages elementary school age children well as they journey through each of the 260 chapters of the New Testament.

[It's All About Jesus Bible Storybook \(padded\): 100 Bible Stories \(One Big Story\)](#)

100 of the most important stories of the Bible with a free interactive app. Great for elementary school age and family devotional times.

[The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name](#) – by Sally Lloyd-Jones

A good fit for older element through high school (and helpful for adults too) to piece together the 44 most important stories of the Bible in a simple and flowing format.

[The One Year Children's Bible for Kids – Challenge Edition](#) – by Tyndale Publishers

Perfect for middle and high school students. Requires about one page a day of reading that takes readers through the most biblical significant passages.

[Cornerstones - 200 Questions & Answers to Learn Truth](#) – by Brian Dembowczyk

A simple question and answer format to the most important truths of the Christian faith. Great for all ages. A more in-depth parent guide is available that would be a good fit for a year-long small group study.

What Bible Verses Are Good for Christians to Memorize?

TOP GOSPEL VERSES

The Good News of Jesus is important for Christians for us to daily remember for our identity in and gratitude towards God. Through it we enjoy the goodness of God & prepare ourselves for Gospel-sharing!

GOD'S GLORY

- Psalms 19:1 “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.” (ESV)

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

- Mark 12:30 “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”

MAN'S SIN

- Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

CHRIST'S LOVE

- John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”
- Romans 5:8 “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY

- John 14:6 “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
- Acts 4:12 “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
- 1 John 2:23 “No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.”

OUR SALVATION

- Romans 10:9 “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”
- 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

ETERNAL LIFE

- 1 John 5:12-13 “Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

MORE AT: www.trustworthyword.com/what-bible-verses-are-good-to-memorize-for-evangelism

More Helpful Verses for Common Life Issues and Struggles:

Addictions: 1 Corinthians 6:12 “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-addictions

Dating: Proverbs 12:4 “A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/dating

Depression: “Mark 14:35-36 “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/depression and www.trustworthyword.com/suicide
- www.trustworthyword.com/mental-health

Fear: Hebrews 13:6 So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”

- www.trustworthyword.com/enemies and www.trustworthyword.com/risk

Forgiveness: Colossians 3:13 “bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/forgiveness

Heaven: John 14:3 “I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-heaven

Hell: Revelation 20:15 “And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-hell

Identity: Romans 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

- Romans 8:31 "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-christian-identity

Love: John 13:34 "As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-love

Lustful Temptations: Matthew 5:28 "everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

- Hebrews 13:4 "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."
- 1 Corinthians 6:18–20 "Flee from sexual immorality...your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."
- www.trustworthyword.com/sexual-health
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sexual-sin
- www.trustworthyword.com/protect-from-porn
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-homosexuality

Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage: Ephesians 5:33 "However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband." 1 Corinthians 7:1 2-15

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-marriage-roles
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-divorce-and-remarriage

Money: Hebrews 13:5 "Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'"

- Acts 20:35 "by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-money

Physical, Emotional, and Relational Health: 1 Corinthians 6:20 "So glorify God in your body."

- 1 Timothy 4:8 "bodily training is of some value"
- www.trustworthyword.com/biblical-health

Politics: 1 Timothy 2:1-2 "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way."

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-voting-and-politics

Prayer & Fasting: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

- www.trustworthyword.com/prayer-fasting

Sin: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? ... And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sin
- www.trustworthyword.com/human-sin

Suffering, Death, & Life: Romans 8:18 "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

- Hebrews 9:27 “it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment”
- Philippians 1:21 “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-suffering-worry-death-life-and-heaven

Work & Retirement: Ephesians 6:7 “rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man”

- Ephesians 5:15–17 “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”
- www.trustworthyword.com/work-place-health
- www.trustworthyword.com/retirement-health

Worry: Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life"

- Philippians 4:5–7 “The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-worry

What Does the Bible Say About Sin?

Understanding Our Sin through the Ten Commandments

Commandments #1-4 - Love the Lord

And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” [29] Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. [30] And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’

(Mark 12:28-30 ESV)

New Testament Listings of Sin Identities

Romans 1:26-32 · 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 · Galatians 5:19-21 · 1 Timothy 1:9-11 · Revelation 21:8

“the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.”
(Romans 8:7)

1. “You shall have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:3)

- They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)
- drunkards ... revilers (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV)
- the faithless, the detestable (Revelation 21:8 ESV)
- drunkenness (Galatians 5:19-21 ESV)

2. “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. [5] You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, [6] but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.” (Exodus 20:4-6)

- haters of God, insolent ... inventors of evil ... ruthless. (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)
- idolaters (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV)
- cowardly ... sorcerers, idolaters (Revelation 21:8 ESV)
- idolatry, sorcery (Galatians 5:19-21 ESV)

3. “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.” (Exodus 20:7)

- Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ [34] But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, [35] or by the earth, for it is

his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. [36] And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. [37] Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil. (Matthew 5:33-37 ESV)

- And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, [9] but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. [10] And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. (Luke 12:8-10 ESV)
- haughty, boastful (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)

4. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. [9] Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, [10] but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. [11] For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” (Exodus 20:8-11)

- You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:15 ESV)
- Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. [17] These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. (Colossians 2:16-17 ESV)
- for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. [11] Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. (Hebrews 4:10-11 ESV)
- foolish, faithless, heartless (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)

Commandments #5-10 - Love Others as Yourself

The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' (Mark 12:31 ESV)

5. “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.” (Exodus 20:12)

- disobedient to parents (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)
- for those who strike their fathers and mothers (1 Timothy 1:9-11 ESV)

6. “You shall not murder.” (Exodus 20:13)

- You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' [22] But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. (Matthew 5:21-22 ESV)

- malice. ... murder, strife ... maliciousness. (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)
- enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions (Galatians 5:19-21 ESV)
- for murderers (1 Timothy 1:9-11 ESV)
- murderers (Revelation 21:8 ESV)

7. “You shall not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14)

- You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ [28] But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28 ESV)
- It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ [32] But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. (Matthew 5:31-32 ESV)
- For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; [27] and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. [28] And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. (Romans 1:26-28 ESV)
- sexually immoral ... nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV)
- sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality ... orgies, and things like these. (Galatians 5:19-21 ESV)
- the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, (1 Timothy 1:9-11 ESV)
- the sexually immoral (Revelation 21:8 ESV)

8. “You shall not steal.” (Exodus 20:15)

- nor thieves, nor the greedy ... swindlers (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV)

9. “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (Exodus 20:16)

- deceit ... They are gossips, slanderers (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)
- enslavers, liars, perjurers, (1 Timothy 1:9-11 ESV)
- all liars (Revelation 21:8 ESV)

10. “You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.” (Exodus 20:17)

- covetousness ... They are full of envy ... (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)
- envy (Galatians 5:19-21 ESV)

Judgment Is Sure: Seek Christ's Atonement

- And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment (Hebrews 9:27 ESV)
- As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹²All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.” (Romans 3:10-12 ESV)
- Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:29-32 ESV)
- Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? ... And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV)
- Now the works of the flesh are evident ... I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21 ESV)
- understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane ... and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, [11] in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted (1 Timothy 1:9-11 ESV)
- their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death. (Revelation 21:8 ESV)

“if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. [10] For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” (Romans 10:9-10 ESV)

What Does the Bible Say About Heaven?

Who goes to Heaven? 5 scriptures to read: (most thorough distinction between believers and non-believers is found in 1 John)

1. Romans 10:9-10 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. [10] For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
2. Romans 10:13-17 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” [14] How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? [15] And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” [16] But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” [17] So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
3. Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
4. John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
5. Revelation 21:27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

What happens when a true follower of Christ dies?

7 Amazing Promises for the Christian in Heaven

1. Your soul is carried by angels into God’s presence and paradise for all eternity. (Luke 16:22, 2 Corinthians 5:6-8, 1 Thessalonians 4:17, Luke 23:43, Revelation 21:3, 22:3-4).
2. You are declared righteous and freely forgiven under God’s judgment and justice. (Hebrews 9:27-28, Romans 14:10-12, Revelation 20:11-12; 21:6-7, 27)
3. You will be transformed and given a glorious, powerful, and spiritual resurrection body but yet be able to consciously think, feel, speak, see, and remember. (1 Corinthians 15:42-44, Philippians 3:20-21, Luke 16:19-31, Revelation 6:9-11; 21:9-27)
4. You will enter into an amazing service to and worship of God’s majesty and glory alongside angels and recognizable believers from all people groups. (John 17:24, Matthew 17:1-5, Luke 16:19-31, Revelation 7:9, 13-17)
5. You will never be suffering, ashamed, sad, grieved, hungry, thirsty, in pain, or die again. (Isaiah 25:8, Luke 20:36, Revelation 7:13-17; 21:4)

6. You will experience a place of eternal rest which is far better than anything you could experience on earth. (John 14:2-3, Philipians 1:23, Revelation 14:13)

7. You will receive an eternal reward, inheritance, prize that can never be removed. (Daniel 12:13, Colossians 3:23-24, 1 Corinthians 9:25)

Here are just a few of those promises to see for yourself!

Luke 23:43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

Philippians 1:23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far

Hebrews 9:27-28 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Romans 14:10-12 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; 11 for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Where does my spirit/soul go when I die? When do I go to Heaven?

Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

John 14:2-3 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

2 Corinthians 5:1-9 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

What about 1 Thessalonians 4?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1 Corinthians 15:51-55 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

What about New Jerusalem? Revelation 21, Isaiah 65:17-25, Daniel 7-12

Will I recognize my loved ones in Heaven? Mount of Transfiguration (Moses & Elijah, Matthew 17), Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), Multitude of Many Nations (Revelation 7)

MORE BIBLICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF HEAVEN

Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables

him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Matthew 6:20-21 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Revelation 21:3-4 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Revelation 7:9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne

and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

Revelation 7:13-17 Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes--who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Luke 20:36 and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.

Luke 23:43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

John 14:2-3 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

John 17:24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

Philippians 1:23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far

1 Thessalonians 4:17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

Colossians 3:23-24 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Daniel 12:13 "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

1 Corinthians 9:25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

Isaiah 25:8 he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.

Revelation 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

What Does the Bible Say About Hell?

Is Hell real? What is it like? Who goes there? Hell is a place of real, eternal, conscious torment under the righteous judgment of God. It is mentioned over 160 times in the Bible, describing a place of real, ongoing punishment. Over 170,000 people die every 24 hours, and one's eternity, whether in Heaven or Hell, is essential to consider. If you do not believe, trust in, and love Jesus Christ, we pray that God uses these truths to warn you of His holy wrath and justice so that He might stir you repent of your sin and trust in Christ. If you are a biblical, born-again Christian, may the Lord use these truths to produce in you a passion for evangelism and missions and to deepen in you a gratitude for His mercy grace!

Why do people go to Hell? God is righteous, holy and morally perfect. He has revealed Himself to all of Creation. People go to Hell because they have rebelled against God, dishonored God, and disobeyed His law (Romans 1:18-23; 2:15-16). Mankind has no excuse. Humanity has demonstrated a willingness and choice to ignore God (James 1:13-16). Since they have violated the law in their rebellion, punishment and justice must be given (Romans 3:10,23, 5:12, 6:23; John 3:18).

What about people who have never heard about Jesus and the Gospel? Will they go to Hell? God tells us in Acts 4:12 that there is only one name by which we may obtain salvation, the name of Jesus. He also explains in John 14:6 that none can come to God the Father except through Jesus. We also learn in 1 John 2:23 that confession of the Son (Jesus) is required to have a relationship with the Father. A most powerful passage concerning evangelism comes in Romans 10 where Paul shares his desire for his unbelieving friends to come to faith, acknowledging that:

“For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’” (Romans 10:13-15 ESV)

Whenever we realize that people who have not heard and confessed Jesus as Lord are still under God's wrath and headed towards Hell, we must be motivated to go and preach the Gospel. The best question is not, “Why do people who have never heard about Jesus go to Hell?” but rather “Why have we not told everyone about Jesus?”

Common Objection: “I don't believe in Hell” or “My god is a god of love who wouldn't send someone to Hell.” Making up a god of your own imagination is idolatry and a violation of God's second commandment (Exodus 20:4-6). Just because you have your own opinion about Hell and God doesn't make your opinion valid or true. You could go stand blindfolded in the midst of a highway with a big rig barreling your way proclaiming “I don't believe in 18 wheelers” but it would not change the reality of

your impending fate. Trust the Creator of the universe. He is who He says He is. God is real. Heaven is real. Hell is real. The Bible is the most accurate book in all of history and God clearly, patiently, and lovingly warns us about Hell so that we might repent and turn to Him and thus experience everlasting life instead of everlasting death and destruction.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:9 ESV)

God ... desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:3-4)

What are some of the Biblical descriptions of Hell?

1. Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth (Matthew 24:51)
2. Eternal Separation from God (2 Thessalonians 1:9)
3. Forever Destruction and Punishment (2 Thessalonians 1:9, Matthew 25:46)
4. Never-ending Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Torment (Revelation 14:10-11)
5. Conscious Pain, Thirst, Sorrow (Luke 16:19-31)
6. Under God's Wrath and Fury (John 3:36, Romans 2:8-9)
7. Constant Fire (Matthew 3:12, Mark 9:43-48, Luke 3:17, Jude 7)
8. Undying Worms (Mark 9:48)
9. Utter Darkness (Jude 13)
10. Shame and Contempt (Daniel 12:2)
11. Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:10, 14-15; 21:8)
12. Second Death (Revelation 21:8)
13. Destination for the Devil and Demons (Matthew 25:41)
14. No rest (Revelation 14:11)

Don't just take our word for it...read some of the below Bible passages yourself...

- Romans 1:20-21 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. [21] For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
- Matthew 25:41, 46 Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ... And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.
- Mark 9:43-48 And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. [45] And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. [47] And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is

better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, [48] 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'

- 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels [8] in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. [9] They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might
- Daniel 12:2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.
- Revelation 14:10-11 he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. [11] And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night...
- Revelation 20:10, 14-15 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. ...[14] Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. [15] And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
- Revelation 21:8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.
- John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.
- 2 John 1:9 Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God.
- 1 John 2:23 No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.
- Romans 2:15-16 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them [16] on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.
- Luke 16:19-31 There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. [20] And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, [21] who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. [22] The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, [23] and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. [24] And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.' [25] But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but

now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. [26] And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' [27] And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house—[28] for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' [29] But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' [30] And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' [31] He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'

We do not like discussing Hell because it is an overwhelming reality, but we can't help but speak where God has so clearly spoken. Our hope in considering your eternity or the eternity of others is that you might more passionately and lovingly consider, believe, and share the truths of Christ.

Check out NeedGod.com for more information!

What Does the Bible Say About Christmas?

What is Christmas? Christmas is a Christian day of celebration (December 25th) in honor of the birth of Jesus Christ. This event is significant to Christians as it is when God the Father sent His Son Jesus Christ in the flesh (incarnation), to reveal Himself and pay the price of our sin.

What is the true meaning of Christmas? Christmas for many people is a time of family gatherings, feasting, gift-giving, and traditional memory making. While these things themselves are good, the true meaning of Christmas is focused on the birth and appearance of Jesus Christ. We must be careful not to get distracted away from Jesus in the midst of the busyness of the Christmas season.

Why did Jesus say He was born? Jesus explains that “for this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice” (John 18:37 ESV). Jesus was born to show us who He is, to teach us the truth about God, to provide a way of salvation through His sinless life, sacrificial death, and powerful resurrection.

What happened on Christmas day? The day of Jesus’ birth was unusual in both its humility and majesty. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the city of David, due to the Roman census/registration, but ultimately as a fulfillment of prophecy (Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1-6, Luke 2:1-5). Mary gave birth to Jesus in a stable, wrapped in cloth, and laid to rest in an animal feeding trough (Luke 1:6-8). Simultaneous with Jesus’ humble birth was a magnificent and supernatural announcement by the angel of the Lord to shepherds (Luke 2:8-20) along with a multitude of angels proclaiming “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” (Luke 2:14 ESV)

What happened after Jesus’ birth? After Jesus was born, he went through Jewish ceremonial traditions (Luke 2:21-38). His encounter with Simeon and Anna in the temple further evidenced that he was the way of “salvation” and “redemption.” After Jesus’ birth, wise men traveled from the east, following a star, to meet and worship Jesus. At this point Jesus was residing in a house, not at a stable, and the wise men made valuable offerings of gold, frankincense and myrrh, further attesting to Jesus’ divine nature (Matthew 2:1-12). Because of the wise men’s testimony of Jesus’ fulfillment of prophecy, King Herod sought to murder Jesus by killing all of the young children in Bethlehem. Thankfully, God has warned Mary and Joseph to flee to Egypt with Jesus where they remained until the death of King Herod. Once the angel of the Lord told Joseph, they returned to Nazareth as another fulfillment of Scripture (Matthew 2:13-23, Luke 2:39-40)

Was Christmas really on December 25th? Although there are some very good historical reasons for the date of December 25th, ultimately we do not know the exact date of Jesus’ birth. The most important details about Jesus’ birth are given within the

biblical accounts. Since the specific date is not shared, it is not a crucial issue of the Christian faith.

Where did all of the Christmas traditions come from? Christmas traditions and practices vary over time and culture. Some have significant connections in trying to create helpful celebrations that correlate with Christian truths, others simply arise from familial and cultural norms.

Should Christians celebrate Christmas? God warns Christians not to argue about particular days of celebration (Colossians 2:16-17), but that when making daily decisions in life we are reminded that in “whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). We are also warned that “whatever does not proceed from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23). Although the Bible does not prescribe the regular, ceremonial remembrance of Jesus’ birth (as it does with Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection through the Lord’s Supper, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34), Christians should daily celebrate Jesus in their drawing near to Him. In addition to our daily celebration of Christ, Christians have the freedom to celebrate Jesus’ birth on Christmas as well if it builds up their faith (1 Corinthians 10:23).

“Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. [17] These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.” (Colossians 2:16-17 ESV)

Why did Jesus have to be both God and human? Although this concept of Jesus being simultaneously human and deity (God) is difficult to grasp, it is a biblical and essential fact. Jesus’ birth “under the law” allows the redemption, or purchase, of mankind from under the law. Only a perfect human (Jesus) would be capable and sufficient to keep and fulfill the law. Jesus’ incarnation (coming in the flesh) allows a way for humans to be adopted as God’s forever children.

Jesus’ incarnation also allowed for his shedding of blood and death because “under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.” (Hebrews 9:22) Unfortunately, the blood of animals is insufficient to atone for sin (Hebrews 10:4), so only the shed blood of a perfect God-man could provide a way of salvation.

Jesus’ incarnation allowed him to sympathize with our temptations and trials, yet Jesus remained perfect, holy, and without sin (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus came in the flesh to show and teach us the Truth: that Jesus and God the Father are one (John 10:30, 14:8-11) and that Jesus is the only way of salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). World religions and cults teach that salvation can be found by good works, by being “good enough.” The reality is that only Jesus, the God-man, is perfect and able to provide a way for salvation.

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12 ESV)

Why is Christmas so important? Jesus is not simply the “reason for the season,” He is the reason for life and for living. It is our hope and prayer that through this resource you discover or deepen in the love of Christ this Christmas!

What are the prophecies about Christmas? The prophecies about Jesus’ birth and life are numerous, but here are a few:

- 1. Offspring of a Woman** – Genesis 3:15, Luke 2:7, Revelation 12:5
- 2. Offspring of Abraham** – Genesis 18:18, Acts 3:25, Matthew 1:1, Luke 3:34
- 3. Offspring of Isaac** – Genesis 17:19, Matthew 1:2, Luke 3:34
- 4. Offspring of Jacob** – Numbers 24:17, Genesis 28:14, Luke 3:34, Matthew 1:2
- 5. Descended from the Tribe of Judah** – Genesis 49:10, Luke 3:33, Matthew 1:2-3
- 6. Heir to the Throne of David** – Isaiah 9:7, 11:1-5, 2 Sam 7:13, Jer 23:5, Matt 1:1,6, Luke 1:32-33
- 7. Born in Bethlehem** – Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1, Luke 2:4-7
- 8. Time of Birth** – Daniel 9:25, Luke 2:1-2, 2:3-7
- 9. Born of a Virgin** – Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:26-35
- 10. Slaughter of Infants** – Jeremiah 31:15, Matthew 2:16-18
- 11. Escape into Egypt** – Hosea 11:1, Matthew 2:14-15

How did Mary become pregnant with Jesus? The angel Gabriel (who has already announced the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah and Elizabeth, Luke 1:5-24, 1:57-80) was sent by God to Nazareth to tell Mary that although she was a virgin, she would be pregnant with Jesus (Luke 1:26-56). Gabriel said “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. [31] And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. [32] He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, [33] and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” (Luke 1:30-33 ESV)

Mary did not understand how this could be, but Gabriel assured her that “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. [36] And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. [37] For nothing will be impossible with God.” (Luke 1:35-37 ESV) Joseph was also told by an angel (Matthew 1:18-25) that “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from

the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21 ESV)

Mary’s response to this amazing news? True Faith. “And Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’” (Luke 1:38) Upon sharing the news with her relative Elizabeth, Mary rejoiced and sang! (Luke 1:39-56) May we all sing and celebrate in a similar manner over the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus!

What should I do about Christmas? BELOW are some helpful answers...

Look to Jesus and Find Joy in Christ

And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, **“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” (Luke 2:9-14 ESV)

The JOY in Christ Test:

ASK YOURSELF - *Is your heart cold or hardened towards God?*

- Formal & routine worship. Going through the motions.
- Boredom or carelessness towards church and fellowship.
- No desire to talk about spiritual things.
- Bondage to sin: knowing a practice is sinful, but not caring enough to put an end to it.
- Out of control anger in thoughts, words, or actions.
- Selfish or critical attitude.
- Little interest or action in studying God’s Word.
- Lack of desire for prayer. Seeing prayer as a duty.
- No interest or boredom in seeing people come to know Christ
- Sacrificially giving of your time, talents, or treasures. Feeling like you “have to” instead of “get to.”
- Little desire to become more holy (sanctification). A decreasing conscience about sinfulness.
- Praying almost exclusively for yourself.
- Caring about the offense of others more than the offense of God.
- Faking it. Not being real, genuine, and open about your life.

Three Steps to JOY in Christ...

1. Repent and Draw Near to the Christ Child (James 4:8-10) Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. [9] Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. [10] Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

2. Believe in and know the Christ Child (Mark 9:22-24) “But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” [23] And Jesus said to him, “If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.” [24] Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”

3. Delight in the Christ Child (Romans 7:21-25) So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. [22] **For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being**, [23] but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. [24] Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? [25] Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Rediscover the Gift of Christmas

(Isaiah 7:14 & Isaiah 9:6-7 ESV)

He Is Immanuel – God With Us

Isaiah 7:14 therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Is God with you? Do you know it? Do you feel it? Are you sure?

11. **No?** Fix it. Do Something. Stop Waiting. Seek Him.

(Deut. 4:29) you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

• **Yes?** Live it. Be Encouraged. Draw Closer. You Are Not Alone.

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

He Is Your Wonderful Counselor *Where do you go for advice? Answers? Solutions?*

(Isaiah 9:6) For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor

He Is Mighty God *Whose strength do you trust in? Seek Out? Act In? Daily?*

(2 Corinthians 12:10) For when I am weak, then I am strong.

He Is Everlasting Father *Where Is Your Focus? On Yourself? On Others? On World?*

Past, Present or Future? Temporary or eternal?

(Hebrews 13:8) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday & today & forever.

He Is Prince of Peace

What is your source of peace? Contentment? Stability? Hope?

(Isaiah 9:7) Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

5 Gifts of Christ This Christmas: Let His Names Live In Your Life!

- Draw Near Immanuel – Read, Hear, Obey His Bible
- Go to Christ with Your Problems – Speak in Prayer
- Rely on Mighty God – Be Weak & Dependent
- Look to Everlasting Father – Turn Your Attention
- Rest in the Prince of Peace – Hope in His Plan

Remember that Jesus Is The Ultimate Gift

(Matthew 1 & 2, Luke 1 & 2 ESV)

7 Truths about Gifts

- 1. Gifts are Purposed** "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news." Luke 1:19
- 2. Gifts are Planned** The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Matthew 1:1, 17
- 3. Gifts are Promised** All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). Matt 1:22-23
- 4. Gifts are Surprising** And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and

the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy-the Son of God." Luke 1:34-35

5. **Gifts are Expressive and Relational** "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21
 - "he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Luke 1:33
6. **Gifts are Loving** "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" Luke 1:28
 - "For nothing will be impossible with God." Luke 1:37
7. **Gifts are Free** "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" Luke 2:14
 - And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her." Luke 1:38

7 Practices with Gifts

1. **Anticipate the Gift** They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: 6 "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."" (Matthew 2:5-6)
2. **Seek the Gift** Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." (Matthew 2:1-2)
 - After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. (Matthew 2:9)
3. **Rejoice in the Gift** When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. (Matt 2:10)
4. **Enjoy the Gift** And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. (Matthew 2:11)
5. **Appreciate the Gift** Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2:11)
6. **Use the Gift** And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. Matthew 2:12

7. **Share the Gift** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

What Does the Bible Say About Easter?

What is Easter? Easter is a Christian holiday that is dedicated towards the celebration of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. In America and other places, this holiday has been transformed in recent history into a commercialized day that is focused on by many towards candy, gifts, egg-hunting games, the Easter bunny, and family gatherings.

What is the true meaning of Easter? The true meaning of Easter is a celebration of Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross and resurrection from the grave in order to provide a way of salvation through the forgiving of sin.

- Romans 10:9 “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” (ESV)

Why did Jesus come to die? Jesus came to live out and show His truth and love. Jesus explains that “For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth” (John 18:37). Jesus' death is a sacrifice in order to bring those who believe into a right relationship with God. “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). There is no access to God in Heaven without Jesus' death and resurrection.

What happened on Easter? What happened after Jesus' resurrection? The Friday before Easter, Jesus was falsely accused, tortured, and executed by crucifixion (a slow method of killing by hanging, impaled with nails on wooden beams). After Jesus' death, He was buried, and three days later, on Easter, Jesus was resurrected to life. He then physically appeared to hundreds of people, showing His power and wisdom before ascending back into Heaven (John 18-21 & 1 Corinthians 15).

What is the Lenten season all about? Do Christians have to celebrate it? The Bible nowhere commands Christians to celebrate Lent. For those who choose to celebrate Lent, it is designed as a 40-day period of dedicated towards fasting and repentance leading into Easter. Its purpose is to prepare and remind Christians of the celebration of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Where did all of the Easter traditions come from? Should Christians celebrate Easter? Many of the Easter traditions originated in cultural traditions of the past. God warns Christians not to argue about particular days of celebration (Colossians 2:16-17), but that when making daily decisions in life, we are reminded that in “whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). We are also warned that “whatever does not proceed from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23). The Bible does call Christians to a regular, ceremonial remembrance of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection through the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-34), but not necessarily through an Easter holiday. Christians should daily celebrate Jesus in their drawing near to Him. Christians have the freedom to celebrate Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection on Easter as well if it builds up their faith (1 Corinthians 10:23).

- “Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.” (Colossians 2:16-17)

Why did Jesus have to be both God and human? Although this concept of Jesus being simultaneously human and deity (God) is difficult to grasp, it is a biblical and essential fact. Jesus’ birth “under the law” allows the redemption, or purchase, of mankind from under the law (God’s perfect standard). Only a perfect human (Jesus) would be capable and sufficient to keep and fulfill the law. Jesus’ incarnation (coming in the flesh) and sacrificial, substitutionary death allows a way for humans to be adopted as God’s forever children through the paying of the penalty for sin.

Jesus’ incarnation also allowed for his shedding of blood and death because “under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” (Hebrews 9:22). Unfortunately, the blood of animals is insufficient to sacrificially atone for sin (Hebrews 10:4), so only the shed blood of a perfect God-man could provide a way of salvation.

Jesus’ incarnation allowed him to sympathize with our temptations and trials, yet Jesus remained perfect, holy, and without sin (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus came in the flesh to show and teach us the Truth: that Jesus and God the Father are one (John 10:30, 14:8-11) and that Jesus is the only way of salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). World religions and cults teach that salvation can be found by good works or by being “good enough.” The reality is that only Jesus, the God-man, is perfect and able to provide a way for salvation.

- But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)
- For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)
- And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12 ESV)

Why is Easter so important? Jesus is not simply the “reason for the season,” He is the reason for life and for living. It is our hope and prayer that you deepen in the love of Christ this Easter!

What are the prophecies about Easter? The prophecies about Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection are numerous, but here are a few:

- 1. Triumphant Entry** – Zechariah 9:9, Isaiah 62:11, John 12:13-14, Matthew 21:1-11
- 2. Betrayed by a Friend** – Psalm 41:9, Mark 14:10
- 3. Sold for 30 Pieces of Silver, Potter’s Field** – Zechariah 11:12-13, Matthew 26:15, 27:6-7
- 4. Judas’ Position Replaced** – Psalm 109:7, Acts 1:18-20
- 5. False Witnesses’ Accused Him** – Psalm 27:12, Matthew 26:60-61
- 6. Silent When Accused** – Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 26:62-63
- 7. Struck and Spit Upon** – Isaiah 50:6, Mark 14:65

8. **Hated Without Cause** – Psalm 69:4, John 15:23
9. **Suffered Vicariously** – Isaiah 53:4, Matthew 8:16-17
10. **Hands and Feet Pierced** – Psalm 22:16, John 20:27
11. **Crucified with Sinners** – Isaiah 53:12, Matthew 27:38
12. **Mocked and Insulted** – Psalm 22:6-8, Matthew 27:39-40
13. **Given Gall and Vinegar** – Psalm 69:21, John 19:29
14. **Hears Prophetic Words Used as Mockery** – Psalm 22:8, Matthew 27:43
15. **Prays for His Enemies** – Psalm 109:4, Luke 23:34
16. **Side Pierced** – Zechariah 12:10, John 19:34
17. **Soldiers Cast Lots for His Clothes** – Psalm 22:18, Matthew 15:24
18. **Not a Bone to Be Broken** – Psalm 34:20, John 19:33
19. **Buried with the Rich** – Isaiah 53:9, Matthew 27:57-60
20. **Resurrection** – Psalm 16:10, Matthew 28:9
21. **Ascension into Heaven** – Psalm 68:18, Luke 24:50

Check out this helpful resource: *The Case for Easter* by Lee Strobel

Easter Week - *What Happened, Day by Day*

If you have ever wondered what happened during each day of Easter week, I hope that you find this summary helpful. Be sure to look up and read the verses to see how amazing Jesus is!

Palm Sunday - On a Sunday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus' presence "stirred up" the whole city of Jerusalem as He was worshiped with the words "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:8-11). May we worship Jesus today!

Monday - On a Monday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His crucifixion and resurrection, "all the people were hanging on his words" (Luke 19:48). May we do the same today!

Tuesday - On a Tuesday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His crucifixion and resurrection, many nonbelievers sought to entrap and trick Jesus. Upon hearing Jesus' truth-filled answers and divine wisdom, His enemies "marveled" (Matthew 22:22) and the crowds were "astonished" (Matthew 22:33). May we marvel at and be astonished by our wondrous Jesus!

Wednesday - On a Wednesday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His crucifixion and resurrection, His enemies came against Him for His death, but crowds

came to Him for His words of life! (Luke 21:37-22:2). May we come to Jesus for life today!

Thursday - On a Thursday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His crucifixion and resurrection, Judas betrayed Jesus and His other disciples disappointed Him. May we "watch and pray that" we likewise "do not enter into temptation" (Matthew 26:41).

Good Friday - On a Friday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus was crucified, He proclaimed "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). May we daily repent of our ignorant and willful sin against our Savior and hear His promise to true believers that "you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

Saturday - On a Saturday, almost 2,000 years ago, as Jesus approached His resurrection, nonbelievers sought to deny Jesus' deity and to stop His fame (Matthew 27:62-66), but no-one and no-thing could prevent Jesus' resurrection. May we rejoice that nothing can "separate us from the love of Christ" (Romans 8:35).

Easter Sunday - On a Sunday, almost 2,000 years ago, after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, people who encountered the resurrected Jesus felt their "hearts burn within" them while Jesus talked with them and opened the Scriptures to them (Luke 24:32). May Jesus open our hearts, minds, and spirits to celebrate His presence with us through His Spirit and His Word! "The Lord has risen indeed!" (Luke 24:34) May we long for the day when He returns, but until that day, may we be worshipping Him "with great joy" and "continually...blessing God" (Luke 24:52).

Jesus' final words from the cross

1st Word from the Cross - Luke 23:34 "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they do.

2nd Word from the Cross - Luke 23:43 "Today you will be with me in paradise"

3rd Word from the Cross - John 19:26-27 "Jesus saw His own mother, and the disciple standing near whom He loved. He said to His mother, Woman, behold your son.' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother.'"

4th Word from the Cross - Mark 15:34 "And at the ninth hour, Jesus shouted in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Elon, lama sabachthani?' which is translated, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

5th Word from the Cross - John 19:28 "He said, 'I thirst.'"

6th Word from the Cross - Luke 23:46 "Speaking in a loud voice, Jesus said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

7th Word from the Cross - John 19:30 "Jesus said, 'It is finished.'"

What Does the Bible Say About Love?

1 John 4:8-11

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

Mark 12:28-31

“One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" ²⁹"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. ³¹The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.'”

Ephesians 5:1-2

“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

Romans 5:8

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 8:38-39

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

John 13:34

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

1 Corinthians 13:1-8

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. ⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it

keeps no record of wrongs. ¶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ¶It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ¶Love never fails.”

Galatians 5:22-24

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

1 John 4:10

“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

ONE ANOTHERS

“The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Mark 12:31

Accept one another - Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. (Romans 15:7)

Admonish one another - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16)

Bear one another's burdens - Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

Bear with one another - Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2)

Build up one another - Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. (Romans 14:19)

Care for one another - . . . so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. (1 Corinthians 12:25)

Comfort one another - Therefore encourage each other with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

Confess faults to one another - Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

Be Devoted to one another - Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. (Romans 12:10a)

Encourage one another - Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Forgive one another - Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

Greet one another - Greet one another with a holy kiss. (Romans 16:16)

Be Honest with one another- Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices . . . (Colossians 3:9)

Honor one another - Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10b)

Be Hospitable to one another - Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. (1 Peter 4:9)

Be Kind to one another - Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

Love one another - Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another . . . (Romans 13:8)

Members one of another - So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. (Romans 12:5)

Pray for one another - Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

Be of the Same Mind with one another - May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus . . . (Romans 15:5)

Serve one another - You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. (Galatians 5:13)

Spur one another on - And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. (Hebrews 10:24)

Submit to one another - Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Ephesians 5:21)

10 Truths about Love from Proverbs

1. **The World Offers False Love.** “Come, let us take our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with love.” (Proverbs 7:18 ESV)
2. **Watch Out for a Love of Laziness & Ignorance.** “How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?” (Proverbs 1:22)
3. **Love the Wisdom of God.** “Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you.” (Proverbs 4:6)
4. **Love in Marriage Is an Amazing Gift, Don’t Waste It.** “Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth ... be intoxicated always in her love.” (Proverbs 5:18-19)
5. **God’s Love Requires a Loving Response.** “I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.” (Proverbs 8:17)
6. **Hatred of God’s Wisdom = A Love of Death.** “but he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me love death.” (Proverbs 8:36)

7. **God Cares for Those Who Love His Wisdom.** “granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries.” (Proverbs 8:21)
8. **Wise Friends Love Wise Friends.** “Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.” (Proverbs 9:8)
9. **Love Covers Sin.** “Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.” (Proverbs 10:12)
10. **Forgiving and Forgetting Is an Act of Love.** “Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.” (Proverbs 17:9)

What Does the Bible Say About the End Times?

20 Things Jesus Wants to Tell You About the End Times (Matthew 24 & 25)

Jesus' disciples asked Him about His second coming and the end times. They wanted to know when it would happen and what signs to expect. Here are 20 of the most important truths Jesus gives us about the end times. Are you ready for His return?

The Question - What Is the Timing & What Are the Signs of Jesus' Return?

Matthew 24:3-5 "As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?'"

1. People Will Try to Convince You They Are Jesus or Prophets From God- They Will Deceive Many

- Matthew 24:4, 11, 23-26 "And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. [5] For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. ... [11] And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ...[23] Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. [24] For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. [25] See, I have told you beforehand. [26] So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it."
- 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 "Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, [2] not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. [3] Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, [4] who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. [5] Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? [6] And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. [7] For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. [8] And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. [9] The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, [10] and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. [11] Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, [12] in

order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

- Revelation 13 - The Beast

2. There Will Be Many Wars, Famines, Widespread Disease, & Earthquakes to Precede Jesus' Return

- Matthew 24:6-7 “And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. [7] For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.”
- Luke 21:10–11 “Then he said to them, ‘Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. [11] There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.’”

3. Expect a Long, Difficult, Painful Season of Suffering Before Jesus Comes Matthew 24:8 “All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.”

4. Faithful Christians Will Suffer, Endure Hatred, and Be Killed But Will Endure to the End

- Matthew 24:9, 13 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. ...But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”
- Matthew 10:21–23 “Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, [22] and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. [23] When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”

5. Faithless, Nominal “Christians” Will Turn From Christ & Turn Against One Another

Matthew 24:10, 12 “And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. ... [12] And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.”

6. Everyone Will Hear of Jesus, Submit to & Honor Him, & Be Held Accountable for Their Lives

Matthew 24:14 “And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

- Isaiah 45:23 “By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.”
- 1 Corinthians 15:24–28 “Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. [25] For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. [26] The last enemy to be destroyed is death. [27] For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put

all things in subjection under him. [28] When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.”

- Philippians 2:9–11 “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
- Romans 14:11–12 “for it is written, ‘As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.’[12] So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.”
- Revelation 5:13 “And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!’”

7. Daniel’s Prophecies Fulfilled - Temple’s Destruction & Desecration with the Image of the Antichrist (The Abomination of Desolation)

- Matthew 24:15-20 “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), [16] then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. [17] Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, [18] and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. [19] And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! [20] Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.”
- Daniel 9:26-27 “Desolations are decreed. [27] And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”

8. Unprecedented Suffering

Matthew 24:21-22 “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. [22] And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.”

9. Impossible to Miss - Visible to All

- Matthew 24:27-28, 30 “For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. [28] Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. ... [30] Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”
- Acts 1:11 “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

10. Sun, Moon, & Stars Darkened

Matthew 24:29-31 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”

11. Faithful Christians Will Be Gathered Together From Across the World

- Matthew 24:31 “And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”
- 1 Corinthians 15 - The Resurrection of the Dead
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 - The Coming of the Lord

12. The Suffering Has Begun - The Kingdom Is Already Here But Not Yet Fulfilled

- Matthew 24:32-34 ““From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. [33] So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. [34] Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.”
- Matthew 3:2 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

13. The World & Skies Will Change - But God’s Word Remains Constant and True

Matthew 24:35 “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”

14. The Timing of Jesus’ Return Is Secret but Will Be Sudden Be Spiritually Ready

Like the Days of Noah - Matthew 24:36-44 -“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. [37] For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. [38] For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, [39] and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. [40] Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. [41] Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. [42] Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. [43] But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. [44] Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Be Faithfully Working

The Faithful and Wise Servant - Matthew 24:45-51 -“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? [46] Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. [47] Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. [48] But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ [49] and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, [50] the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know [51] and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Be Actively Watching

The Parable of the Ten Virgins - Matthew 25:1-13 -“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. [2] Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. [3] For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, [4] but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. [5] As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. [6] But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ [7] Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. [8] And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ [9] But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ [10] And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. [11] Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ [12] But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ [13] Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

15. Don't Waste Your Life - Invest In Eternal Things

A Wasted Life Evidences A Path Towards Hell - Dishonoring the Master

An Invested Life Evidences A Path Towards Heaven - Honoring the Master

The Parable of the Talents - Matthew 25:14-30 “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. [15] To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. [16] He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. [17] So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. [18] But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. [19] Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. [20] And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ [21] His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ [22] And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’ [23] His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ [24] He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, [25] so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ [26] But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? [27] Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. [28] So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. [29] For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. [30] And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

16. When Jesus Returns All Will Be Judged and Sent to Heaven (Eternal Life) or Hell (Eternal Punishment) -

The Final Judgment - Matthew 25:31-46 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. [32] Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. [33] And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. [34] Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. [35] For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, [36] I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ [37] Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? [38] And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? [39] And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ [40] And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ [41] “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. [42] For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, [43] I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ [44] Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ [45] Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ [46] And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

- 2 Corinthians 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”
- Hebrews 9:27–28 “And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, [28] so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.”

17. Jesus’ Judgement Is Inescapable

The Parable of the Weeds Explained - Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 “Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” [37] He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. [38] The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, [39] and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. [40] Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. [41] The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, [42] and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [43] Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

- Matthew 8:11-12 “I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, [12] while the sons of the

kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

18. Many Falsely Believe Themselves to Be Saved

I Never Knew You - Matthew 7:21-23 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. [22] On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ [23] And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

19. Lack of Forgiveness to Others Evidences A Path Towards Hell

Matthew 18:34-35 “And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. [35] So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

20. Jesus Is With His True Followers Always, To The End of the Age

Matthew 28:19–20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

If you knew the end times were here, how would your priorities change? We never know when our last day of life will be, so we must seek to make the most of each day, always ready for Jesus’ return.

You may not get additional opportunities to change your priorities. The time to change is now. We are urged to “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2). Don’t delay, this may be your last day.

- Have you submitted your life to Jesus’ control?
- Are you following Him faithfully every day?
- Do you trust Jesus more than yourself?
- Does your life evidence a love of God?

Prioritize Jesus by attending church every Sunday. We are blessed with many biblically faithful churches that will encourage and strengthen our faith in these difficult and dark days. Get in and stay in the Bible daily so you are in love with and led by your Savior’s voice.

What Does the Bible Say About Women of Faith?

Here are some of the best examples of faithful women across the Scriptures.
It is amazing to see how God worked in and through them.
What examples of faithfulness to us all!

Eve - a helper fit for man, taken out of man, the first mother - Genesis 2:18-4:1, 2
Corinthians 11:3, 1 Timothy 2:13

- Genesis 2:18 “Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” (ESV)
- Genesis 2:23 “Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”
- Genesis 3:20 “The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.”

Noah’s Wife - endurance through disaster, faithfulness as a wife and mother for hundreds years (Noah lived until 950 years old) in the midst of an evil generation where “every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5) - Genesis 5:28-9

Sarah - obeyed and courageously moved along with her husband into a faraway land at the call of God, wife to Abraham, denied protection by a cowardly Abraham and allowed to be taken by Pharaoh and Abimelech, barren/childless until 90, sinned multiple times in her treatment of Hagar, laughed at God’s promise of a child, yet the Lord blessed her with a child in Isaac and praised her faith, lived until 127 years old - Genesis 11:29-23; Romans 9:9; Hebrews 11:11; 1 Peter 3:6

- Genesis 21:1 “The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised.”
- Hebrews 11:11 “By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.”
- 1 Peter 3:6 “as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.”

Hagar the Egyptian - mistreated by Sarah, used and cast off by Abraham, mother to Ishmael with Abraham, cared for and protected by the Lord - Genesis 16, 21:8-21

- Genesis 16:13 “So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, “You are a God of seeing,” for she said, “Truly here I have seen him who looks after me.”
- Genesis 21:17 “And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, ‘What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.’” (ESV)

Rebekah - attractive but modest, virgin, selfless servant, kind, hard-working, wife to Isaac, struggled with infertility, seeks the Lord during her pregnancy, husband is

cowardly in denying her in front of the people of Gerar (Abimelech), provides sinful advice and favoritism to her son Jacob, yet the Lord chooses and uses Jacob through Rachel - Gen. 24-27, Rom. 9:10-13

- Genesis 25:21 “And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. And the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.”

Rachel - hardworking shepherdess, beautiful, patiently waits for her husband, Jacob’s wife, loved, barren for many years, envied her sister Leah, mother to Joseph and Benjamin, stole her father’s idols and deceived him, died giving birth to Benjamin - Genesis 29-31, 33, 35

- Genesis 30:22–24 “Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. [23] She conceived and bore a son and said, ‘God has taken away my reproach.’ [24] And she called his name Joseph, saying, ‘May the LORD add to me another son!’”

Leah - not as beautiful as Rachel, Jacob’s wife, marriage based on deception, hated by Jacob, blessed by the Lord with children, mother to Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah - Genesis 29-31, 33, 35

- Genesis 29:31 “When the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.”
- Ruth 4:11 “Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel”

Shiphrah & Puah - Hebrew Midwives in Egypt - feared God more than Pharaoh, disobeyed the evil laws of the government and refused to murder babies, risked their lives and lied to Pharaoh to protecting lives of the babies, blessed by God and the nation of Israel prospered through their faithfulness. Exodus 1:15-22

- Exodus 1:17 “But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live.”

Jochebed - Moses’ & Aaron's mother, enslaved, courageously protects her baby by hiding him as long as possible then giving him up for adoption when she had no other option, able to nurse

Exodus 1, 2:1-10, 6:20; Numbers 26:59; Hebrews 11:23

- Hebrews 11:23 “By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.”

Pharaoh’s Daughter - courageously adopted Moses knowing the danger of disobeying her father - Exodus 2:5-10

- Exodus 2:6 “When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, “This is one of the Hebrews’ children.”

Miriam - prophetess, Moses and Aaron’s sister, protects her baby brother Moses by watching him until he is adopted, bravely speaks to Pharaoh’s daughter so her mom can nurse Moses, leads women rejoicing in song and dance in response to God’s salvation from the Egyptian army when they were drowned by God in the Red Sea, given another

chance to serve God after failing in opposing Moses and punished with leprosy - Exodus 2:1-10, 15:20-21, Numbers 12:1-15

- Exodus 2:4, 7 “And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. ...[7] Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, ‘Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?’”
- Exodus 15:20–21 “Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing. [21] And Miriam sang to them ‘Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.’”

Faithful Whole-Hearted Women - generous in giving, skilled in their work, hard-working, passionate heartfelt service for the purpose of providing for and building the Tabernacle to worship God - Exodus 35:20-29

- Exodus 35:29 “All the men and women, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work that the LORD had commanded by Moses to be done brought it as a freewill offering to the LORD.”

Rahab - prostitute, believed in God, great-great-grandmother to King David, bravely hid the spies of Israel from the king of Jericho, faith evidenced by her obedience - Joshua 2, 6; Matthew 1:5; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25-26

- Joshua 2:11 “for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath”
- Hebrews 11:31 “By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.”
- James 2:25–26 “And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? [26] For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.”

Deborah - faithful and brave when Barak failed to courageously lead Israel against General Sisera, wise prophetess and the 5th Judge of Israel, sang with Barak a song of gratitude to God - Judges 4 & 5

- Judges 4:4–5 “Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. [5] She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment.”

Jael - clever in defeating General Sisera to lull him to sleep and killed him with a tent peg - Judges 4:17-22

- Judges 4:21 “But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand. Then she went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple until it went down into the ground while he was lying fast asleep from weariness. So he died.”
- Judges 5:24 “Most blessed of women be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, of tent-dwelling women most blessed.”

Samson’s Mother - godly parent with Manoah, humbly shares the angelic appearances with her husband and lets him lead their family, barren, obeys the angel’s

command to abstain from alcohol and unclean food, given Samson as a son - Judges 13, 14:1-9; 16:17

Naomi - widowed, lost both sons, honored and blessed God even in her loss, gave wisdom to Ruth, great-great-grandmother to King David - Ruth 1; 4:13-22

- Ruth 1:5, 8 “the woman was left without her two sons and her husband. ...But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, ‘Go, return each of you to her mother’s house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.’”

Ruth - widowed, faithful to her mother-in-law Naomi, believed and trusted in God, great-grandmother to King David - Ruth 1-4

Hannah - loved by Elkanah, suffered from infertility, prayer and dedicated son Samuel to the Lord, endured provocation from Peninnah, Elkanah’s other wife, over her childlessness, depressed, took her sorrow and anxiety to the Lord in prayer, trusted in God’s promise through Eli, gave and dedicated Samuel over to serve the Lord, beautiful song of praise to the Lord, faithfully committed to the Lord and blessed her son, God gave her five more children - 1 Samuel 1; 2:1-11, 18-21

- 1 Samuel 1:10 “She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly.”
- 1 Samuel 1:27–28 “For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition that I made to him. [28] Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD.”

Abigail - discerning and beautiful, married to a wealthy but wicked man (Nabal), she showed understanding and generosity in providing an avenue for peace for her family, was culturally wise and humble, worked hard to care for others, selflessly and courageously offers to take on the penalty others deserve, trusted in the Lord, patiently endured much suffering, married King David - 1 Samuel 25:2-42

- 1 Samuel 25:3 “The woman was discerning and beautiful”

Bathsheba - beautiful, raped by King David, grieved over the murder of her husband, lost a son, given and raised a godly son in Solomon, lineage of Jesus, wisely intercedes in a dangerous situation so that her son can become King, well respected - 2 Samuel 11; 12:13-24, 1 Kings 1-2

- 2 Samuel 12:24–25 “she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. And the LORD loved him [25] and sent a message by Nathan the prophet. So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.”
- 1 Kings 2:19 “Then he sat on his throne and had a seat brought for the king’s mother, and she sat on his right.”

Widow at Zarephath - hard working, humble, faithful to obey the Lord, hospitable, generously prepared a meal for Elijah out of her last food, Lord provides unending flour and oil, son raised from dead by Elijah - 1 Kings 17:7-24

- 1 Kings 17:24 “And the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth.”

Widow of a Prophet - faithfully served the Lord alongside her husband, widowed with two sons, poor and overcome with debt, faithfully followed Elisha's advice, the Lord provided oil to pay off her debt - 2 Kings 4:1-7

- 2 Kings 4:7 "She came and told the man of God, and he said, 'Go, sell the oil and pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on the rest.'"

Shunammite Woman - wealthy, generously hospitable with meals and built a guest room for Elisha, she was suffering from infertility and the Lord blessed her with a son through Elisha, her son dies but is raised from the dead by her persistence in seeking healing from God through Elisha- 2 Kings 4:8-37

- 2 Kings 4:30 "Then the mother of the child said, 'As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So he arose and followed her."

Huldah - trustworthy, hardworking, encouraged King Josiah to read and believe the Bible (Book of the Law) that was found, courageously proclaimed truth in obedience to God - 2 Chronicles 34:22-33, 2 Kings 22:14-20

- 2 Kings 22:15 "And she said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: "Tell the man who sent you to me ... "

The Woman Who Feared the Lord (Proverbs 31 Woman) - trustworthy, excellent wife, full of good works, diligent with her hands, wise with finances and a smart businesswoman, wakes up early and is not lazy, physically strong and healthy, generous to the poor, prepares for seasons of difficulty, thinks of the needs of others before herself, builds up the reputation of her husband, dignified, speaks with wisdom and kindness, praised by her husband and children, fears the Lord above all else - Proverbs 31:10-31

- Proverbs 31:30 "Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised."

Esther - orphaned and adopted, wise learner and submissive, beautiful and favored, though a foreigner, becomes queen, endures racist attacks by Haman, seeks the Lord through fasting and prayer, bravely risks her life and saves tens of thousands of Jewish people across the world

- Esther 2:15 "he asked for nothing except what Hegai the king's eunuch, who had charge of the women, advised. Now Esther was winning favor in the eyes of all who saw her."
- Esther 4:14 "And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"
- Esther 4:16 "hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish."

Jehosheba - bravely and wisely hides her nephew and future King from a murderous Queen for six years

- 2 Kings 11:2-3 "But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the king's sons who were

being put to death, and she put him and his nurse in a bedroom. Thus they hid him from Athaliah, so that he was not put to death. [3] And he remained with her six years, hidden in the house of the LORD, while Athaliah reigned over the land.”

Elizabeth - righteous and faithful wife to a priest, childless until old, trusts the Lord’s promise, obedient to God’s commands, mother of John the Baptist, encourager and relative to Mary - Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

- Luke 1:6 “And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.”

Mary - sexually pure, virgin until Jesus is born, raises Jesus, bravely follows and trusts God, widowed, watches son murdered, faithful - Luke 1:26-56; 2; 3; Matthew 1:18-25, 2, John 2:1-12, Luke 8:19-21, John 19:25-27

- Luke 1:38 “Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’”
- Luke 1:46–47 “And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior’”

Anna - married seven years, widowed for ~50+ years, worships God day and night at the Temple with fasting and prayer, sees Jesus, prophetess, full of gratitude and praise to God, speaks truth - Luke 2:36-38

- Luke 2:37–38 “She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. [38] And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.”

Samaritan Woman - married multiple times, living with a man, encounters Jesus, tells everyone in her town about Jesus - John 4:4-42

- John 4:29 “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”

Sinful Woman - sinful life, bravely enters the Pharisee’s house, cries at Jesus’ feet, cleans His feet with her hair, anoints His feet with an expensive ointment, sins forgiven by Jesus, loved Jesus greatly - Luke 7:36-50

- Luke 7:47 “Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.”

Sick Woman - weakened and impoverished by chronic bleeding, goes to Jesus, has faith in Jesus, works hard to get to Jesus in a crowd, touches Jesus and is healed - Mark 5:24-34

- Mark 5:27–28 “She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. [28] For she said, ‘If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.’”

Mary of Bethany - sits at Jesus’ feet, listening and learning, chooses wisely how to spend her time, pours perfume on Jesus’ feet in gratitude for her brother Lazarus’ resurrection and preparation for Jesus’ death - Luke 10:38-42, John 11:1-45; 12:1-8

- Luke 10:39–42 “Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. ...the Lord answered her, “... one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”
- John 12:3 “Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.”

Martha of Bethany - sister Mary brother Lazarus dies, loved by Jesus, welcomes Jesus into her home, works hard for Jesus, Jesus encourages her to worry less and listen at his feet - Luke 10:38-42, John 11:1-45

- Luke 10:38 “Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house.”
- Luke 10:40–41 “But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” [41] But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things”

Widow with Two Coins - impoverished, lonely, gives sacrificially of everything she has, trust the Lord for His provision - Luke 21:1-4; Mark 12:41-44

- Luke 21:3–4 “And he said, ‘Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. [4] For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.’”

Mary Magdalene - was possessed by demons but set free by Jesus, faithful to Jesus to the end - Luke 8:1-3; 24:1-10; John 19:25; 20:11-18, Matthew 27:55-61; 28:1; Mark 15:40-41; 16:1-11

- Mark 16:1 “When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him.”

Dorcas (Tabitha) - helped others with works and generosity, died, resurrected by Peter - Acts 9:36-42

- Acts 9:36 “Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity.”

Lydia - businesswoman, seller of purple cloth, believes in Jesus through Paul at Philippi, hospitable - Acts 16:11-15, 40

- Acts 16:14 “One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.”

Priscilla - Aquila’s wife, mentors alongside her husband, church in their home - Acts 18:1-3, 18-26, Romans 16:3-4, 1 Corinthians 16:19

- Acts 18:26 “He [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”

- Romans 16:3–4 “Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, [4] who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well.”

Lois & Eunice - grandmother and mother to Timothy, provided godly instruction and example of genuine faith in God - 2 Timothy 1:5, Acts 16:1

- 2 Timothy 1:5 “I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.”

Younger Widows -

- 1 Timothy 5:14 “So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander.”
- 1 Corinthians 7:39–40 “A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. [40] Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.”

Older Women - modeling godliness, teaching and training younger women as wives and mothers

- Titus 2:3-5 “Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, [4] and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, [5] to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”

Phoebe - a servant

- Romans 16:1 “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae”

Mary - a hard worker

- Romans 16:6-7 “Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. ... They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.”

Andronicus and Junia - relatives and prisoners with Paul

- Romans 16:7 “Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.”

In Every Place Women - respectable, modest, self-controlled, humble, doing good, learning, submissive, not teaching or exercising leadership over men in church (rooted in the order of creation and the fall), faithfully enduring as mothers and godly women

- 1 Timothy 2:8-15 “I desire then that in every place ... women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, [10] but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. [11] Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. [12] I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. [13] For Adam was formed first, then Eve; [14] and Adam was not

deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. [15] Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.”

- 1 Corinthians 11:3,8, 11-13, 16 - “But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. ... [8]For man was not made from woman, but woman from man... [11] Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; [12] for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. [13] Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? ... [16] If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.”
- 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, [34] the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. [35] If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.”

In Marriage - Godly Wives - Ephesians 5:22-33 - 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 - 1 Peter 3:1-7 - Colossians 3:18-25

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-marriage-roles

- Helpmate (Gen 2:18)
- Loving and gracious submission to the leadership of her husband (Eph 5:22, Col 3:18)
- Not strive/resist the leadership of her husband (Gen 3:16, 1 Pet 3:1)
- Respect her husband (Eph 5:33)
- Diligent worker, whether at home or in the workplace (Pro 31)
- Hospitable towards others and generous towards poor (Pro 31)
- Cares for children and household (Prov 31)
- Meet sexual needs of husband (1 Cor 7)
- Be beautiful on the inside (1 Pet 3:4)

Prayer and Fasting

What Does the Bible Say About Prayer?

10 Reasons to Pray

1. **Encounter God** - Pray is a meeting to intentionally and humbly communicate with God.
2. **Know God** - Listening and speaking to Jesus enables us to know Him more personally.
3. **Glorify God** - It pleases and honors God when we draw near to Him in prayer.
4. **Experience God's Power** - Prayers of the righteous are answered powerfully.
5. **Understand God's Present Work** - God desires to be related to and enjoyed daily.
6. **Look Forward to God's Future Work** - Submit and yield your future into His hands.
7. **Protect from Satan's Attacks** - We remember our real enemy in Satan, his demons, the world, and our flesh and are reminded that prayer is a spiritual weapon of offense and defense.
8. **Share True Hope with Others** - We evangelistically pray for God's saving work.
9. **Awareness of His Presence** - Failing to pray means ignoring His constant presence with us.
10. **Obedience** - God has commanded and taught us to relate to Him through prayer.

Top Books to Devotionally Guide Your Prayer

- *Everyday Prayers: 365 Days to a Gospel-Centered Faith* by Scotty Smith
- *Pray for the World* - by Patrick Johnstone
- *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions* by Arthur Bennett
- *Morning and Evening* - Charles H. Spurgeon
- *The Songs of Jesus: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms* by Timothy & Kathy Keller
- (for comfort, a compilation) *Streams in the Desert* by Mrs. Charles E. Cowman
- (for ladies) *Whispers of Hope: 10 Week of Devotional Prayer* by Beth Moore
- (for ladies) *Praying God's Word Day by Day* by Beth Moore

Top 3 Books to Learn About Prayer & How to Pray

1. *Praying the Bible* by Donald S. Whitney
2. *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* by Timothy Keller
3. *George Müller: Delighted in God* by Roger Steer

Personal Prayer **(Matthew 6:5-15, ESV)**

Prayer is Personal Conversation

v.5-6 “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

Prayer is Meaningful Conversation

v.7-8 “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

Prayer is God-Focused Conversation

v.9 Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us this day our daily bread,
12 & forgive us our debts (sins), as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
14-15 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

A.C.T.S.

Spend time praying over each of these areas

Adoration (of God)

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.” (Matthew 6:9 ESV)

Confession (of sins)

“and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12 ESV)

Thanksgiving (for His work)

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10
ESV)

Supplication

(how can you ask God to help you or others)

“Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11 ESV)

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” (Matthew 6:13 ESV)

3 Ways to Prepare for Prayer

1. Make Your Focus God-ward “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [6] But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:5-6 ESV)

2. Ask Genuinely and Significantly “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. [8] Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” (Matthew 6:7-8 ESV)

3. Sincerely Show Mercy & Grace to Others “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, [15] but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matthew 6:14-15)

Best Bible Verses on Prayer

There are 650 prayers listed in the Bible...check them out at:
www.gospelpedlar.com/articles/Christian%20Life/Prayer.pdf

Here are some favorites:

- (James 5:13-18) Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. [14] Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. [15] And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. [16] Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. [17] Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. [18] Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, & the earth bore its fruit.
- (Philippians 4:4-7) Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. [5] Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; [6] do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- (Proverbs 28:9) If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.
- (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) Rejoice always, [17] pray without ceasing, [18] give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
- (Psalm 55:16-17) But I call to God, and the LORD will save me. [17] Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice.
- (Luke 18:1-8) And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. [2] He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. [3] And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' [4] For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, [5] yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" [6] And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. [7] And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? [8] I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"
- (James 4:1-4) What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? [2] You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. [3] You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to

spend it on your passions. [4] You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

- (1 John 5:14-15) And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. [15] And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.
- (Ephesians 6:18-20) praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, [19] and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, [20] for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.
- (Romans 8:26-27) Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. [27] And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.
- **(Matthew 6:5-15) The “Lord’s Prayer”:** And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [6] But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. [7] “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. [8] Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. [9] Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. [10] Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. [11] Give us this day our daily bread, [12] and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. [13] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [14] For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, [15] but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
- **(John 17) Jesus’ Prayer to His Father - The “High Priestly Prayer”:** When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you ... [9] I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. [11] ... Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ... [15] I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ... [17] Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ... [20] “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, [21] that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ... [24] Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ... [26] I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Prayer in the Psalms and Proverbs

A.C.T.S. - A helpful acronym to remember how to pray!

ADORATION (of God)

Humble Yourself - The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life. (Proverbs 22:4)

- One's pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor. (Proverbs 29:23)

Respect the Lord - The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor. (Proverbs 15:33)

- Blessed is the one who fears the LORD always, but whoever hardens his heart will fall into calamity. (Proverbs 28:14)

CONFESSION (of sin)

Turn Your Lips - Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. - Proverbs 28:13

Turn Your Lives - Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. [8] It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. (Proverbs 3:7-8)

- One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless. (Proverbs 14:16)
- The highway of the upright turns aside from evil; whoever guards his way preserves his life. (Proverbs 16:17)

THANKSGIVING (to God)

Recognize the Source - For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; (Proverbs 2:6)

Rest in the Source - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding, [6] In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

- My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, [12] for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights. (Proverbs 3:11-12)

Respond to the Source - Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce (Proverbs 3:9)

SUPPLICATION (asking)

Seek Him - Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand it completely. (Proverbs 28:5)

- Many seek the face of a ruler, but it is from the LORD that a man gets justice. (Proverbs 29:26)

Speak to Him - The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous. (Proverbs 15:29)

Make Godly Requests Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die [8] Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me. (Proverbs 30:7-8)

Seek His Favor - A good man obtains favor from the LORD (Proverbs 12:2)

Seek His Answers - The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD. (Proverbs 16:1)

What should guide our prayers?

Pray According to His Voice “If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.” (Proverbs 28:9 ESV)

- “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.” (1 John 5:13-15)

Pray According to His Character “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him.” (Proverbs 15:8)

- “Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.” (John 16:23)

Pray According to His Relationship “The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.” (Proverbs 15:29)

- “And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.” (Matthew 21:22)
- “and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.” (1 John 3:22)

Praying the Psalms

Donald Whitney (Praying the Bible by Donald S. Whitney) has shared an outstanding method of using the Psalms as a guide and format for our prayers. There are 150 Psalms, with around 30 days per month, which provides about 5 Psalms/Day to Choose To discover which daily Psalms you might consider praying through, take the day of the week and add in increments of 30. For instance, on January 7th you would have Psalm 7, 37, 67, 97, and 127 to choose from (Day of the Week + 30). Skim over those five Psalms until you discover one in which your heart resonates for that particular day. Then read a verse at a time, pausing to reflect and pray over and according to that particular truth to God.

Take a few minutes and try praying personally through Psalm 7.

Psalm 7

REFUGE [1] O LORD my God, in you do I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers and deliver me, [2] lest like a lion they tear my soul apart, rending it in pieces, with none to deliver.

DISCIPLINE [3] O LORD my God, if I have done this, if there is wrong in my hands, [4] if I have repaid my friend with evil or plundered my enemy without cause, [5] let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it, and let him trample my life to the ground and lay my glory in the dust. Selah

PROTECTION [6] Arise, O LORD, in your anger; lift yourself up against the fury of my enemies; awake for me; you have appointed a judgment. [7] Let the assembly of the peoples be gathered about you; over it return on high.

RIGHTEOUSNESS [8] The LORD judges the peoples; judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me.

JUSTICE [9] Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end, and may you establish the righteous—you who test the minds and hearts, O righteous God!

PLEASING OR DISPLEASING GOD [10] My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart. [11] God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day.

WRATH [12] If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword; he has bent and readied his bow; [13] he has prepared for him his deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery shafts.

THE WICKED [14] Behold, the wicked man conceives evil and is pregnant with mischief and gives birth to lies. [15] He makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into the hole that he has made. [16] His mischief returns upon his own head, and on his own skull his violence descends.

PRAISE [17] I will give to the LORD the thanks due to his righteousness, and I will sing praise to the name of the LORD, the Most High.

Prayers of Endurance

(Psalm 69 ESV)

No Situation Is Hopeless: Run to God!

[1] Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. [2] I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me. [3] I am weary with my crying out; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God. [4] More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; mighty are those who would destroy me, those who attack me with lies. What I did not steal must I now restore?

Confess Your Sin

[5] O God, you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you. [6] Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me, O Lord GOD of hosts; let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me, O God of Israel. [7] For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonor has covered my face. [8] I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother's sons.

Messengers Are Often Attacked for their Message: Stay Humble But Zealous

[9] For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me. [10] When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting, it became my reproach. [11] When I made sackcloth my clothing, I became a byword to them. [12] I am the talk of those who sit in the gate, and the drunkards make songs about me.

God Is Aware, Able, and Good: Never Doubt

[13] But as for me, my prayer is to you, O LORD. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love answer me in your saving faithfulness. [14] Deliver me from sinking in the mire; let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters. [15] Let not the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up, or the pit close its mouth over me.

Seek His Presence in Your Loneliness

[16] Answer me, O LORD, for your steadfast love is good; according to your abundant mercy, turn to me. [17] Hide not your face from your servant; for I am in distress; make haste to answer me. [18] Draw near to my soul, redeem me; ransom me because of my enemies! [19] You know my reproach, and my shame and my dishonor; my foes are all known to you. [20] Reproaches have broken my heart, so that I am in despair. I looked for pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none. [21] They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.

Seek and Trust God's Just Vengeance and Punishment

[22] Let their own table before them become a snare; and when they are at peace, let it become a trap. [23] Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see, and make their loins tremble continually. [24] Pour out your indignation upon them, and let your burning anger overtake them. [25] May their camp be a desolation; let no one dwell in their tents. [26] For they persecute him whom you have struck down, and they recount the pain of those you have wounded. [27] Add to them punishment upon punishment; may they have no acquittal from you. [28] Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; let them not be enrolled among the righteous.

Trust His Salvation Plan: Now & Future

[29] But I am afflicted and in pain; let your salvation, O God, set me on high! [30] I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. [31] This will please the LORD more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs. [32] When the humble see it they will be glad; you who seek God, let your hearts revive. [33] For the LORD hears the needy and does not despise his own people who are prisoners. [34] Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them. [35] For God will save Zion and build up the cities of Judah, and people shall dwell there and possess it; [36] the offspring of his servants shall inherit it, and those who love his name shall dwell in it.

Prayers of Protection

(Psalm 31)

Admit You Need Outside Help!

[1] In you, O LORD, do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me! [2] Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily! Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me!

Praise Your Protector

[3] For you are my rock and my fortress; and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me; [4] you take me out of the net they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge. [5] Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.

Recognize Your Enemies & Increase In Your Love of God

[6] I hate those who pay regard to worthless idols, but I trust in the LORD. [7] I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction; you have known the distress of my soul, [8] and you have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy; you have set my feet in a broad place.

Be Transparent with the Depth of Your Need!

[9] Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief; my soul and my body also. [10] For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away. [11] Because of all my adversaries I have become a reproach, especially to my neighbors, and an object of

dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me. [12] I have been forgotten like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel.

Regardless of Your Circumstances, Trust in the Lord!

[13] For I hear the whispering of many—terror on every side!—as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life. [14] But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, “You are my God.” [15] My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors! [16] Make your face shine on your servant; save me in your steadfast love!

Ask Specifically for Help

[17] O LORD, let me not be put to shame, for I call upon you; let the wicked be put to shame; let them go silently to Sheol. [18] Let the lying lips be mute, which speak insolently against the righteous in pride and contempt.

Thank God Profusely and Specifically

[19] Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind! [20] In the cover of your presence you hide them from the plots of men; you store them in your shelter from the strife of tongues. [21] Blessed be the LORD, for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me when I was in a besieged city. [22] I had said in my alarm, “I am cut off from your sight.” But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cried to you for help.

Never Forget that God is in Control

[23] Love the LORD, all you his saints! The LORD preserves the faithful but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride. [24] Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the LORD!

Top 30 Ways to Pray

Here are some suggestions and ideas for ways to pray!

1. ACTS: Spend time praying over each of these areas: Adoration (of God), Confession (of sins), Thanksgiving (for His work), Supplication (how can you ask God to help you or others)
2. Pick a Psalm and pray through it, reflecting how you might be feeling and thinking in a similar way or situation (150 Psalms, ~30 days/month, 5 psalms to choose from per day)
3. Pray over the names of God. Reflect on who He is and adore Him (from *God Is* by Ken Hemphill): Alpha (beginning), Omega (end), Our Advocate, the Almighty, the Author & Finisher, the Beloved Son, the Bread of Life, the Bright Morning Star, Captain of our Salvation, the Chief Shepherd, the Cornerstone, Our Creator, Our Counselor, Our Deliverer, the Door, the Faithful Witness, Everlasting Father, the First Begotten, the Good Shepherd, the Great High Priest, the Holy Child, the Head of the Church, the Great I AM, Immanuel, Jesus, the Just One, the Life, the Lamb of God, the Light of the World, the Lion of Judah, the Lord of All, the Lord of Glory, Our Master, the Man of Sorrows, Our Mediator, the Messiah, the Mighty God, Our Redeemer, the Prince of Peace, Our Rock, the Resurrection & the Life, Our Savior, the Rose of Sharon, the Son of God, the Son of Man, the True Light, the True Vine, the Truth, Wonderful, the Word of God, & the Way
4. Pray the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15)
5. Remain in silence – reflect on who the Lord is and how the Lord is working upon your life
6. Pray for Missionaries – International, across North America, & Military chaplains
Use *Pray for the World* by Patrick Johnstone as a guide!
7. Pray over the 10 commandments and ask for forgiveness of those you have broken (Exodus 20)
8. Journal out (write) down a prayer
9. Write your sins on a dry erase board or a paper. Pray for forgiveness and then destroy the writing.
10. Pray out loud.
11. Pray for five of your friends by name.
12. Pray for students and senior adults in your church by name.
13. Pray for a non-believer by name. Pray for a struggling Christian by name.
14. Pray for the leaders of our church: Staff. Lay leadership. Sunday School teachers. Volunteers.
15. Pray for five members of your family by name.
16. Pray for opportunities to witness and for love, boldness, wisdom, and courage to do so.

17. Pray for increased growth in your own spiritual walk with Christ: Bible Reading, Prayer, Worship, Stewardship, Service, etc.
18. Thank God because we are: the salt of the earth, the light of the world, witnesses of the Gospel, branches in God's vine, friends of Jesus, called by Christ, Saints of God, justified before God, walking in newness of life, in the Spirit, Sons of God, more than conquerors, one body, strong for the weak, filled with God's goodness, not Spiritually lacking, in Christ Jesus, God's field and building, God's temple, the Members of Christ, known by God, the Aroma of Christ, given over to death, protected from Fear of Death, a new creation, ambassadors for Christ, strong when we are weak, crucified with Christ, heirs with Christ, sons and not slaves, not under the law, sealed with the Holy Spirit, created to do good, fellow citizens with the Saints, Christ's household, not quitters, protected by God's power, God's people, blessed when we are cursed, called God's children, from God (from *We Are* by Ken Hemphill)
19. Pray for strength and ways of escape with certain struggles and temptations you are dealing with. Pray for Satan to remain far from you.
20. Prayer walk: Walk around and pray for the areas and people you see.
21. Pray for specific needs/concerns of others.
22. Pray for your future spouse, children, or grandchildren (if the Lord wills).
23. Randomly open your Bible and pray over the Scripture you read. Reflect how you may have experienced or are experiencing similar things.
24. Pray freely as you feel led use a devotional book to guide you (try *Everyday Prayers: 365 Days to a Gospel-Centered Faith* by Scotty Smith).
25. Pray an ancient prayer of a Puritan (try a book called: *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions* by Arthur Bennett)
26. Pray through a church prayer sheet. Pray in a group over each other's needs/requests & as you feel led.
27. Pray sitting (2 Sam 7:18), standing (Mark 11:25), kneeling (Chronicles 6:13; Daniel 6:10; Luke 22:41; Acts 7:60, 9:40, 20:36, 21:5; Ephesians 3:14), with your face to the ground (Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:35), and with hands lifted up (1 Timothy 2:8).
28. Pray as you watch the news. As you are sitting in class. As you are driving a car (eyes open). Let your surroundings guide and instruct your prayer.
29. Pray when you receive news by email, text message, phone calls, or Facebook.
30. Read Luke 18:1-8. Pray for a situation that you've "lost heart" over?

A 10 Day Prayer for Love from 1 Corinthians 13

Remember Valentine's Day?

As kids, Valentine's Day was a time of nervousness and excitement as we exchanged and received cards and gifts in secret. As adults, Valentine's Day can be a helpful reminder to be more intentional in how we love one another. *One of the most famous passages on love is found in 1 Corinthians 13. Read it closely then let it guide your responsive prayer back to God.*

1 Corinthians 13:4–7 “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (ESV)

Who Is God Calling You to Love Better? Is it your spouse, child, parent, relative, neighbor, coworker, or friend. Pick one person now and use their name to fill in the blanks below as you pray to Jesus. Will you pray for them for 10 days like Jeremiah prayed in seeking God's voice (Jeremiah 42:7)?

- Lord, help me to love _____ patiently.
- Lord, help me to show love to _____ with my kind words and actions.
- Lord, help me to demonstrate love towards _____ by being more content in my situation in life.
- Lord, help me to speak lovingly to _____ with my praise and encouragement.
- Lord, help me to demonstrate more humility towards _____ by thinking more of them as more important than myself.
- Lord, help me to be more gentle towards _____ in my actions and responses.
- Lord, help me to make selfless choices that prioritize _____'s needs above my own.
- Lord, help me to be less demanding and more easy-going towards _____ .
- Lord, help me to let go of my past hurts and be more forgiving towards _____ .
- Lord, help me to be righteous in my actions towards _____.
- Lord, help me to read, hear, know, and speak your truth into _____'s life.
- Lord, help me to show mercy towards _____ and to protect them from their enemies in this world.
- Lord, help me to give grace to _____ and to be a faithful presence in their life.
- Lord, help me to be positive and optimistic in my relationship with _____
- Lord, help me to love _____ well until the day I die.

Now let's not just pray about love. Let's practice it. Will you love _____ better in the year ahead?

100 Best Prayer Quotes

1. "Some people pray just to pray and some people pray to know God." Andrew Murray
2. "Some people think God does not like to be troubled with our constant coming and asking. The way to trouble God is not to come at all." D.L. Moody
3. "There is a mighty lot of difference between saying prayers and praying." John G. Lake
4. "You may pray for an hour and still not pray. You may meet God for a moment and then be in touch with Him all day." Fredrik Wisloff
5. "I have so much to do that I spend several hours in prayer before I am able to do it." John Wesley
6. "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had absolutely no other place to go." Abraham Lincoln
7. "Always respond to every impulse to pray. The impulse to pray may come when you are reading or when you are battling with a text. I would make an absolute law of this – always obey such an impulse." Martyn Lloyd-Jones
8. "Wishing will never be a substitute for prayer." Ed Cole
9. "Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?" Corrie Ten Boom
10. "Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan." John Bunyan
11. "Of all the duties enjoined by Christianity none is more essential and yet more neglected than prayer." François Fénelon
12. "When a Christian shuns fellowship with other Christians, the devil smiles. When he stops studying the Bible, the devil laughs. When he stops praying, the devil shouts for joy." Corrie Ten Boom
13. "When I pray, coincidences happen, and when I don't pray, they don't." William Temple
14. "Pray, and let God worry." Martin Luther
15. "Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers, pray for powers equal to your task." Phillips Brooks
16. "God's answers are wiser than our prayers." –Unknown
17. "Prayer in its highest form is agonizing soul sweat." Leonard Ravenhill
18. "Let the fires go out in the boiler room of the church and the place will still look smart and clean, but it will be cold. The Prayer Room is the boiler room for its spiritual life." Leonard Ravenhill
19. "The Church has not yet touched the fringe of the possibilities of intercessory prayer. Her largest victories will be witnessed when individual Christians everywhere come to recognize their priesthood unto God and day by day give themselves unto prayer." John R. Mott
20. "I must secure more time for private devotions. I have been living far too public for me. The shortening of devotions starves the soul, it grows lean and faint. I have been keeping too late hours." William Wilberforce
21. "I have held many things in my hands, and have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess." Martin Luther

22. "If you read history you will find out that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next." C.S. Lewis
23. "He that loves the Word and the purity of its precepts cannot turn traitor." William Gurnall
24. "My main ambition in life is to be on the devil's most wanted list." Leonard Ravenhill
25. "Satan always rocks our cradle when we sleep at our devotions." Joseph Hall
26. "The Scriptures were not given to increase our knowledge but to change our lives." D.L. Moody
27. "The vigour of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts." George Mueller
28. "The best of it is, God is with us." John Wesley
29. "Little of the Word with little prayer is death to the spiritual life. Much of the Word with little prayer gives a sickly life. Much prayer with little of the Word gives more life, but without steadfastness. A full measure of the Word and prayer each day gives healthy and powerful life." Andrew Murray
30. "Our ordinary views of prayer are not found in the New Testament. We look upon prayer as a means for getting something for ourselves; the Bible idea of prayer is that we may get to know God Himself." Oswald Chambers
31. "If you are sick, fast and pray; if the language is hard to learn, fast and pray; if the people will not hear you, fast and pray, if you have nothing to eat, fast and pray." Frederick Franson
32. "Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons; but they are helpless against our prayers." J. Sidlow Baxter
33. "Notice, we never pray for folks we gossip about, and we never gossip about the folk for whom we pray! For prayer is a great deterrent." Leonard Ravenhill
34. "God never gives us discernment in order that we may criticize, but that we may intercede." Oswald Chambers
35. "There is nothing that makes us love a man so much as praying for him." William Law
36. "A servant of the Lord stands bodily before men, but mentally he is knocking at the gates of heaven with prayer." John Climacus
37. "Rich is the person who has a praying friend." Janice Hughes
38. "It is necessary to rouse the heart to pray, otherwise it will become quite dry. The attributes of prayer must be: love of God, sincerity, and simplicity." John of Kronstadt
39. "The true spirit of prayer is no other than God's own Spirit dwelling in the hearts of the saints. And as this spirit comes from God, so doth it naturally tend to God in holy breathings and pantings. It naturally leads to God, to converse with him by prayer." Jonathan Edwards
40. "Accustom yourself gradually to carry Prayer into all your daily occupation -- speak, act, work in peace, as if you were in prayer, as indeed you ought to be." François Fénelon
41. "Whether we think of or speak to God; whether we act or suffer for him; all is prayer when we have no other object than his love, and the desire of pleasing him." John Wesley

42. "God does not stand afar off as I struggle to speak. He cares enough to listen with more than casual attention. He translates my scrubby words and hears what is truly inside. He hears my sighs and uncertain gropings as fine prose." Timothy Jones
43. "In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart." John Bunyan
44. "Prayer is not so much an act as it is an attitude—an attitude of dependency, dependency upon God." Arthur W. Pink
45. "There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God." Brother Lawrence
46. "Prayer does not fit us for the greater work, prayer is the greater work." Oswald Chambers
47. "The Church used to be a lifeboat rescuing the perishing. Now she is a cruise ship recruiting the promising." Leonard Ravenhill
48. "The only reason we don't have revival is because we are willing to live without it!" Leonard Ravenhill
49. "A sinning man stops praying, a praying man stops sinning" Leonard Ravenhill
50. "If weak in prayer, we are weak everywhere." Leonard Ravenhill

E.M. Bounds Quotes on Prayer

51. "Private place and plenty of time are the life of prayer." E.M. Bounds
52. "Prayer is the language of a man burdened with a sense of need." E.M. Bounds
53. "Prayer is the greatest of all forces, because it honors God and brings him into active aid." E.M. Bounds
54. "Nothing is clearer than that prayer has its only worth and significance in the great fact that God hears and answers prayer." E.M. Bounds
55. "The story of every great Christian achievement is the history of answered prayer." E.M. Bounds
56. "Trust receives what prayer acquires. So, what prayer needs, at all times, is abiding and abundant trust." E.M. Bounds
57. "Public prayers are of little worth unless they are founded on or followed up by private praying." E.M. Bounds
58. "To be too busy with God's work to commune with God is the highway to backsliding." E.M. Bounds
59. "The goal of prayer is the ear of God." E.M. Bounds
60. "Jesus taught that perseverance is the essential element in prayer." E.M. Bounds
61. "Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still." E.M. Bounds
62. "A holy life does not live in the closet, but it cannot live without the closet." E.M. Bounds
63. "He only can truly pray who is all aglow for holiness, for God, and for heaven." E.M. Bounds
64. "Heaven is too busy to listen to half-hearted prayers or to respond to pop-calls." E.M. Bounds
65. "Holy living is essential preparation for prayer." E.M. Bounds

66. "He who is too busy to pray will be too busy to live a holy life. Satan had rather we let the grass grow on the path to our prayer chamber than anything else." E.M. Bounds
67. "It is necessary to iterate and reiterate that prayer, as a mere habit, as a performance gone through by routine or in a professional way, is a dead and rotten thing." E.M. Bounds
68. "It is only when the whole heart is gripped with the passion of prayer that the life-giving fire descends, for none but the earnest man gets access to the ear of God." E.M. Bounds
69. "No learning can make up for the failure to pray. No earnestness, no diligence, no study, no gifts will supply its lack." E.M. Bounds
70. "Prayer should not be regarded as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege to be enjoyed, a rare delight that is always revealing some new beauty." E.M. Bounds
71. "Prayer succeeds when all else fails." E.M. Bounds
72. "The greatest benefactor this age could have is the man who will bring the teachers and the church back to prayer." E.M. Bounds
73. "Prayer makes a godly man, and puts within him the mind of Christ, the mind of humility, of self-surrender, of service, of pity, and of prayer. If we really pray, we will become more like God, or else we will quit praying." E.M. Bounds
74. "Sainthood's piety is made, refined, perfected, by prayer. The gospel moves with slow and timid pace when the saints are not at their prayers early and late and long." E.M. Bounds
75. "What the Church needs to-day is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use - men of prayer, men mighty in prayer." E.M. Bounds
76. "Prayer is not learned in a classroom but in the closet." E.M. Bounds
77. "Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still." E.M. Bounds
78. "True prayer must be aflame. Christian life and character need to be all on fire." E.M. Bounds
79. "Giving thanks is the very life of prayer." E.M. Bounds
80. "No erudition, no purity of diction, no width of mental outlook, no flowers of eloquence, no grace of person can atone for lack of fire. Prayer ascends by fire. Flame gives prayer access as well as wings, acceptance as well as energy. There is no incense without fire; no prayer without flame." E.M. Bounds
81. "The men who have done the most for God in this world have been early on their knees. He who fritters away the early morning, its opportunity and freshness, in other pursuits than seeking God will make poor headway seeking Him the rest of the day. If God is not first in our thoughts and efforts in the morning, He will be in the last place the remainder of the day." E.M. Bounds
82. "We can do nothing without prayer. All things can be done by importunate prayer. It surmounts or removes all obstacles, overcomes every resisting force and gains its ends in the face of invincible hindrances." E.M. Bounds
83. "God draws mightily near to the praying soul." E.M. Bounds
84. "You know the value of prayer: it is precious beyond all price." E.M. Bounds

85. "The little estimate we put on prayer is evident from the little time we give to it." E.M. Bounds
86. "Without devotion prayer is an empty form, a vain round of words." E.M. Bounds
87. "God cannot help hearing the prayer of an obedient child." E.M. Bounds
88. "PRAYER, praise and thanksgiving all go in company." E.M. Bounds
89. "To see God, to know God, and to live for God-these form the objective of all true praying." E.M. Bounds
90. "Pray without ceasing; continue in prayer; continuing instant in prayer; in everything by prayer, let your request be made known unto God; pray always, pray and not faint; men should pray everywhere; praying always, with all prayer and supplication." E.M. Bounds
91. "He who would pray, must obey. He who would get anything out of his prayers, must be in perfect harmony with God. Prayer puts into those who sincerely pray a spirit of obedience, for the spirit of disobedience is not of God and belongs not to God's praying hosts." E.M. Bounds
92. "An obedient life is a great help to prayer. In fact, an obedient life is a necessity to prayer, to the sort which accomplishes things. The absence of an obedient life makes prayer an empty performance, a mere misnomer. A penitent sinner seeks pardon and salvation and has an answer to his prayers even with a life stained and debauched with sin. But God's royal intercessors come before him with royal lives. Holy living promotes holy praying. God's intercessors "lift up holy hands," the symbols of righteous, obedient lives." E.M. Bounds
93. "Four things let us ever keep in mind: God hears prayer, God heeds prayer, God answers prayer, and God delivers by prayer." E.M. Bounds
94. "Enthusiasm is more active than faith, though enthusiasm cannot remove mountains nor call into action any of the omnipotent forces which faith can command. Activity is often at the expense of more solid, useful elements, and generally to the total neglect of prayer. To be too busy with God's work to commune with God, to be busy with doing church work without taking time to talk to God about His work, is the highway to backsliding, and many people have walked therein to the hurt of their immortal souls." E.M. Bounds
95. "Wise is he in the day of trouble who knows his true source of strength and who fails not to pray." E.M. Bounds
96. "God's acquaintance is not made hurriedly." E.M. Bounds
97. "God does not bestow His gifts on the casual or hasty comers and goers. Much with God alone is the secret of knowing Him and of influence with Him." E.M. Bounds
98. "Prayer is God's plan to supply man's great and continuous need with God's great and continuous abundance." E.M. Bounds
99. "Life growing in its purity and devotion will be a more prayerful life." E.M. Bounds
100. "Prayer breaks all bars, dissolves all chains, opens all prisons, and widens all straits by which God's saints have been held." E.M. Bounds

What Does the Bible Say About Fasting?

(Ezra 8:21-23, ESV) Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. 22 For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, "The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him." 23 So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.

10 Reasons to Fast

From *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald Whitney

1. **Strengthen Prayer**
2. **Seek God's Guidance**
3. **Express Grief**
4. **Seek Deliverance or Protection**
5. **Express Repentance or Return to God**
6. **Humble Oneself Before God**
7. **Express Concern for the Work of God**
8. **Minister to the Needs of Others**
9. **Overcome Temptation & Dedicate Yourself to God**
10. **Express Love and Worship to God**

7 Ways to Fast

- **Normal Fast** – fasting from all food, not from water
Jesus' temptation (Matthew 4:1-11)
- **Partial Fast** – limitation of your diet
(Daniel 1:12 – vegetables to eat and water to drink)
(Matthew 3:4 - John the Baptist - locusts & wild honey)
- **Absolute Fast** – fasting from all food and all water
(Ezra 8:21-23, Esther 4:12-16, Paul - Acts 9:9, David - 2 Samuel 12:15-23)

- **Supernatural Fast** – requires God’s intervention to survive Moses (Deuteronomy 9:9), Elijah (1 Kings 19:8)
- **Private Fast** - in a way not to be noticed (Matthew 6:16-18)
- **Congregational Fast** – united focus (Joel 2:15-16, Acts 13:2)
- **Other than food** - “a voluntary denial of a normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity” - Richard Foster
Fasting from sex within marriage for more focus on prayer (1 Corinthians 7:3-5)

Helpful Resources for Learning More about Fasting

- *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald Whitney
- *A Hunger for God* by John Piper - Freely available at www.desiringgod.org/books/a-hunger-for-god
- “Crossway Interview with John Piper on *A Hunger for God*” - www.desiringgod.org/interviews/crossway-books-interview-with-john-piper-on-a-hunger-for-god

Top Bible Verses for Fasting

“Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. 22 For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, “The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him.” 23 So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.” (Ezra 8:21-23, ESV)

Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” [15] And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. [16] No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. [17] Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.” (Matthew 9:14-17 ESV)

“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [17] But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, [18] that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:16-18 ESV)

“Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. [2] While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ [3] Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.” (Acts 13:1-3 ESV)

“And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” (Acts 14:23 ESV)

“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. [2] And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. [3] And the tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.’ [4] But he answered, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (Matthew 4:1-4 ESV)

“Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.’” (John 6:35 ESV)

“You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:13 ESV)

“Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do.” (1 Corinthians 8:8 ESV)

“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: [10] ‘Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. [11] The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. [12] I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ [13] But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ [14] I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 18:9-14 ESV)

“For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. [19] Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. [20] But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, [21] who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” (Philippians 3:18-21 ESV)

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, [2] through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, [3] who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. [4] For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, [5] for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.” (1 Timothy 4:1-5 ESV)

Helpful Quotes on Fasting

- “Prayer is reaching out after the unseen; fasting is letting go of all that is seen and temporal. Fasting helps express, deepen, confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God.” Andrew Murray
- “In Shansi I found Chinese Christians who were accustomed to spend time in fasting and prayer. They recognized that this fasting, which so many dislike, which requires faith in God, since it makes one feel weak and poorly, is really a Divinely appointed means of grace. Perhaps the greatest hindrance to our work is our own imagined strength; and in fasting we learn what poor, weak creatures we are - dependent on a meal of meat for the little strength which we are so apt to lean upon.” Hudson Taylor
- “Bear up the hands that hang down, by faith and prayer; support the tottering knees. Have you any days of fasting and prayer? Storm the throne of grace and persevere therein, and mercy will come down.” John Wesley
- “We are a culture of abundance that indulges and abuses—fasting is a means of God’s grace to embrace someone greater than our appetites.” Keyan Soltani
- “I would entreat the people of God to be very cautious how they give heed to such things. I have seen 'em fail in very many instances; and know by experience that impressions being made with great power, and upon the minds of true saints, yea, eminent saints; and presently after, yea, in the midst of, extraordinary exercises of grace and sweet communion with God, and attended with texts of scripture strongly impressed on the mind, are no sure signs of their being revelations from heaven: for I have known such impressions to fail, and prove vain by the event, in some instances attended with all these circumstances.” Jonathan Edwards (*Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, p. 282.)

John Piper Quotes on Fasting

- “Fasting helps cultivate that spiritual hunger by forcing the hunger issue on us and making us ask if we really do hunger for God.” John Piper
- “Christian fasting, at its root, is the hunger of a homesickness for God” John Piper
- “Therefore there is a distinctive Christian fasting. It is always both contentment in the already and dissatisfaction in the not yet.” John Piper
- “We fast because we’re hungry for God’s Word and God’s Spirit in our lives.” John Piper
- “We fast because we long for God’s glory to resound in the church and God’s praise to resound among the nations.” John Piper
- “We fast because we yearn for God’s Son to return and God’s kingdom to come.” John Piper
- 4. “Ultimately we fast simply because we want God more than we want anything this world has to offer us.” John Piper
- 5. “If you are not fasting, it is perhaps because you do not feel any fervent longings for God’s power in your life.” John Piper
- 6. “Fasting is an offering of emptiness to show where fullness can be found. It is a sacrifice of need and hunger.” John Piper

7. “And fasting sets us onto God for satisfaction and off of food.” John Piper

Theology

God & Satan

What Does the Bible Say About the Names of God?

The Names of God

“O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.” Psalm 8:1 (ESV)

Our Creator (Elohim) - One God, Revealing Himself in the Three Person of Father, Son, and Spirit - Isaiah 40:28 “Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.”

- Genesis 1:1–2 “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. [2] The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”
- John 1:1–3 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.”

Abba, Father - Galatians 4:6 “And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”

- Matthew 3:16–17 “And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”
- Mark 9:7 “And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, ‘This is my beloved Son; listen to him.’”

Alpha (beginning, first) & Omega (end, last) - Revelation 22:13 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

Almighty (El Shaddai) - Genesis 17:1 “I am God Almighty”

Ancient of Days (Attiyq Youm) - Daniel 7:9–10 “As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.”

Deliverer - Psalm 70:5 “You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay!”

Everlasting God (El Olam) - Isaiah 40:28 “Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.”

Fortress - Psalm 18:2 “The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”

God Most High (El Elyon) - Genesis 14:20 “blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!”

God of Knowledge (El Deah) - 1 Samuel 2:3 “the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.”

God Who Gave You Birth (El Chuwl) - Deuteronomy 32:18 “the God who gave you birth”

God Who Sees (El Roi) - Genesis 16:13 “You are a God of seeing”

Great I AM - Exodus 3:14 “God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’”

Just One - Ezra 9:15 “O LORD, the God of Israel, you are just”

Lord of All - Psalm 97:5 “The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth.”

Lord - Our Banner (Jehovah-Nissi) - Exodus 17:15 “Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The LORD Is My Banner”

Lord - Our Creator (Jehovah-Bore) - Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

Lord - Our Healer (Jehovah-Rapha) - Exodus 15:26 “I am the LORD, your healer.”

Lord - Our Hosts (Jehovah-Sabaoth) - Isaiah 6:3 “And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!’”

Lord - Our Peace (Jehovah-Shalom) - Judges 6:24 “Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD Is Peace.”

Lord - Our Provider (Jehovah-Jireh) - Genesis 22:14 “So Abraham called the name of that place, ‘The LORD will provide’; as it is said to this day, ‘On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.’”

Lord - Our Righteousness (Jehovah-Tsidkenu) - Jeremiah 23:6 “In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’”

Lord - Our Shepherd (Jehovah-Rohi) - Psalm 23:1 “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

Lord is There (Jehovah-Shammah) - Psalm 139:7 “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?”

Majestic - Psalm 8:1 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”

Self-Existent One (Jehovah (Yahweh)) - Exodus 3:14 “God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.”

Jesus - Matthew 1:21 “She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

- **Advocate** - 1 John 2:1 “we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”
- **Anointed One (Christos)** - Matthew 16:16 “Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”
- **Author of Life** - Acts 3:15 “you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead.”
- **Beloved Son** - Matthew 3:17 “a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

- **Bread of Life** - John 6:35 “Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.’”
- **Bridegroom** - Matthew 9:15 “And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.”
- **Bright Morning Star** - Revelation 22:16 “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”
- **Chief Shepherd** - 1 Peter 5:4 “And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”
- **Cornerstone** - Mark 12:10 “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone”
- **Door** - John 10:9 “I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved”
- **Faithful Witness** - Revelation 1:5 “Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood”
- **Founder (author) & Perfecter (finisher) of Our Faith**- Hebrews 12:2 “looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”
- **Founder (Captain) of our Salvation** - Hebrews 2:10 “the founder of their salvation”
- **God** - Colossians 2:9 “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily”
- Romans 9:5 “the Christ, who is God over all”
- John 14:9–10 “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father ... I am in the Father & the Father is in me”
- John 10:30 “I and the Father are one.”
- **Good Shepherd** - John 10:11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”
- **Great High Priest** - Hebrews 4:14 “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.”
- **Head of the Church** - Ephesians 5:23 “Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.”
- **Image of the Invisible God** - Colossians 1:15 “He is the image of the invisible God”
- 2 Corinthians 4:4 “Christ, who is the image of God. (ESV)
- **Immanuel** - Matthew 1:23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).”
- **Judge** - Acts 10:42 “he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.”
- **King of Kings, Lord of Lords** - Revelation 17:14 “the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”
- **Lamb of God** - John 1:29 “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

- **Light of the World** - John 8:12 “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”
- **Lion of Judah** - Revelation 5:5 “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”
- **Living Water** - John 4:14 “whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”
- **Lord of Glory** - James 2:1 “hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory”
- **Man of Sorrows** - Isaiah 53:3 “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”
- **Mediator** - 1 Timothy 2:5 “there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”
- **Messiah** - John 1:41 “We have found the Messiah' (which means Christ).”
- **Name Above All Names** - Philippians 2:9 “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name”
- **Only Son** - John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”
- **The Power of God, The Wisdom of God** - 1 Corinthians 1:23–24 “we preach Christ crucified... the power of God and the wisdom of God.”
- **Prophet** - John 6:14 “When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, ‘This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!’”
- **Redeemer** - Job 19:25 “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.”
- **Resurrection** - John 11:25–26 “Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?’”
- **Rock** - 1 Corinthians 10:4 “they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.”
- **Savior** - 1 John 4:14 “we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.”
- **Son of God** - 1 John 5:13 “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.”
- **Son of Man** - Matthew 20:28 “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
- **Teacher/Master** - John 13:13 “You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.”
- **True Light** - John 1:9 “The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.”
- **True Vine** - John 15:1 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.”
- **Word of God** - John 1:14 “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”
- **The Way, The Truth, The Life** - John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

- **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace** - Isaiah 9:6 “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”
- **Yahweh (Jehovah) - I AM** - John 8:58 “Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.’”

Spirit - John 4:24 “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

- **Breath of the Almighty** - Job 33:4 “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”
- **Helper** - John 14:16 “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever”
- **Spirit of Counsel & Might** - Isaiah 11:2 “And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him ... the Spirit of counsel and might”
- **Spirit of Adoption** - Romans 8:15 - “For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”
- **Spirit of Judgment & Burning** - Isaiah 4:4 “when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning.”
- **Spirit of Christ** - 1 Peter 1:10–11 “Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.”
- Romans 8:9 “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.”
- **Spirit of Glory** - 1 Peter 4:14 “If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”
- **Spirit of God** - Genesis 1:2 “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”
- **Spirit of Grace** - Zechariah 12:10 “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.”
- **Spirit of Knowledge & the Fear of the Lord** - Isaiah 11:2 “And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him ... the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.”
- **Spirit of Truth** - John 14:17 “the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”
- **Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding** - Isaiah 11:2 “And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him ... the Spirit of wisdom and understanding”

- **Spirit of Life** - Romans 8:2 “the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.”
- **Spirit of the Living God** - 2 Corinthians 3:3 “you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.”
- **Spirit of Prophecy** - Revelation 19:10 “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”
- **Spirit of Revelation** - Ephesians 1:17 “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him”
- **Spirit of the Father** - Matthew 10:20 “For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”
- **Spirit of Son** - Galatians 4:6 “And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”

Helpful resources for studying the names of God:

- *God Is* by Ken Hemphill
- **GotQuestions.org**
 What are the names of God and what do they mean? www.gotquestions.org/names-of-God.html
 What are the names of Jesus? www.gotquestions.org/names-Jesus-Christ.html
 What are the names of the Holy Spirit? www.gotquestions.org/names-Holy-Spirit.html
 What does the Bible teach about the Trinity? www.gotquestions.org/Trinity-Bible.html
- **“Names of God” by Adrian Rogers** (www.lwf.org/names-of-god)
- **Rose Publishing** - www.hendricksonrose.com
 Attributes of God, I Am, Names of God, Names of Jesus, Names of Holy Spirit

What Does the Bible Say About the Miracles of God?

THE MOST IMPORTANT MIRACLES IN THE BIBLE

What does the Bible say about the wonderful works of God?
Psalm 9:1 “I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart;
I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.” (ESV)

1. Creation of the Universe from Nothing - Day and Night - Sky - Sea, Land, Plants, and Trees - Sun, Moon, and Stars - Birds and Fish - Animals and Humans (Genesis 1-2)
2. Enoch Taken Up to God without Dying (Genesis 5:24, Hebrews 11:5)
3. The Global Flood and Noah’s Salvation (Genesis 7-8)
4. Creation of Languages at Babel (Gen 11:1-9)
5. Abraham’s Covenant Sacrifice Passed through by a Smoking Fire Pot and a Flaming Torch (Genesis 15:17)
6. God Appears (theophany) or Sends Angels
 - (Genesis 16:7–14 to Hagar, Genesis 22:11–15 to Abraham, Genesis 31:11 to Jacob, Exodus 3:2–4, Exodus 19-34 to Moses, Exodus 23:20–21, 33:2, Numbers 20:16 an Angel before the Israelites, Numbers 22:22–38 to Balaam, Judges 2:1–3 to all the people of Israel, Judges 6:11–23 to Gideon, Judges 13:3–22 to Manoah and his wife, 1 Chronicles 21:15 to destroy Jerusalem, 1 Samuel 3 to Samuel, 2 Samuel 24:16-17 to David, 1 Kings 19, 2 Kings 1 to Elijah, Zechariah 1-6 angelic visions to Zechariah, Zechariah 3:4 The angel of the Lord takes away the sin of the high priest Joshua, Luke 1:11-20)
7. Destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah with Fire and Stone (Genesis 19:4)
8. Lot’s Wife Turned into a Pillar of Salt (Genesis 19:26)
9. Birth of Isaac to Sarah (90 years old) and Abraham (100 years old) (Genesis 21:1)
10. Burning Bush Unconsumed (Exodus 3:3)
11. Aaron’s Staff Turns into a Serpent (Exodus 7:10-12)
12. Plagues of Egypt (Water to blood, frogs, gnats, flies, livestock plague, boils, thunder & hail, locusts, darkness, & death of the first-born) (Exodus 7:20-12:3)
13. The Lord & the Angel of God Lead Israel by Pillar of Cloud and Fire (Ex13:21-22, 14:19-20)
14. God’s Presence on Mt. Sinai (Genesis 19:16-20, 20:18, 24:9-11)
15. Moses Face Shining (Exodus 34:29-35)
16. God’s Presence in the Tabernacle Seen by Cloud and Fire (Exodus 33:9-10; 40:34-38)
17. Parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21)
18. Waters of Marah Cleansed (Exodus 15:23-25)
19. Bread and Quail from Heaven (Exodus 16:14-35)
20. Water from Rock (Exodus 17:5)

21. 40 Years in the Desert - No Worn-Out Clothes, No Swollen Feet (Deuteronomy 8:4)
22. Fire Consumes Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2)
23. Fire Sent Against Complaining (Numbers 11:1-3)
24. Earth Opens Up Beneath the people of Korah (Numbers 16:32)
25. Fire Consumes 250 (Numbers 16:35-45)
26. Plague Kills 14,700 Complainers Against Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16:46-50)
27. Aaron's Rod Buds with Almonds (Numbers 17:8)
28. Water from Rock (Numbers 20:7-11)
29. Impatience and Complaining Against God Is Punished by Serpents, Healed Found by Looking at a Bronze Serpent Raised on a Pole (Numbers 21:4-9, 2 Kings 18:4, John 3:14-15)
30. Balaam's Donkey Speaks (Numbers 22:21-35)
31. Parting of the Jordan River (Joshua 3:14)
32. Jericho's Walls Fall Down (Joshua 6:6-20)
33. The Lord Kills by Hailstones (Joshua 10:11)
34. The Earth's Rotation Stops - Sun and Moon Stand Still (Joshua 10:12-14)
35. Gideon's Fleece Wet and Dry (Judges 6:37-40)
36. Samson's Supernatural Strength (Judges 14-16)
37. Water Emerges from the Ground for Samson (Judges 15:19)
38. Dagon Idol Falls & Breaks Before the Ark of the Covenant (1 Samuel 5:1-5)
39. Tumors Come Upon the Philistines (1 Samuel 5:6-12)
40. 70 Killed for Looking at the Ark (1 Samuel 6:19)
41. Thunder Sent to Destroy the Philistines in Battle (1 Samuel 7:10)
42. Lord Sends Thunder and Rain at Samuel's Request (1 Samuel 12:18)
43. David Defeats Goliath (1 Samuel 17)
44. Lord Sends Sound to Show David His Victory (2 Samuel 5:23-25)
45. Uzzah Killed for Touching the Ark (2 Samuel 6:6-7)
46. King Jeroboam's Hand Is Withered and Healed (1 Kings 13:4-6)
47. Ravens Feed Elijah (1 Kings 17:1-7)
48. Widow's Flour and Oil Multiplies with Elijah (1 Kings 17:14-16)
49. Elijah Raises the Widow's Son from the Dead (1 Kings 17:17-24)
50. Elijah's Words Brings Drought and then Rain (1 Kings 17-18)
51. Fire on Mt. Carmel, Prophets of Ba'al Defeated (1 Kings 18:20-40)
52. Elijah's Running Faster than King Ahab's Chariot (1 King 18:46)
53. Elijah Given a Hot Meal and Water from an Angel (1 Kings 19:6)
54. Fire Consumes 102 Soldiers at Elijah's Command (2 Kings 1:10-16)
55. Elijah and Elisha Part the Jordan River with a Cloak (2 Kings 2:7-8, 14)
56. Elijah Carried to Heaven (2 Kings 2:11)
57. Elisha Purifies Jericho's Water Supply (2 Kings 2:21-22)
58. Elisha Curses 42 Young Men for Mocking Elisha as a Prophet of God, they are Mauled by Bears (2 Kings 2:24)
59. Elisha Prophecies the Provision of Water for the Israelite Army in the Desert (2 Kings 3:16-22)
60. Elisha Provides Multiplication of Oil for a Widow's Debt (2 Kings 4:1-7)

61. Elisha Prophecies for a Birth, Raises Shunammite's Son from the Dead (2 Kings 4:14-37)
62. Elisha Heals a Deadly Pot of Stew (2 Kings 4:38-41)
63. Elisha Multiplies 20 Loaves to Feed 100, with Leftovers (2 Kings 4:42-44)
64. Elisha Heals Naaman of Leprosy in the Jordan River, Gehazi's Greed is Punished with Leprosy (2 Kings 5)
65. Elisha Makes an Ax-head Float (2 Kings 6:5-7)
66. Elisha Knows the King Syria's Plans (2 Kings 6:12)
67. Elisha Asks for His Servant to See the Lord's Army of Horses and Chariots (2 Kings 6:17)
68. Elisha Prays for the Syrian Army to Be Blinded and then have their Sight Restored (2 Kings 6:18-20)
69. Elisha's Bones Resurrect a Dead Man (2 Kings 13:21)
70. Lions Sent by the Lord to Kill the Assyrians (2 Kings 17:25)
71. God Destroys 185,000 Assyrians (2 Chronicles 32:21, 2 Kings 19:35)
72. Isaiah and Hezekiah Ask God to Move the Sun Dial Shadow Backwards 10 Degrees (2 Kings 20:9-11)
73. King Uzziah Pridefully Enters the Temple and becomes a Leper (2 Chronicles 26:16-21)
74. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego Given Supernatural Health & Wisdom for Faithful Fasting (Daniel 1:8-21)
75. Delivers Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego in the Fiery Furnace (Daniel 3:16-30)
76. King Nebuchadnezzar Loses Mind from Pride and Regains Mind when Humbled (Daniel 4:28-37)
77. Handwriting on the Wall in front of King Belshazzar of Babylon (Daniel 5:5)
78. Delivers Daniel in the Lion's Den (Daniel 6:22)
79. Jonah in the Belly of a Whale (Jonah 2:1-10)
80. Gabriel and other Angels Appear to Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, and the Shepherds (Luke 1:11-20, Luke 1:26-38, Luke 2:8-15, Matthew 1:20-25, Matthew 2:19)
81. Virgin Birth of Jesus (Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-38)
82. Star of Bethlehem Leads Wise Men to Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12)
83. 300+ Prophecies Fulfilled about Jesus - www.trustworthyword.com/evidence-for-jesus
84. Angels Minister to Jesus After Satan's Temptations (Matthew 4:11)
85. God the Father's Voice Heard and God the Spirit's Presence Seen at Jesus' Baptism (Matthew 3:13-17)
86. Jesus Turns Water into Wine (John 2:1-11)
87. Jesus Heals an Official's Son (John 4:43-54)
88. Jesus Escapes from a Murderous Mob in His Hometown of Nazareth (Luke 4:30)
89. Jesus Casts Out a Demon at Capernaum (Mark 1:21-27, Luke 4:31-36)
90. Jesus Heals Peter's Sick Mother-In-Law (Matthew 8:14-15, Mark 1:29-31, Luke 4:38-39)
91. Jesus Heals Many who are Sick and Demonically Oppressed (Matthew 8:16-17, Mark 1:32-34, Luke 4:40-41)
92. Jesus Gives Peter, James, and John a Miraculous Catch of Fish (Luke 5:1-11)
93. Jesus Cleanses a Man with Leprosy (Matthew 8:1-4, Mark 1:40-45, Luke 5:12-14)

94. Jesus Heals a Centurion's Paralyzed Servant (Matthew 8:5-13, Luke 7:1-10)
95. Jesus Heals a Paralytic Let Down from the Roof by Friends (Matthew 9:1-8, Mark 2:1-12, Luke 5:17-26)
96. Jesus Heals a Man's Withered Hand on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:9-14, Mark 3:1-6, Luke 6:6-11)
97. Jesus Raises a Widow's Son from the Dead (Luke 7:11-17)
98. Jesus Calms a Storm on the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25)
99. Jesus Casts Out Demons out of a Man and into a Herd of Pigs (Matthew 8:28-33, Mark 5:1-20, Luke 8:26-39)
100. Jesus Heals a Woman with an Issue of Blood (Matthew 9:20-22, Mark 5:25-34, Luke 8:42-48)
101. Jesus Raises Jarius' Daughter Back to Life (Matthew 9:18, 23-26, Mark 5:21-24, 35-43, Luke 8:40-42, 49-56)
102. Jesus Heals Two Blind Men (Matthew 9:27-31)
103. Jesus Heals a Mute Man (Matthew 9:32-34)
104. Jesus Heals a Man Unable to Walk (John 5:1-15)
105. Jesus Feeds 5,000 Men Plus Many Women and Children (Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:1-15)
106. Jesus Walks on Water (Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52, John 6:16-21)
107. Jesus Heals Everyone Who Touches His Clothing (Matthew 15:21-28, Mark 7:24-30)
108. Jesus Casts a Demon from a Foreign Woman's Daughter (Matthew 15:21-28, Mark 7:24-40)
109. Jesus Heals a Deaf Man with a Speech Impediment (Mark 7:31-37)
110. Jesus Feeds 4,000 Plus Women and Children (Matthew 15:32-39, Mark 8:1-13)
111. Jesus Heals a Blind Man with Spit at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26)
112. Jesus Heals a Blind Man with Mud and Washing at Siloam (John 9:1-12)
113. God the Father's Voice Heard at Jesus' Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36)
114. Jesus Casts a Demon Out of a Mute Boy Suffering from Harmful Seizures (Matthew 17:14-20, Mark 9:14-29, Luke 9:37-43)
115. 72 Disciples Empowered Over the Demonic (Luke 10:17-20)
116. Jesus Pulls the Temple Tax (a Coin Shekel) from a Fish's Mouth (Matthew 17:24-27)
117. Jesus Casts a Demon Out of a Blind and Mute Man (Matthew 12:22-23, Luke 11:14-23)
118. Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman (Luke 13:10-17)
119. Jesus Heals a Man with Excessive Swelling (Dropsy/Edema) (Luke 14:1-6)
120. Jesus Heals Ten People with Leprosy (Luke 17:11-19)
121. Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead (John 11:1-45)
122. God the Father's Voice Speaks Over His Son (John 12:28)
123. Jesus Heals a Blind Beggar (Bartimaeus) (Matthew 20:29-34, Luke 10:46-52, Luke 18:35-43)
124. Jesus Curses & Withers an Unproductive Fig Tree (Matthew 21:18-22, Mark 11:12-14)

125. Angels Strengthen Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43)
126. Jesus Heals a Servant's (Malchus') Severed Ear in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:50-51)
127. Supernatural Darkness Covers the Land for the Three Hours Immediately Prior to Jesus' Death (Matthew 27:45)
128. The Curtain of the Temple Tears in Two at the Moment of Jesus' Death (Matthew 27:51)
129. An Earthquake Occurs at the Moment of Jesus' Death (Matthew 27:51)
130. Many Dead Believers Are Resurrected at the Moment of Jesus' Death (Matthew 27:52-53)
131. An Earthquake Occurs at the Moment of Jesus' Resurrection (Matthew 28:2)
132. Jesus Is Resurrected (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20, 1 Corinthians 15)
133. Angels Appear at Jesus' Tomb Upon His Resurrection (Matthew 28:2-7, John 20:12-13)
134. Jesus Enters a Locked Room in Jerusalem (John 20:19)
135. Jesus Breathes Out the Holy Spirit Upon His Disciples (John 20:22)
136. Jesus Vanishes from the Presence of Two Disciples (Luke 24:31)
137. Jesus Gives Peter and the Disciples a Second Miraculous Catch of Fish (John 21:4-11)
138. Jesus Ascends Into Heaven (Acts 1:9-11)
139. Angels at Jesus' Ascension (Acts 1:10-11)
140. Sound of Rushing Wind, Tongues of Fire (Acts 2:1-2)
141. Ability to Speak and Be Understood by Many Languages (Tongues) (Acts 2:4-13)
142. Peter Heals a Man Unable to Walk (Acts 3:1-10)
143. Peter and John Speak with Boldness and the Place was Shaken (Acts 4:28-31)
144. Ananias and Sapphira Die for Lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11)
145. Peter Heals Many of Diseases and Demons, Even through His Shadow (Acts 5:12-16)
146. Angelic Opening of the Prison Doors to Free Apostles (Acts 5:19) opening the prison doors to free the Apostles,
147. Stephen's Wonders and Signs (Acts 6:8)
148. Stephen Sees the Glory of God and Jesus Standing by His Father (Acts 7:55-56)
149. Philip Casts Out Demons and Heals the Paralyzed and Lame (Acts 8:6-7)
150. Angel Tells Philip to Go South (Acts 8:26)
151. Spirit Tells Philip to Go to the Ethiopian Eunuch's Chariot (Acts 8:29)
152. Spirit Transports Philip from the Desert to Azotus (Acts 8:39)
153. God Appears to Paul and Ananias (Acts 9:1-19)
154. Paralytic (Aeneas) Healed by Peter (Acts 9:32-35)
155. Tabitha (Dorcas) Raised from the Dead (Acts 9:36-43)
156. Angel of God Appears to Centurion Cornelius and the Lord Speaks to Peter (Acts 10:1-16)
157. Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit and Speak in Languages (Acts 10:44-48)
158. Agabus Prophecies about a Future Famine & Paul's Imprisonment (Acts 11:28, Acts 21:10-12)
159. An Angel of the Lord delivers Peter from prison (Acts 12:7-10)

160. An Angel of the Lord Strikes Down & Kills King Herod for Not Glorifying God (Acts 12:22-23)
161. Elymas the Magician is Blinded (Acts 13:8-12)
162. Paul Heals a Lame Man (Acts 14:8-10)
163. Paul's Vision to Go to Macedonia (Acts 16:9)
164. Paul Casts Out a Demon from a Fortune-Telling Slave Girl (Acts 16:16-18)
165. Paul and Silas Prison Doors and Shackles Opened by an Earthquake (Acts 16:25-34)
166. The Holy Spirit Falls on New Believers in Ephesus, Evidenced by Languages (tongues) and Prophecy (Acts 19:5-6)
167. Paul Heals and Casts Out Demons, even through handkerchiefs (Acts 19:11-12)
168. Eutychus Raised to Life (Acts 20:7-12)
169. Angel Speaks to Paul with Warning Prior to a Shipwreck (Acts 27:23-24)
170. Paul Bitten by a Viper but Unharmed (Acts 28:1-6)
171. Paul Heals Many on Malta (Acts 28:7-10)
172. Continuation of Spiritual Gifts in the Church - Spirit of Utterance of Wisdom and Knowledge, Faith, Gifts of Healing, Working of Miracles, Prophecy, Ability to Distinguish Spirits, Ability to Speak and Interpret Language (1 Corinthians 12:1-11)
173. The Power of Signs, Wonders, Mighty Works, Miracles, and Gifts Referenced (Romans 12:6-8, Romans 15:17-19, 2 Corinthians 12:1-29, Hebrews 2:4, Galatians 3:5, 1 Corinthians 14)
174. John's Vision on Patmos (the book of Revelation)
175. Many More Miracles of Jesus Not Recorded (John 20:30, Acts 10:38-39)
176. Many More Miracles Yet to Come (Matthew 13:29-49, Matthew 16:27, 24:31, 25:31, Revelation)

What Does the Bible Say About the Character of God?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY GOD IS LIKE?

The Character & Attributes of God

Romans 1:20 “For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.” (ESV)

1. **A Unity** - “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. (Deut 6:4)
2. **Beautiful** - “to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord” (Psalm 27:4)
3. **Blessed** – “God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.” (Genesis 1:31)
4. **Creator, Source of Life** - “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” (Gen 1:1); “All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” (John 1:3)
5. **Divine** - “But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation.” (Jeremiah 10:10)
6. **Eternal, Preexistent** – “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.” (Psalm 90:2)
7. **Faithful** - “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)
8. **Freedom** – “Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.” (Psalm 115:3)
9. **Good** – “No one is good except God alone” (Luke 18:19)
10. **Gracious and Merciful** - “Nevertheless, in your great mercies you did not make an end of them or forsake them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.” (Nehemiah 9:31)
11. **Holy** – “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts.” (Isaiah 6:3)
12. **Independent** - “The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.” (Acts 17:24-25)
13. **Innocent** - “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.” (James 1:13-14); “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” [22] In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.” (Job 1:21-22)
14. **Invisible** – “No one has ever [fully] seen God” (John 1:18)
15. **Jealous** – “I the Lord your God am a jealous God” (Exodus 20:5)

16. **Just Judge** - "And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)
17. **Knowable** - "but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me" (Jeremiah 9:24)
18. **Love** - "God is love" (1 John 4:8)
19. **Omnipotent** - "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26)
20. **Omnipresent** - "Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?" (Psalm 139:7)
21. **Omniscient** - "He knows everything" (1 John 3:20)
22. **Perfect** - "your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)
23. **Righteous and Just** - "All his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he." (Deuteronomy 32:4)
24. **Sovereign** - "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! [34] 'For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?' [35] 'Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?' [36] For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen." (Romans 11:33-36)
25. **Spirit** - "God is spirit" (John 4:24)
26. **Strength** - "that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being" (Ephesians 3:16)
27. **Truthful** - "The Lord is the true God" (Jeremiah 10:10)
28. **Unchangeable** - "For I the Lord do not change" (Malachi 3:6)
29. **Wills** - "if the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." (James 4:15); "according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will" (Ephesians 1:11)
30. **Wise** - "the only wise God" (Romans 16:27)
31. **Worthy** - "And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, [10] and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.'" (Revelation 5:9-10)
32. **Wrathful Towards Sin** - "Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." (John 3:36)

Helpful resources:

- "What is the character of God" - www.gotquestions.org/character-of-God.html
- Wayne Grudem's *Christian Beliefs*

The Greatest Modern-Day Identity Theft

10 Misrepresentations of the Character of God for One's Own Purposes By Creating "god" Into Our Own "Acceptable" Image - Ongoing Idolatry

1 Corinthians 10:14 "Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry"

2 Peter 2:1-3 "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master"

1. Personal Motivator - Silence on Sin, Positive Thinking, Unity Over Holiness, Intolerant Tolerance, Evolving Morality (Not “Woe to you”, Matthew 23)
2. Smooth-Talking, Attractional, Popular, & Loved Jesus (No Offense, Absolute Truth Statements - John 6:66; Not Despised & Rejected, Isaiah 55:3)
3. Good Teacher, Wise Man - Doubting or Ignoring Jesus’ Divinity (Not, “I and the Father are one” John 10:30)
4. Physical Healer - Wanting Miracles More than God Himself (Not spiritual “good news”, “sight”, and “liberty” Luke 4:20-30)
5. Giver of Abundant Life - Earthly Focused, Treasures of Earth (Not “Set your mind on things above” - Colossians 3:2)
6. Universal Salvation - All Go to Heaven, No Hell (Not “eternal punishment” and “eternal fire” Matthew 25:41, 46)
7. Self-Improvement - Change Oneself (Not Holy Spirit’s Repentance and Sanctification, Galatians 3:3)
8. Self-Love and Satisfaction (Not, “Let him deny himself” Matthew 16:24)
9. Self-Rule - Obey Experiences, Emotions, and Opinions (Not “Obey God rather than men”, Acts 5:29)
10. Servant of Mankind’s Will, Genie-Like (Not God’s “Will Be Done”, Matthew 6:10, 26:42)

What Does the Bible Say About the Names of Satan?

The Names of The Evil One - Who Is He?

The Accuser. Your Adversary. Angel of the Abyss/Pit (Abaddon, Apollyon). The Antichrist. Beelzebul (The Prince/Ruler of Demons, Lord of Flies, Lord of Dung). Belial. Day Star (In Latin, Lucifer, son of Dawn). The Deceiver. The Devil. The Dragon. The Enemy. The Evil One. The Father of Lies. King of Tyre (Anointed Guardian Cherub). A Murderer from the Beginning. Prince of Power of the Air. A Roaring Lion. The Ruler/god of this World/Age. Satan. The Serpent. Slanderer. The Tempter. The Thief. The Wolf.

The Antichrist

- 2 John 7 “For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.”
- 1 John 2:18 “Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.”
- 1 John 2:22 “Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.”

Devil, The Accuser, Slanderer

- Matthew 4:1 “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”
- Matthew 25:41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”
- Revelation 12:10 “And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, ‘Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.’”

The Dragon

- Revelation 12:3 “And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.”
- Revelation 20:2–3 “And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.”

The Enemy, Your Adversary, A Roaring Lion

- Matthew 13:39 “and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age”

- 1 Peter 5:8 “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

The Evil One

- John 17:15 “I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.”
- Matthew 13:19 “When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.”

The Father of Lies, Liar, The Deceiver

- John 8:44 “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”
- 2 John 7 “For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.”
- Revelation 12:9 “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

Murderer

- John 8:44 “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”
- 1 John 3:15 “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.”

The Prince/Ruler of Demons, Beelzebul, Lord of Flies, Lord of Dung

- Matthew 9:34 “But the Pharisees said, ‘He casts out demons by the prince of demons.’”
- Matthew 10:25 “It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.”
- Matthew 12:24 “But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, ‘It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.’”

Prince of Power of the Air

- Ephesians 2:1–3 “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”

The Ruler/god of this World/Age

- John 14:30 “I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me”
- John 12:31 “Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.”
- John 16:11 “concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”
- 2 Corinthians 4:4 “In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”
- 1 John 5:19 “We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”

Satan, The Accuser, The Adversary

- 1 Chronicles 21:1 “Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.”
- Job 1:7 “The LORD said to Satan, ‘From where have you come?’ Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.’”
- Luke 10:18 “And he said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.’”

The Serpent, The Great Dragon

- Genesis 3:1,4 “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say ...’”
- 2 Corinthians 11:3 “But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”
- Revelation 12:9 “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”
- Revelation 20:2–3 “And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. (ESV)

The Tempter

- Matthew 4:3 “And the tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.’”
- 1 Thessalonians 3:5 “For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.”

The Thief

- John 10:10 “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

The Wolf

- John 10:12 “He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.”

Less Common (and Sometimes Debated) Names of Satan

Angel of the Abyss/Pit, Abaddon, Apollyon

- Revelation 9:11 “They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.”

Belial

- 2 Corinthians 6:15 “What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?”

Day Star (In Latin, Lucifer), son of Dawn

- Isaiah 14:12 “How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!”
- Revelation 12:4 “His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.”
- 2 Peter 2:4 “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment”
- Jude 6 “And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day”

King of Tyre, Anointed Guardian Cherub

- Ezekiel 28:12–13 “Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord GOD: “You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared.”
- Ezekiel 28:14–15 “You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you.”

What Does the Bible Say About the Works of Satan?

Satan's Works - What Does He Do? *The Devil's Tactics & Schemes*

2 Corinthians 2:11 “so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.” (ESV)

Arrogantly Resists God and Vainly Relies on Self

Ezekiel 28:17 “Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you.”

- Isaiah 14:13 You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north’

Appeals to Fleshly Desires, Ambition, Covetousness, and Pride

Genesis 3 & 1 John 2:16–17 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

Incites Pride in Numbers

1 Chronicles 21:1 “Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.”

Travels Continuously Across the Earth

Job 1:7 “The LORD said to Satan, ‘From where have you come?’ Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.’”

Steals Away Earthly Possessions, Positions, and People

Job 1:10–11 “Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.”

Attacks Physical, Emotional, and Mental Health

Job 2:4–5 “Then Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face.’”

Enters God's Presence to Attack Godly Followers

Zechariah 3:1 "Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him."

Actively Tempts Us Away from Following God

Matthew 4:1-11 - Satan's Temptation of Jesus

- 2 Corinthians 2:11 "so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs"

Places False Believers Among True Believers

Matthew 13:24-30,36-43 "the enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat...the weeds are the sons of the evil one and the enemy who sowed them is the devil"

Distracts Believers' Minds Towards Earthly Things

Matthew 16:22-23 "And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.'"

Persistently Tempts by Twisting Scripture

Mark 1:13 "And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him."

Prevents the Gospel from Being Understood and Believed

Mark 4:14-15 "The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them."

Offers Shortcuts Away from God's Provision

Luke 4:3 "The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.'"

Baits You Towards Seeking Possessions, Power, and Prestige

Luke 4:6-7 "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."

Tries to Get You to Manipulate God

Luke 4:9-10 "And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,'"

Patiently Looks for Future Temptation Opportunities

Luke 4:13 “And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.”

Prevents the Bible from Being Heard, Understood, Loved, and Believed.

Luke 8:12 “The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.”

Enters Into (Possesses) Humans for His Purposes

Luke 22:3–6 “Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.”

Spreads Hatred and Lies

John 8:44 “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Kills and Destroys

John 10:10 “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

1. Revelation 12:12 “Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

Provokes Betrayal Against God

John 13:2 “During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him”

Dangerously Attacks the Followers of Jesus

John 17:15 “I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.”

Provides Pathways for Greed

Acts 5:3–4 “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.’”

Oppresses the Lost

Acts 10:38 “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.”

Works Against God’s Work

Acts 13:10 “You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?”

Spiritually Blinds Unbelievers

Acts 26:18 “ to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

- 2 Corinthians 4:4 “In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

Brings Physical Suffering to those Outside of Church

1 Corinthians 5:5 “you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”

Entraps in Lust & Sexual Sin

1 Corinthians 7:5 “Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

Enslaves with Bitterness and Unforgiveness

2 Corinthians 2:10–11 “Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.”

Leads People to an Insincere & Impure Faith

2 Corinthians 11:3 “But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

Attracts Us to His False Appearance

2 Corinthians 11:14 “And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.”

Tricks People to Believing He is All-Powerful, All-Knowing, and Good

2 Corinthians 11:13–15 “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.”

Harasses Believers

2 Corinthians 12:7 “So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.”

Encourages Anger, Laziness and Stinginess

Ephesians 4:26–28 “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.”

Intentionally Plans for His Next Attack

Ephesians 6:11 “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”

Wrestles Against Believers Indirectly through Others

Ephesians 6:12 “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

Leads People Into Gluttony, Worldliness, & Shamefulness

Philippians 3:18–19 “For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.”

Stops Mission Work

1 Thessalonians 2:17–18 “But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us.”

Empowers False Miracles

2 Thessalonians 2:9–10 “The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.”

Condemns through Pride and Arrogance

1 Timothy 3:6 “He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.”

Seeks to Dishonor the Name and Reputation of Believers

1 Timothy 3:7 “Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.”

Encourages Laziness, Gossip, and Nosiness

1 Timothy 5:13–15 “Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. For some have already strayed after Satan.”

Manipulates and Controls Unbelievers for His Purpose

2 Timothy 2:26 “and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”

Enslaves Humanity Under a Fear of Death

Hebrews 2:14–15 “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”

Flees from Faithful Resistance

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

Brings Suffering Against Saints

1 Peter 5:8–9 “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.”

Appeals to Our Eyes, Flesh, and Pride

1 John 2:16 “For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.”

Desires Us to Sin By Acting (Commission or Omission) On the Temptation

1 John 3:8 “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.”

Wants His Followers to Imitate His Example of Disobedience

1 John 3:10 “By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.”

Imprisons and Kills Faithful Saints

Revelation 2:10 “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

Births, Grows, and Encourages All False Religions & Cults

Revelation 2:12–13 “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword. ‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.’”

- 1 Corinthians 10:20 “No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons.”

Deceives the Whole World

Revelation 12:9 “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

Suffers Forever

Revelation 20:10 “and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

What Does the Bible Say About the Character of Satan?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY SATAN IS LIKE?

The Character & Attributes of Satan

2 Corinthians 11:14 “even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.” (ESV)

Why does Satan do what he does?

What are Satan’s abilities?

What are Satan’s motives?

What are Satan’s goals?

Satan desires to elevate his image above God’s image, by blinding and blurring our view of the image of God. The Evil One opposes your enjoyment, worship, and growth into God’s image. The Devil’s goal is to blend your image into his image, deceiving you into imitating his character rather than God’s character.

1. **Singular Being (vs. God’s Trinitarian Unity)**
2. **Limited Beauty (vs. God’s Absolute Beauty)**
3. **Cursed (vs. God as Blessed)**
4. **Created (vs. God as Creator & Preexistent)**
5. **Source of Death (vs. God as Source of Life)**
6. **Fallen (vs. God’s Divinity)**
7. **Everlasting Destruction (vs. God from Everlasting)**
8. **Faithless (vs. God as Faithful)**
9. **Enslaving (vs. God’s Freedom)**
10. **Evil (vs. God’s Goodness)**
11. **Condemning (vs. God as Gracious & Merciful)**
12. **Unholy (vs. God’s Holiness)**
13. **Dependent (vs. God’s Independence)**
14. **Guilty (vs. God’s Innocence)**
15. **Competitive (vs. God’s Right Jealousy)**
16. **Judged (vs. God’s as Judge)**
17. **Hidden (vs. God as Knowable)**
18. **Hate (vs. God is Love)**
19. **Limited Power (vs. God’s Omnipotence)**
20. **Limited Presence (vs. God’s Omnipresence)**
21. **Limited Knowledge (vs. God’s Omniscience)**
22. **Sinful (vs. God is Perfect)**
23. **Wicked (vs. God is Righteous)**
24. **Rebellious (vs. God is Sovereign)**

- 25. Weak (vs. God's Strength)**
- 26. Deceitful (vs. God as Truthful)**
- 27. Manipulative (vs. God is Unchangeable)**
- 28. Foolish (vs. God is Wise)**
- 29. Worthless (vs. God is Worthy)**
- 30. Under Wrath (vs. God's Wrath Upon Sin)**

Angels & Demons

What Does the Bible Say About the Names of Angels?

Faithful Angels' Names - Who Are They?

“Angels are created, spiritual beings with moral judgment and high intelligence, but without physical bodies” Wayne Grudem

Angel

- Luke 2:13–14 “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, [14] ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!’” (ESV)
- Revelation 22:6 “And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.” (ESV)
- Hebrews 2:16 “For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.” (ESV)

Cherubim

- Genesis 3:24 “He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.” (ESV)
- *Ark* - Exodus 25:18–22 “And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat. [19] Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end. Of one piece with the mercy seat shall you make the cherubim on its two ends. [20] The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. [21] And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. [22] There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.” (ESV)
- *Tabernacle Curtains & Veil* - Exodus 26 & 36
- *Temple Inner Sanctuary and Walls* - 1 Kings 6:23–29 In the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim of olivewood, each ten cubits high. [24] Five cubits was the length of one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the length of the other wing of the cherub; it was ten cubits from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other. [25] The other cherub also measured ten cubits; both cherubim had the same measure and the same form. [26] The height of one cherub was ten cubits, and so was that of the other cherub. [27] He put the cherubim in the innermost part of the house. And the wings of the cherubim were spread out so that a wing of one touched the one wall, and a wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; their other wings touched each other in the middle of the house. [28] And he overlaid the cherubim with gold. [29] Around all the

walls of the house he carved engraved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, in the inner and outer rooms. (ESV)

Host of Heaven

2. Nehemiah 9:6 “You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host . . . and the host of heaven worships you.”

Visible and Invisible - Thrones, Dominions, Rulers, Authorities

- Colossians 1:16 “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.”
- Colossians 2:15 “He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.” (ESV)
- Ephesians 6:12 “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (ESV)
- Ephesians 3:10 “so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.” (ESV)
- Romans 8:38–39 “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (ESV)

Holy Ones

- Deuteronomy 33:2–3 “He said, ‘The LORD came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us; he shone forth from Mount Paran; he came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand. [3] Yes, he loved his people, all his holy ones were in his hand; so they followed in your steps, receiving direction from you’” (ESV)
- Psalm 89:5 “Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!” (ESV)
- Psalm 89:7 “a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around him?” (ESV)
- Zechariah 14:5 “And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.” (ESV)
- Jude 14 “It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones’” (ESV)

Heavenly Beings

- Psalm 8:5 “Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.” (ESV)
- Psalm 29:1 “Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.” (ESV)
- Psalm 89:6 “For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD? Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD” (ESV)

Living Creatures

- Ezekiel 1:5–28 “And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had a human likeness, [6] but each had four faces, and each of them had four wings. [7] Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf’s foot. And they sparkled like burnished bronze. [8] Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. And the four had their faces and their wings thus: [9] their wings touched one another. Each one of them went straight forward, without turning as they went. [10] As for the likeness of their faces, each had a human face. The four had the face of a lion on the right side, the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four had the face of an eagle. [11] Such were their faces. And their wings were spread out above. Each creature had two wings, each of which touched the wing of another, while two covered their bodies. [12] And each went straight forward. Wherever the spirit would go, they went, without turning as they went. [13] As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving to and fro among the living creatures. And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. [14] And the living creatures darted to and fro, like the appearance of a flash of lightning. [15] Now as I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the earth beside the living creatures, one for each of the four of them. [16] As for the appearance of the wheels and their construction: their appearance was like the gleaming of beryl. And the four had the same likeness, their appearance and construction being as it were a wheel within a wheel. [17] When they went, they went in any of their four directions without turning as they went. [18] And their rims were tall and awesome, and the rims of all four were full of eyes all around. [19] And when the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures rose from the earth, the wheels rose. [20] Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, and the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. [21] When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those rose from the earth, the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. [22] Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse, shining like awe-inspiring crystal, spread out above their heads. [23] And under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward another. And each creature had two wings covering its body. [24] And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army. When they stood still, they let down their wings. [25] And there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads. When they stood still, they let down their wings. [26] And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. [27] And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. [28] Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around. Such was the appearance of the likeness

of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking.”(ESV)

- Revelation 4:6–9 “And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: [7] the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. [8] And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!’ [9] And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, (ESV)

Seraphim

- Isaiah 6:2–7 “Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. [3] And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!’ [4] And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. [5] And I said: ‘Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’ [6] Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. [7] And he touched my mouth and said: ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.’ (ESV)

Sons of God

- Job 1:6 “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.” (ESV)
- Job 2:1 “Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD.” (ESV)
- Job 38:7 “when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (ESV)

Sons of God / Nephilim

- Genesis 6:1–4 “When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, [2] the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. [3] Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.” [4] The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.” (ESV)

Spirits

- 1 John 4:1–3 “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. [2] By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, [3] and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God.

This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.” (ESV)

Elemental Spirits

- Colossians 2:8 “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.” (ESV)
- Colossians 2:20 “If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations” (ESV)

Ministering Spirits

- Hebrews 1:14 “Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?” (ESV)

Seven Spirits

- Revelation 1:4 “the seven spirits who are before his throne” (ESV)
- Revelation 3:1 “The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.”
- Revelation 4:5 “before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God”
- Revelation 5:6 “And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.” (ESV)

Those Who Are With Us

2 Kings 6:16–17 “He said, ‘Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’ [17] Then Elisha prayed and said, ‘O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see.’ So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.” (ESV)

Watchers

Daniel 4:17 “The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.” (ESV)

Two Named Angels

The Archangel Michael

- Jude 9–10 “But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.” [10] But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively.” (ESV)
- Revelation 12:7–8 “Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, [8] but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.” (ESV)
- Daniel 10:10–14 “And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. [11] And he said to me, ‘O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.’ And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. [12] Then he said to me, ‘Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. [13] The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, [14] and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.’” (ESV)
- Daniel 12:1 “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.” (ESV)

Gabriel - Daniel, Mary & Zechariah

- Daniel 8:15–17 “When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it. And behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. [16] And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, ‘Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.’ [17] So he came near where I stood. And when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face. But he said to me, ‘Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end.’ (ESV)
- Daniel 9:20–23 “While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the LORD my God for the holy hill of my God, [21] while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. [22] He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, “O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding. [23] At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision.” (ESV)
- Luke 1:19–20 “And the angel answered him, ‘I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. [20] And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.’” (ESV)

- Luke 1:26–27 “In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, [27] to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary.” (ESV)

3 CAUTIONS & WARNINGS ABOUT ANGELS:

#1 Know that Satan Disguises Himself and an Un-Fallen Angel to Deceive Humanity

2 Corinthians 11:14–15 “And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. [15] So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.” (ESV)

- *Mormonism* - Moroni to Joseph Smith
- *Jehovah’s Witnesses* - Archangel Michael is Pre-Incarnate Jesus
- *Islam* - Gabriel (Jibrael) to Mohammed, Michael (Mikael), Raphael (Israfil), and Azrael; belief in seven archangels
- *Catholicism* - Raphael/Azarias “one of the seven” (Book of Tobit, angelic command to burn fish guts to drive the demonic away, receives worship)

1 John 4:1–3 “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. [2] By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, [3] and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.” (ESV)

#2 Avoid False Teachings & Examples Towards the Worship of Angels

Colossians 2:18–19 “Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, [19] and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.” (ESV)

- “the Church...invokes their [the angels] assistance in the funeral...’May the angels lead you into Paradise...she celebrates the memory of certain angels more particularly ? (St. Michael, St. Gabriel, St. Raphael, and the guardian angels” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 335)
- “Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 336)
- “The Church venerates the angels who help her on her earthly pilgrimage and protect every human being.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 352)

Images, Icons, Amulets, Charms, Fetish - Exodus 20:4–5 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. [5] You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of

the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me" (ESV)

‘Following the divinely inspired teachings of our holy Fathers and the tradition of the Catholic Church (for we know that this tradition comes from the Holy Spirit who dwells in her)...holy images of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ, our inviolate Lady, the holy Mother of God, and the venerated angels, all the saints and the just, whether painted or made of mosaic or another suitable material, are to be exhibited in the holy churches of God, on sacred vessels and vestments, walls and panels, in houses and on streets” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1161)

#3 Examine Any Experiential Encounters Towards the Worship of Angels
Worshipful Awe of & Fascination Towards Angels - Revelation 22:8–9 “I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.” (ESV)

Idolatry via Worship of Angels - Romans 1:22–25 “Claiming to be wise, they became fools, [23] and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. [24] Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, [25] because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.” (ESV)

Communication (Prayers & Consultations - Necromancy, Mediums, Intercessions) to Angels (Faithful or Fallen) Instead of to God - Isaiah 8:19 "And when they say to you, ‘Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter,’ should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living?’” (ESV)

2 Corinthians 4:18 “as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” (ESV)

Colossians 3:1–2 “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. [2] Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” (ESV)

What Does the Bible Say About the Works of Angels?

ANGELS' WORKS - WHAT DO THEY DO?

Hebrews 1:14 “Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?” (ESV)

Faithless, Disobedient Angels = Fallen Angels = Demons

- Revelation 12:7–12 “the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”
- Ezekiel 28:15–17 “You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. ... and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. [17] Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground”
- Isaiah 14:12–15 “How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! ... You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God ... I will make myself like the Most High.’ But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.”

Faithful Angels = Perfectly Obedient Servants - Across the Whole Bible

Messengers of the Law - Acts 7:53 “the law as delivered by angels”

- Galatians 3:19 “the law?...it was put in place through angels by an intermediary.”
- Hebrews 2:2 “For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution”

Messengers of Revelation - Scripture

3. Revelation 19:9–10 “And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” [10] Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Messengers of Revelation - Instruction & Understanding

- Judges 13:3–22 the angel returns to Manoah and his wife again to teach them about the mission of their son

- Angels Appear at Jesus' Tomb Upon His Resurrection (Matthew 28:2-7, John 20:12-13)
- Angels at Jesus' Ascension (Acts 1:10-11)
- Angel of God Appears to Centurion Cornelius and the Lord Speaks to Peter (Acts 10:1-16)

Messengers of Revelation - Encouragement

- Genesis 16:7-14 to Hagar - direction, encouragement
- 2 Kings 1:15 "Then the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, 'Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.' So he arose and went down with him to the king"
- Angel Speaks to Paul with Warning Prior to a Shipwreck (Acts 27:23-24)

Messengers of Revelation - Announce Birth of a Child

- Judges 13:3-22 to Manoah and his wife, announces Samson's coming birth
- Gabriel and other Angels Appear to Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, and the Shepherds (Luke 1:11-20, Luke 1:26-38, Luke 2:8-15, Matthew 1:20-25, Matthew 2:19)

Messengers of Revelation - Call to Obey, Follow, & Lead

- Exodus 23:20-21 "Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. Pay careful attention to him and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression, for my name is in him."
- Judges 6:11-23 to Gideon, call to battle

Messengers of Revelation - Judgment

- Daniel 4:13-17 "I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. ... [17] The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men."
- Genesis 31:11 to Jacob in a Dream
- Prepared to destroy Jerusalem - 1 Chronicles 21:15-16 "And God sent the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but as he was about to destroy it, the LORD saw, and he relented from the calamity. And he said to the angel who was working destruction, 'It is enough; now stay your hand.' And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. [16] And David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces."; 2 Samuel 24:16-17 to David

Messengers of Revelation - Rebuke

- Judges 2:1-3 to all the people of Israel

Messengers of Revelation - Future Judgement, Deliverance, & Events

- Zechariah 1-6 angelic visions to Zechariah
- Revelation to John

God Sent an Angel in Response to Prayer

- Judges 13:3–22 Manoah asks the Lord to send the angel again to teach them about the mission of their son

Court of Witnesses

- Deuteronomy 33:2 “The LORD came from Sinai ... he came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand.”

Guard

- Genesis 3:24 “He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.”
- Elisha Asks for His Servant to See the Lord’s Army of Horses and Chariots (2 Kings 6:17)

Execute Judgement/Wrath - Gather, Destroy, Cast

- God Destroys 185,000 Assyrians (2 Chronicles 32:21, 2 Kings 19:35)
- Zechariah 1-6 angelic visions to Zechariah,
- An Angel of the Lord Strikes Down & Kills King Herod for Not Glorifying God (Acts 12:22-23)
- Revelation 14:19–20 “So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. [20] And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse’s bridle, for 1,600 stadia.”

Guide

- The Lord & the Angel of God Lead Israel by Pillar of Cloud and Fire (Ex13:21-22, 14:19-20)
- Numbers 20:16 “when we cried to the LORD, he heard our voice and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt”
- Exodus 23:20–21, 33:2, Numbers 20:16 an Angel before the Israelites
- Angel Tells Philip to Go South (Acts 8:26)
- Angel of God Appears to Centurion Cornelius and the Lord Speaks to Peter (Acts 10:1-16)
- An Angel of the Lord delivers Peter from prison (Acts 12:7-10)

Stop Disobedience

- Numbers 22:22–38 to Balaam, Balaam’s Donkey Speaks

Discipline

- Muteness for Zechariah's unbelief - Gabriel - Luke 1:11-20

Protect

- The Lord & the Angel of God Lead Israel by Pillar of Cloud and Fire (Ex13:21-22, 14:19-20)

Provide

- 1 Kings 19:5-8 - Food to Elijah when he was about to die
- And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, “Arise and eat.”

Bring Forgiveness from God

- Zechariah 3:4 The angel of the Lord takes away the sin of the high priest Joshua
- Isaiah 6:6-7 Seraphim to Isaiah

Deliver/Save

- Genesis 19:15 “As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city.”
- Angelic Opening of the Prison Doors to Free Apostles (Acts 5:19)
- An Angel of the Lord delivers Peter from prison (Acts 12:7-10)

Minister to the Needs of the Children of God

- Hebrews 1:14 “Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?”

Minister to Jesus their Creator

- Angels Minister to Jesus After Satan’s Temptations (Matthew 4:11)
- Angels Strengthen Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43)

Worship - Song & Praise

- Hebrews 1:6 “And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship him.’”
- Isaiah 6:3 “And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!’”
- Revelation 4:8 “And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!’”
- John’s Vision on Patmos (the book of Revelation)

4 Biblical Responses in Regard to Angels

1. See, Receive, & Follow Jesus’ Example of Servant Leadership - Mark 10:45
 “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

2. All Creation, both Great (Angels) and Small (Humanity), Is Designed to Serve God - Revelation 19:4–5 “And the twenty-four elders and the four living

creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!” [5] And from the throne came a voice saying, “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.”

3. Together We Worship God Alone - Revelation 19:10 “Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

- Revelation 22:8–9 “I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, [9] but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

4. Jesus Is Far Greater than All of the Angels - Hebrews 1:3–4 “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, [4] having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.”

What Does the Bible Say About the Character of Angels?

ANGELS - WHAT ARE THEY LIKE?

ANGELS APPEAR FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END OF TIME

Matthew 24:29–31 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (ESV)

THE ABILITIES & CHARACTERISTICS OF ANGELS

Created - Finite/Limited but Eternal

- Colossians 1:16 “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.”
- Psalm 148:2-6 - “For he commanded and they were created. And he established them forever and ever; he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away.”

Righteous - Perfectly Obedient

- Fallen/Faithless Angels (Revelation 12:7–12, Ezekiel 28:15–17, Isaiah 14:12–15)

Strong/Mighty/Powerful

4. God Destroys 185,000 Assyrians (2 Chronicles 32:21, 2 Kings 19:35)

Intimidating

- Genesis 3:24 “He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.”
- Prepared to destroy Jerusalem - 1 Chronicles 21:15–16 “And God sent the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but as he was about to destroy it, the LORD saw, and he relented from the calamity. And he said to the angel who was working destruction, “It is enough; now stay your hand.” And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. [16] And David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword

stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.” (ESV)

- Elisha Asks for His Servant to See the Lord’s Army of Horses and Chariots (2 Kings 6:17)

Awe Inspiring

- Revelation 19:10 “Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, ‘You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.’ For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”
- Revelation 22:8–9 “I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, [9] but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

Sometimes Seen & Sometimes Unseen

- Prepared to destroy Jerusalem - 1 Chronicles 21:15–16 “And God sent the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but as he was about to destroy it, the LORD saw, and he relented from the calamity. And he said to the angel who was working destruction, “It is enough; now stay your hand.” And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. [16] And David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.” (ESV)
- Elisha Asks for His Servant to See the Lord’s Army of Horses and Chariots (2 Kings 6:16-17)

Numerous

- Elisha Asks for His Servant to See the Lord’s Army of Horses and Chariots (2 Kings 6:17)
- Deuteronomy 33:2 “The LORD came from Sinai ... he came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand.”
- Matthew 26:53 “Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?”

Appear Physically as Humans

- Angels in Sodom & Gomorrah - Genesis 19:1 “The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth”
- Judges 13:3–22 Manoah and his wife believe the angel to be a “man of God”

Appear Supernaturally

- For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have. (Luke 24:39)
- Genesis 31:11 to Jacob in a Dream

- The Lord & the Angel of God Lead Israel by Pillar of Cloud and Fire (Ex13:21-22, 14:19-20)
- To Joseph in a dream to go & return from Egypt (Matthew 2:13, 19-20)
- Angels Appear at Jesus' Tomb Upon His Resurrection (Matthew 28:2-7, John 20:12-13)
- Angels at Jesus' Ascension (Acts 1:10-11)

Seen by Animals

- Numbers 22:22–38 to Balaam, Balaam's Donkey Speaks

Disappear Supernaturally

- Judges 6:21 to Gideon, vanished
- Judges 13:3–22 angel departs from Manoah in the flame of the fire from the altar that consumed a sacrifice for the Lord

Fly

- Isaiah 6:2 “Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.”
- Hebrews 1:7 “Of the angels he says, ‘He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.’”

Move - Supernaturally

- The Lord & the Angel of God Lead Israel by Pillar of Cloud and Fire (Ex13:21-22, 14:19-20)
- Living Creatures - Ezekiel 1, 3, 10, 11

Interact with People & Physical Objects with Touch

- Angels in Sodom & Gomorrah - Genesis 19:10 “But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door.”
- Genesis 19:16 “But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.”
- Isaiah 6:6–7 “Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. [7] And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” (ESV)
- 1 Kings 19:5-8 - Food to Elijah when he was about to die
- And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, “Arise and eat.” (ESV)
- An Angel of the Lord delivers Peter from prison (Acts 12:7-10)

Interact with Physical Objects without Touch

- Angelic Opening of the Prison Doors to Free Apostles (Acts 5:19)
- An Angel of the Lord delivers Peter from prison (Acts 12:7-10)

See - Watchers

- Daniel 4:13 “I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven.”

Hear

- Zechariah 1-6 angelic visions to Zechariah

Speak

- Genesis 16:7–14 to Hagar
- Genesis 22:11–18 to Abraham - Stop Sacrificing Isaac, Declares the Lord’s Promises
- Angel Speaks to Paul with Warning Prior to a Shipwreck (Acts 27:23-24)

Communicate - Directly & through Dreams/Visions

- Angel Tells Philip to Go South (Acts 8:26)
- Angel of God Appears to Centurion Cornelius and the Lord Speaks to Peter (Acts 10:1-16)
- John’s Vision on Patmos (the book of Revelation)

Think

- Zechariah 1-6 angelic visions to Zechariah

Feel Emotions - Joy, Praise

- Luke 2:13–14 (ESV) “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!’”

Refuse Worship & Redirect All Worship to God - As Fellow Servants

- Revelation 19:9–10 “Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”
- Revelation 22:8–9 “I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, [9] but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

Withholds their name when requested to “honor” the angel

- Judges 13:3–22 Manoah asks the angel his name, but the name is withheld as it is “wonderful”

Communicate their name

- Gabriel - Daniel 8 & 9

- Gabriel and other Angels Appear to Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, and the Shepherds (Luke 1:11-20, Luke 1:26-38, Luke 2:8-15, Matthew 1:20-25, Matthew 2:19)
- Michael - Daniel 10 & 12, Jude 9, Revelation 12

Provide - Supernaturally

- Genesis 22:11–15 to Abraham - Provide a Ram for Burnt Offering

Eat

- Angels in Sodom & Gomorrah - Genesis 19:3 “he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.”

Instead of Eating, Guides Sacrifice towards God in Worship

- Judges 13:3–22 angel departs from Manoah in the flame of the fire from the altar that consumed a sacrifice for the Lord

Consume Food with Spontaneous Fire

- Judges 6:21 to Gideon, consumed food with fire from rock

Cause Blindness

- Angels in Sodom & Gomorrah - Genesis 19:11 “And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.”

Cause Muteness

- Gabriel to Zechariah (Luke 1:11-20)

Kill - Supernaturally

- God Destroys 185,000 Assyrians (2 Chronicles 32:21, 2 Kings 19:35)
- 2 Samuel 24:16-17 to David
- An Angel of the Lord Strikes Down & Kills King Herod for Not Glorifying God (Acts 12:22-23)
- John’s Vision on Patmos (the book of Revelation)

Bring Forgiveness from God

- Zechariah 3:4 The angel of the Lord takes away the sin of the high priest Joshua
- Isaiah 6:6-7 Seraphim to Isaiah

Help & Minister

- Angels Minister to Jesus After Satan’s Temptations (Matthew 4:11)
- Angels Strengthen Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43)

OUR RESPONSE?

- 1. Receive Jesus as Your Lord & Savior** (don't procrastinate, every day is a gift, not a guarantee)
- 2. Gratitude to God** (don't misplace focus on angels)
- 3. Know the Truth** (resist the temptation of speculation)
- 4. Live in the Power of the Holy Spirit** (don't chase after or seek lesser spirits)

OUR SUPERPOWERS? YOUR SUPERPOWERS?

1 Corinthians 12:1–11 “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. ... [4] Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; [5] and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; [6] and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. [7] **To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.** [8] For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, [9] to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, [10] to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. [11] All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.” (ESV)

Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (ESV)

3 QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Are you indwelt by God the Holy Spirit?
2. How are you serving God with the gifting He has given?
3. How are you witnessing with the power you have received?

What Does the Bible Say About the Names of Demons?

Carved Images, Idols - although images and idols are essentially just material (wood, stone, metal), they are often connected directly to the participation in demonic worship

- Deuteronomy 7:25-26 “The carved images of their gods you shall burn with fire. You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. And you shall not bring an abominable thing into your house and become devoted to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest and abhor it, for it is devoted to destruction.”
- Psalm 106:36-38 “They served their idols, which became a snare to them. They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons; they poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood.”
- 1 Corinthians 10:19–20 “What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons.”
- Acts 7:41–42 “And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven”
- Revelation 9:20-21 “The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.”

Deceitful Spirits

- 1 Timothy 4:1-2 “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared.”

Demons

5. Mark 1:32-34 “That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.”

Elementary Principles

- Galatians 4:3 “In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.”

Evil spirits

- Judges 9:22–23 “Abimelech ruled over Israel three years. And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem, and the leaders of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech”
- Matthew 10:1 “He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.”

Goat Demons - Leviticus 17:7 “So they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices to goat demons, after whom they whore. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations.”

gods - although demons are not gods, since there is only one God, they are referenced and associated with the false worship of gods

- Deuteronomy 7:25-26 “The carved images of their gods you shall burn with fire. You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. And you shall not bring an abominable thing into your house and become devoted to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest and abhor it, for it is devoted to destruction.”
- Deuteronomy 32:16-18 “They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations they provoked him to anger. They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded. You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth”

Harmful Spirit

- 1 Samuel 16:14-16 “Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the Lord tormented him. And Saul's servants said to him, ‘Behold now, a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our lord now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre, and when the harmful spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will be well.’”
- 1 Samuel 16:23 “And whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him.”

Host of Heaven

- 2 Chronicles 33:1-13 “Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. For he rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had broken down, and he erected altars to the Baals, and made Asheroth, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, “In Jerusalem shall my name be forever.” And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. And he burned his sons as an offering in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and used fortune-telling and omens and sorcery, and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. And the carved image of the idol that he had made he set in the house of God”

- 2 Kings 21:3 “For he rebuilt the high places that Hezekiah his father had destroyed, and he erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them.”

Lying Spirit

- 2 Chronicles 18:19-27 “And Micaiah said, ‘Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, ‘Who will entice Ahab the king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth- gilead?’ And one said one thing, and another said another. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, saying, ‘I will entice him.’ And the Lord said to him, ‘By what means?’ And he said, ‘I will go out, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And he said, ‘You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so.’ Now therefore behold, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these your prophets. The Lord has declared disaster concerning you.”
- John 8:44 “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Spirit

- Job 4:12-21 [Eliphaz speaking] “Now a word was brought to me stealthily; my ear received the whisper of it. Amid thoughts from visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, dread came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones shake. A spirit glided past my face; the hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes; there was silence, then I heard a voice: ‘Can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker? Even in his servants he puts no trust, and his angels he charges with error; how much more those who dwell in houses of clay...”

Spirit of the Antichrist, Spirit of Error

- 1 John 4:1-6 “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”

Spirit of Divination

- Acts 16:16-18 “As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, ‘These men are servants of the Most High God, who

proclaim to you the way of salvation.’ And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And it came out that very hour.”

Unclean Spirit

- Mark 1:23-28 “And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.’ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent, and come out of him!’ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, ‘What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.’ And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.”
- Acts 5:12-16 “Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. ... they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.”
- Revelation 18:2 “And he called out with a mighty voice, ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.’”

Sons of God / Nephilim - ? (NOTE: much unknown, possibly demonic (fallen angels) or humans)

- Genesis 6:1-4 “When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, [2] the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. [3] Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.” [4] The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.” (ESV)

What Does the Bible Say About the Works of Demons?

Battle Against Faithful Angels

- Revelation 12:7-12 “Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: ‘Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.’”

Deceive and Work through False Prophets, False Signs, False Wonders

- 1 John 4:1-6 “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”
- 2 Thessalonians 2:9–10 “The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.”
- 1 Timothy 4:1-2 “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared.”

Desire Attention and Worship

6. Acts 7:41–42 “And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven”
7. Revelation 9:20-21 “The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, nor

did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.”

Disease and Sickness - their presence or absence often coincides with the presence or absence of some diseases, sickness, and disabilities

- Matthew 10:1 “He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.”
- Mark 1:32-34 “That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.”

Divination, Fortune-Telling

- Acts 16:16-18 “As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, ‘These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.’ And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And it came out that very hour.”

Do Satan’s Works, Oppose Humanity, Accuse, Tempt

- Ephesians 6:11–12 “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

Dwell Among Humanity

- Revelation 18:2 “And he called out with a mighty voice, ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.’”

Enslave

- Galatians 4:3 “In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.”

Flee from the Spirit of God

- Matthew 12:28-30 “But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house. "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters”

Indwell Some Unbelievers, Works and Communicates with Other Demons, Harms Human Hosts

- Matthew 12:43-45 (also Luke 11:24-26) “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, ‘I

will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.”

Rebel, Sin

- 2 Peter 2:4 “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment”
- Jude 6 “And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day”

Tempt Towards Pride, Unrighteousness, and Division

- James 3:14–16 “But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.”

Work through Government Leaders

- Revelation 16:14 “For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.”

What Does the Bible Say About the Character of Demons?

WHAT ARE DEMONS LIKE?

DEMONIC ABILITIES & CHARACTERISTICS

Able to Move, Indwell Humans (sometimes multiple demons in one person) and Animals, Can Communicate and Work with Other Demons, Harm Humans and Animals

- Matthew 12:43-45 (also Luke 11:24-26) “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.”
- Acts 19:15–16 “But the evil spirit answered them, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?’ And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”
- Luke 8:1-2 “Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out.”
- Mark 5:9–13 “And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” He replied, “My name is Legion, for we are many.” And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him, saying, “Send us to the pigs; let us enter them.” So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.”

Afraid of the Abyss/Hell

- Luke 8:31 “And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss.”

Afraid of God, Recognize God

8. Mark 1:32-34 “That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.”
9. James 2:19 “You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!”

10. Mark 1:32-34 “That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.”

Against God

- Matthew 12:28-30 “But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house. "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters”
- 2 Thessalonians 2:9–10 “The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.”
- Revelation 16:14 “For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.”

Angelic Abilities, Imitate Satan’s Character

- Arguably as angelic creatures they have retained their angelic abilities since their fall (see “Angels” at www.SpiritualWarfare.blog/character-of-angels).
- As servants of Satan they seem to imitate and follow his example and character (see “Satan” at www.SpiritualWarfare.blog/character-of-satan) of rebellion against God and harm towards humanity.
- Matthew 12:43-45 (also Luke 11:24-26) “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.”

Cannot Remove Salvation

- Romans 8:31-39 “What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Cast Out by Jesus from a distance with no particular phrase/command

- Matthew 15:28 “Then Jesus answered her, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed instantly.”

Cast Out by Jesus with a Brief Command of Rebuke

- Matthew 17:18 “And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly.”
- Matthew 8:16 “That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.”

Deceivers, Liars, Insincere

- Job 4:12-21 [Eliphaz speaking] “Now a word was brought to me stealthily; my ear received the whisper of it. Amid thoughts from visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, dread came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones shake. A spirit glided past my face; the hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes; there was silence, then I heard a voice: ‘Can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker? Even in his servants he puts no trust, and his angels he charges with error; how much more those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed like the moth. Between morning and evening they are beaten to pieces; they perish forever without anyone regarding it. Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them, do they not die, and that without wisdom?’”
- Colossians 2:6-8 “Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.”
- 1 Timothy 4:1-2 “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared.”

Degrees of Wickedness - we must be careful not to speculate too much from this passage or any others that might place too much emphasis on particular focuses, powers, or ranks of individual demons

- Luke 11:24-26 (Matthew 12:43-45) “When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.”

Desire Worship

- 1 Corinthians 10:20-22 “No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?”

Disguised

- 2 Corinthians 11:14-15 “And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.”

Doomed

- 2 Peter 2:4 “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment”
- Revelation 12:4 “His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.”
- Jude 6 “And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day”

Enslave

- Galatians 4:3 “In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.”

Harass Believers When Allowed

- 2 Corinthians 12:7–10 “So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Harms Human Hosts - Forces Into Fire & Water, Causes Deafness and Muteness

- Matthew 17:14-20 “Jesus Heals a Boy with a Demon And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him, said, ‘Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him.’ And Jesus answered, ‘O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me.’ And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, ‘Why could we not cast it out?’ He said to them, ‘Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.’”
- Mark 9:25–26 “And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out

of him and never enter him again.” And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.””

Harm Non-Believers - Can See, Speak, Think, Cause Convulsions, Scream Loudly

- Mark 1:23-28 “And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.’ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent, and come out of him!’ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, ‘What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.’ And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.”
- Acts 19:15-16 “But the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?” And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

Instill Jealousy, Selfish Ambition, Boasting, Disorder, Vile Practices

- James 3:14-16 “But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.”

Limited Abilities - Could Not Read Mind or Dreams of King Nebuchadnezzar, Pharaoh’s Magicians Could Not Imitate all of the Plagues of God, the Prophets of Ba’al

- Daniel 2:27-28 “Daniel answered the king and said, “No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these”
- Exodus 8:18 “The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce gnats, but they could not.”
- 1 Kings 18:29 “And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention.”

Overpowered by the Name of Jesus with True Believers

- Luke 10:17-20 “The seventy-two returned with joy and said, ‘Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.’ He replied, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.’”

Persistent, Annoying, Attempting to Profit Off of God’s Workers, Limited Foreknowledge

- Acts 16:16-18 “As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, ‘These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.’ And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And it came out that very hour.”

Supernaturally Strong, Physically Control the Possessed

- Luke 8:29 “For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For xshackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.)”

Unable to Resist Jesus’ Power, Cast Out, Silenced

- Mark 1:27 “The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, ‘What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.’”
- Mark 1:32-34 “That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.”

10 RESPONSES WHEN CONSIDERING THE DEMONIC

1. Fear God, Not Satan & His Demons

- 2 Corinthians 7:1 “Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.”
- Proverbs 1:7 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

2. Turn from Wickedness to God

- 2 Chronicles 7:14 “if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land”

3. Confess Our Sin

- Acts 19:18–19 “Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver.”

4. Destroy Evil Items

- Acts 19:18–19 “Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver.”
- Deuteronomy 7:25-26 “The carved images of their gods you shall burn with fire. You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. And you shall not bring an abominable thing into your house and become devoted to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest and abhor it, for it is devoted to destruction.”

5. Keep Your Focus on God

- 1 John 2:12–14 “I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name’s sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”

6. Share the Gospel Regularly, Cast Out Demons Rarely

- Matthew 10:1 “He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.”
- Luke 10:17-20 “The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

7. Put on the Full Armor of God Daily - Ephesians 6:10-20 - truth, righteousness, gospel of peace, faith, salvation, word of God, prayer, with boldness in the strength of the Lord

8. Walk in Freedom

- Galatians 5:1 “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

9. Speak of Jesus’ Power & Goodness

- Mark 5:19-20 “Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.”

10. Test the Spirits & the Teachings

- 1 John 4:1-6 “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is

the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”

Believers & Unbelievers

What Does the Bible Say About the Names of Believers?

He Has Made Us...

Psalm 8:3-9

Be Humbled - God Care-fully Made You

[3] When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, [4] what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

In the Creation - He Has Made Us Remarkable

[5] Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. [6] You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, [7] all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, [8] the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. [9] O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

What Does the Bible say About Christian Identity?

The greatest gift of Christianity is not merely a future existence in Heaven, but is the present and eternal reality of a relationship and unity with Christ (John 15:1-11, 1 Corinthians 6:17). As Christians we must realize that we are not products of our past or present decisions, failures, or successes. Our identity, value, & worth are rooted in our new name and identity in Christ. We focus on knowing God first and foremost and simultaneously discover our amazing nature as God's forever adopted children.

In Christ, I Am....

See "Who I Am in Christ" from Freedom in Christ Ministries (www.ficm.org/about-us/who-i-am-in-christ/) or Rose Publishing's "Who I Am In Christ" (<https://www.hendricksonrose.com/page/wl/hr/hr-series/hr-who-i-am-in-christ-series>)

Accepted

"Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."
(Romans 15:7 ESV)

Aroma of Christ.

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. [15] For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, [16] to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? [17] For we are not, like so many, peddlers of

God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ. (2 Corinthians 2:14-17 ESV)

Blessed.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, (Ephesians 1:3 ESV)

Born of God

“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12–13 ESV)

Called to Not Fear or Worry.

- “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.” (John 14:1 ESV)
- fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10 ESV)
- “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. [9] Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:8-9 ESV)
- do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7 ESV)
- So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?” (Hebrews 13:6 ESV)

Children and Heirs of God.

- The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, [17] and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8:16-17 ESV)
- And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” [7] So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. (Galatians 4:6-7 ESV)
- “I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.” (2 Corinthians 6:18 ESV)

Chosen and Adopted.

even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love [5] he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, (Ephesians 1:4-5 ESV)

Citizens of Heaven.

- But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, [21] who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. (Philippians 3:20-21 ESV)
- For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. (Hebrews 13:14)
- So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (Ephesians 2:19 ESV)

Comforted and Comforters.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, [4] who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4 ESV)

Crucified, Buried, Risen, and Free with Christ.

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. [5] For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. [6] We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. [7] For one who has died has been set free from sin. [8] Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. (Romans 6:4-8 ESV)

Empowered Representatives.

- Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:20 ESV)
- “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Filled with God’s Holy Spirit.

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ [39] Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:38-39 ESV)

Forgiven.

- In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, (Ephesians 1:7 ESV)
- He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, [14] in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)
- And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, [14] by

canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (Colossians 2:13-14 ESV)

Free

John 8:32–38 “you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. ... So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

Friend.

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:15 ESV)

Heard.

And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. [15] And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. (1 John 5:14-15 ESV)

Inconceivably Rich.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9 ESV)

Justified and Made Righteous.

- For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. [18] Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. [19] For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:17-19 ESV)
- For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV)

Known.

- “I know my own and my own know me.” (John 10:14 ESV)
- “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.” (Jeremiah 1:5 ESV)

Light of the World.

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. [15] Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. [16] In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16 ESV)

Loved.

- What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)
- I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. (Jeremiah 31:3 ESV)
- “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16 ESV)

New Creation.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV)

Never Alone.

“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20 ESV)

Part of the Body of Christ.

- For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, [5] so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (Romans 12:4-5 ESV)
- Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:20 ESV)

Purchased and Purposed.

- Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, [20] for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19–20 ESV)
- For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10 ESV)
- All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19 ESV)

Reconciled with God.

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18–19 ESV)

Redeemed, Rescued, and Saved. (Ephesians 1:13-14, Matthew 20:28, Romans 5:8)

- In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13–14 ESV)
- even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:28 ESV)

- God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8 ESV)

Saints.

- But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. (Ephesians 5:3 ESV)
- Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. (Philippians 4:21)
- But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. [10] Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10 ESV)

Salt of the Earth.

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.” (Matthew 5:13 ESV)

Sealed.

And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, [22] and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. (2 Corinthians 1:21–22 ESV)

Secure.

- For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39 ESV)
- But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—[6] and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-7 ESV)

Strengthened.

- For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:10 ESV)
- Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4 ESV)
- I can do all things through him who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13 ESV)

Truly Alive. Alive Forever.

- For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23 ESV)
- Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25-26 ESV)
- Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. (Romans 6:8 ESV)
- For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21 ESV)

The Temple of God and of Priceless Worth.

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, [20] for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 ESV)

United with God.

- But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. (1 Corinthians 6:17 ESV)
- For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. [4] When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:3-4 ESV)

Victorious.

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8:37)

Washed. Cleaned. Declared Innocent. Atoned. Not Condemned.

- And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” (Isaiah 6:7 ESV)
- And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11 ESV)
- There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1-2 ESV)

Who Are You?

5 Important Identity Questions

- 1. Have You Received the Gift of Identity in Christ?**
- 2. Will You Believe You Are Who Jesus Made You?**
- 3. Will You Love Who Jesus Made You?**
- 4. Will You Live Like Jesus Made You?**
- 5. Will You Share Who Jesus Made You?**

What Does the Bible Say About the Works of Believers?

What are Evidences of True Belief?

Our Christian Job Description

Psalm 9:2 & Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)

The Why: The Source & Purpose of Our Life

Enjoy God

Psalm 9:2 “I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.”

- Christian Hedonism - “God is most glorified in us, when we are most satisfied in Him.” ~ John Piper - www.desiringgod.org
- Exult - to feel or show triumphant elation or jubilation
- Praise - to express warm approval or admiration of

Serve God

- Ephesians 2:10 “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”
- Joshua 24:14–15 “Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

What does it look like to live for God? What is a Christian’s job description?

“If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.” C.T. Studd

The What: The Christian Job Description

- 1. Prioritize God in Your Heart.**
- 2. Follow Genuine Jesus, Avoid Fake gods.**
- 3. Honor God’s Name with Your Lips & Life.**
- 4. Show Up Sincerely On Sunday.**

5. **Respect & Obey Your Parents.**
6. **Love Lives Personally.**
7. **Honor Your Marriage Vows.**
8. **Work Hard & Honestly.**
9. **Speak Truth.**
10. **Be Content.**

The How: 10 Ways to Live for God

1. Listen.

Psalm 119:11 “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”

2. Obey.

Imitate the Holiness of God

- 1 John 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.”
- 1 Peter 1:14–16 “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”

3. Love.

- Matthew 5:16 “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”
- Mark 12:30–31 “you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind & with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”
- John 13:34–35 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

4. Fellowship.

- Acts 2:42, 46 “they devoted themselves to the ... fellowship And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts”

5. Serve. Give. Go & Love.

- Acts 2:44-45 “And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings & distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.”
- Romans 12:6–8 “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who

contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”

- 1 Corinthians 12:27-31 “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.”

6. Worship.

- Acts 2:42, 43, 47 “they devoted themselves to the ... breaking of bread ... awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ... praising God”

7. Evangelize. Go & Tell.

- Acts 2:47 “having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

8. Pray & Fast.

- Matthew 6:9 “Pray then like this...”
- Matthew 6:16 “And when you fast...”
- Ezra 8:21 “Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods.”

9. Learn. Go & Teach.

- Acts 2:42 “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching”
- Matthew 28:19-2 “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

10. Forgive.

- 1 John 2:9 “Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.”
- Matthew 6:14-15 “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

What Does the Bible Say About the Character of Believers?

What Are True Believers Like?

How Can I Be Sure I Am a Christian?

Galatians 5:22–24 ~ Philippians 4:8–9 (ESV)

Know the Evidence of Spiritual Lostness

Galatians 5:19–21 “Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, [20] idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, [21] envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

KNOW THE EVIDENCE OF SPIRITUAL LIFE: *CHRISTIAN CHARACTER*

Galatians 5:22–23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Test Yourself for Christian Character

- Lamentations 3:40 “Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the LORD!”
- Psalm 26:2 “Prove me, O LORD, and try me; test my heart and my mind.”
- Psalm 139:23–24 “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”
- 2 Corinthians 13:5 “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?— unless indeed you fail to meet the test!”
- Galatians 5:24 “And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

Resist the Character-Killer, Satan

- Romans 13:12–14 “The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. [13] Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. [14] But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”
- 1 John 5:18–19 “We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”
- Ephesians 6:11–12 “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,

but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

Avoid Christian Character-Killers

11. Ephesians 4:30 “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”
12. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 “Do not quench the Spirit.”
13. 1 Thessalonians 2:4 “but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.”

Mentally Take in Christian Character

- Philippians 4:8 “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

Practice Christian Character

- Philippians 4:9 “What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”
- 1 Thessalonians 4:1 “Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.”
- Galatians 5:26 “Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”

Suffer Well for More Christian Character

Romans 5:3–5 “Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

What Does the Bible Say About the Names of Unbelievers?

God speaks clearly about the serious state of unbelief. May the Lord use these descriptions for the conviction and salvation of the lost. May believers have a great passion and urgency in sharing the Gospel hope with their lost neighbors, friends, family, and strangers.

1 John 3:8–10 “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. [9] No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.” (ESV)

Romans 8:7 “the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.”

- **Accursed** - Psalm 119:21 “You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones, who wander from your commandments.”
- **Children of the Devil** - 1 John 3:10 “By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.”
- **Crooked** - Proverbs 28:18 “Whoever walks in integrity will be delivered, but he who is crooked in his ways will suddenly fall.”
- **Dead** - Ephesians 2:1-10 “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins”
- **Disobedient, Detestable** - Titus 1:16 “They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.”
- **Drunkard, Glutton** - Proverbs 23:20 “Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters”
- **Enslaved** - Galatians 4:8 “Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods.”
- **Evil** - Matthew 12:35 “The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.”
- **Fool** - Proverbs 28:26 “Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.”
- **Guilty** - Proverbs 21:8 “The way of the guilty is crooked, but the conduct of the pure is upright.”
- **Indebted** - Colossians 2:14 “by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands”
- **Lost** - Luke 19:10 “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”
- **Sinner** - Luke 18:13 “But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’”

- **Scoffer** - Jude 18 “They said to you, ‘In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.’”
- **Sluggard** - Proverbs 6:9 “How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?”
- **Violent** - Psalm 140:11 “let evil hunt down the violent man speedily!”
- **Wicked** - John 3:20 “For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.”
- **Worldly** - Jude 19 “It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.”
- **Gossips, Slanderers, Haters of God, Insolent, Haughty, Boastful, Inventors of Evil, Disobedient to Parents, Foolish, Faithless, Heartless, Ruthless** - Romans 1:29–31 “They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.”
- **Cowardly, Faithless, Detestable, Murderers, Sexually Immoral, Sorcerers, Idolaters, Liars** - Revelation 21:8 “But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”
- **Unrighteous, Deceived, Sexually Immoral, Idolaters, Adulterers, Men Who Practice Homosexuality, Thieves, Greedy, Drunkards, Revilers, Swindlers** - 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”
- **Lovers of Self, Lovers of Money, Proud, Arrogant, Abusive, Disobedient too their Parents, Ungrateful, Unholy, Heartless, Unappeasable, Slanderous, Without Self-Control, Brutal, Not Loving Good, Treacherous, Reckless, Swollen with Conceit, Lovers of Pleasure** - 2 Timothy 3:2–5 “For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.”

What Does the Bible Say About the Works of Unbelievers?

What Are Evidences of Unbelief?

Unbelievers' Works - What Do They Do?

Unbelievers, no matter their verbal claims to faith, have works of their lips and lives that show...

1. Ongoing Disobedience to God.

Titus 1:16 “They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.”

2. A Love of the World.

Matthew 7:17–20 “So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.”

3. A Love of Pleasure and Lack of Self-Control.

1 Corinthians 5:8–11 “Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.”

4. Habitual Practice of Unrepentant Sin - Examples: Sexual Immorality, Idolatry (Coveting), Adultery (Lust), Homosexuality, Stealing, Greed, Drunkenness (Substance Use for a High), Partying, and Dishonest Gain

1 Corinthians 6:9–11 “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

5. Opposition to Love - Impatience, Envy, Bragging, Arrogance, Rudeness, Self-Focus, Easily Irritated, Resentful/Bitter, Disobedient, Ignorant of Truth

1 Corinthians 13:4–7 “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

6. Opposition to the Holy Spirit - Examples: Sexual Immorality, Impurity, Sensuality, Idolatry, Sorcery, Enmity, Strife, Jealousy, Fits of Anger, Rivalries, Dissensions, Divisions, Envy, Drunkenness, Orgies, and Things Like These.

Galatians 5:17–21 “For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

7. Opposition to God’s Law

1 Timothy 1:8–11 “ Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.”

8. They Will Suffer Forever in Hell

Revelation 21:8 “But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

The Lost Among Us: 12 Truths

Luke 15 (ESV)

1. Jesus Purposely Came for the Lost

- Luke 19:10 “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”
- Ezekiel 34:16 “I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.
- The Lost can’t “find” or “save” themselves

2. We Get Lost By Our Sinful Choices

- Psalm 119:176 “I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant”

3. False Teachers Lead Souls Into Lostness

14. Jeremiah 50:6 “My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray, turning them away on the mountains. From mountain to hill they have gone. They have forgotten their fold.”

4. Stay Humbled By & In Awe of God’s Finding & Saving - Mercy & Grace

- 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

5. Faithful Believers Have Responsibility for Seeking the Lost

- Ezekiel 34:4 “The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them.”
- Matthew 10:5–7 “These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, ‘Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

6. Be Passionate for the Salvation of the Lord - Their Situation Is Urgent & Serious

- Luke 15:4 “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, & go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?”
- Luke 15:8 “Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it?”

7. Saved Humans Rejoice Over Saved Souls

- Luke 15:6 “And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’”
- Luke 15:9–10 “And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’”

8. Heavenly Beings Rejoice Over Saved Souls

- Luke 15:7 “Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”
- Luke 15:10 “Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

9. God Rejoices Over Saved Souls

- Luke 15:20 “And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.”

- Luke 15:22–23 “But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.’”

10. Saved Souls Truly Repent

- Luke 15:21 “And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’”

11. The Gospel = Lost Are Found and the Dead Are Made Alive

- Luke 15:24 “For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.”
- Luke 15:32 “It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.”

12. The Gospel Invite Continues for the Lost

- Luke 15:1–2 “Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, ‘This man receives sinners and eats with them.’”
- Luke 15:28–31 “But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. [30] But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ [31] And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.’”

What Does the Bible Say About the Character of Unbelievers?

Unbelievers' Character – What Are They Like?

Unbelievers are...

1. Captured by Satan to Do His Will

2 Timothy 2:26 “and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will”

2. Follow Their Own Path Rather than Submit to God

Romans 1:28–32 “And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. [29] They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, [30] slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, [31] foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. [32] Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (ESV)

3. Prioritize Desires (What Feels Good and Appears Good) and the Pride of Life (Self-Focus, Self-Love)

1 John 2:16–17 “For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

The Prodigal Story

In Luke 15 Jesus tells the story of a Father with two sons to explain God’s love for humanity. In the story he describes lostness and unbelief as seen in both sons, with a focus on what true repentance and belief looks like when the “prodigal son” repents and returns home to his father.

Luke 15:11–13 “There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living.” (ESV)

Prodigals Have...

Luke 15:14–16 “And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.”

1. Rebelled against God

2. Run from God

3. Avoided Christian Reminders - Church, Bible, Christians

4. Past Regrets Towards God

5. Past Regrets Towards Others

6. Wasted their Lives on Trivialities

7. Real Suffering - No True Peace, Hope, or Joy

Luke 15:17–19 “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.’”

Prodigals Have a Heavenly Father Who Is...

Luke 15:20–24 “And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.”

1. Over Them - Kingly Authority and Power

2. Watching Them - Knows Everything

3. Compassionate Towards Them

4. Lovingly Patient with Them

5. Forgiving Towards the Repentant

6. Merciful and Gracious

Christians Have a Purpose and a Message

2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

2 Corinthians 5:11 “Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.”

1. Surrender to Jesus’ Loving Control

2. Speak Truth to a Deceived World

3. Show Love to the Hateful

4. Share Jesus Persuasively

2 Corinthians 5:14–21 “For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling

the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

A Christian Response Towards Unbelief

1. Humility

2. Compassion

3. Truth

4. Love

5. Faith-Filled Action

- Jude 22–23 “And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.” (ESV)
- Proverbs 11:30 “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.”
- James 5:20 “let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”

“If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for.” - Charles Spurgeon

Salvation

What Does the Bible Say About Salvation?

What is salvation? Salvation is the process which God saves mankind from sin. God has created all of humanity, but all of humanity has consciously rebelled against Him and His purposes. Mankind justly deserves God's wrath but God lovingly sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross. Christ's death and resurrection from the grave are the only means by which God's wrath upon sin is satisfied. Salvation is referred to as the "Gospel" for it is the "good news" that Christ has come to satisfy man's greatest need. Those who repent from their sin, place their faith and trust in Christ, and believe in His death on the cross and resurrection from the grave receive the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Those who remain in their sinful state will be forever separated from God and under His just wrath in eternal death in Hell. God's offer of salvation through the Gospel is extended to all humanity until the day of one's death or until the day of His return and judgment.

How does salvation happen? God initiates and controls salvation. Although God explains some of how salvation works, He does not fully disclose all of the details. Terms such as election, calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, and glorification are all helpful for attempting to understand the process of salvation.

(Romans 8:29-30) For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. [30] And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. - Deuteronomy 29:29

"Salvation is from our side a choice; from the divine side it is a seizing upon, an apprehending, a conquest by the Most High God. Our accepting and willing are reactions rather than actions." A.W. Tozer

How can I be sure I am saved? Check out "How Can I Be Sure I am a Christian?" at www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian

- (Ephesians 1:13-14) In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
- (2 Peter 1:10) Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities, you will never fall.

How can I be saved? Check out "How Can I Become a Christian?" at www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian

Why do some people believe they can simply make a one-time decision, pray a prayer, walk an aisle, get baptized, and be guaranteed Heaven? People who have this understanding may not fully understand the Gospel call to “die to oneself” and may not see that the Christian life is one of faithfully following Christ in obedience for an eternity (Matthew 10:37-39, Luke 9:23-24, 9:57-62).

What is God’s role in salvation? God is the author and finisher of our faith, sovereignly electing, calling, and giving spiritual life to those whom He chooses.

- even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. (Ephesians 1:4)
- (John 6:44a) No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

What is my role in salvation? We are responsible for our sin and are called to respond to His glory in repentance and belief. When God regenerates my soul, I respond in faith-filled repentance and belief, trusting and treasuring Christ above all else as my Lord and Savior.

15. (John 1:12-13) But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, [13] who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
16. "Since no man is excluded from calling upon God the gate of salvation is open to all. There is nothing else to hinder us from entering, but our own unbelief." – John Calvin

Do I need to pray a prayer to be saved? No special or formulaic prayer is needed, but one should call upon God in repentance from sin, belief in His crucifixion and resurrection, and trust in His Lordship.

- (Romans 10:9) because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
- (Romans 10:13) everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.
- (Mark 1:14-15) “Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

What about those who have never heard the Gospel? Without hearing and believing upon the name of Jesus, there is no hope for eternity in Heaven. A life without Jesus leads to Hell.

- (Romans 10:14-15) How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? [15] And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

Can I lose my salvation? True believers never fall away and never are separated from Jesus. God provides assurance to those whom are genuinely His children but warns that there will be many who call upon Him by name, but never fully treasured Him more than everything.

- (Romans 8:38-39) For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- (1 John 2:19) They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

What about people who say they are Christians, but their lives say otherwise? This is an example of false belief. True belief always results in a changed life, bearing the fruit of God's Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26).

- (Matthew 7:21-23) "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. [22] On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' [23] And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'
- (James 2:17,19) faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead... You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe, and shudder!

Should we question our faith? We are called to test ourselves to ensure we are genuine believers.

- (1 John 2:3-4) And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. [4] Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.
- (2 Corinthians 13:5) Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?— unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

Is salvation by faith alone, or by faith plus works? Salvation is by faith alone, through Christ's work alone. True faith is evidenced by good works that honor Christ's name.

- (Ephesians 2:8-10) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast. [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
- (James 2:26) For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

Is baptism necessary for salvation? No, but it is the first step of obedience as a Christian.

- (Acts 2:37-38) Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- "God has promised forgiveness to your repentance, but He has not promised tomorrow to your procrastination." - Augustine

What is the atonement? The atonement is a term used to reference Jesus' substitutional sacrifice on our behalf to pay the price of our sinful rebellion against God in order to unite us with Him forever.

- (John 10:15) I lay down my life for the sheep.
- (2 Corinthians 5:21) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Why does it matter? The atonement matters for a correct understanding of who God is and what He has done in His provision for salvation. Our response to His goodness and offer of salvation affects us for an eternity, whether in Heaven or Hell.

- (Colossians 2:14) by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.
- "Is it not wonderful news to believe that salvation lies outside ourselves?" – Martin Luther

Apart from Christ, what are the consequences of sin? The consequence of our rebellion against God through sin is eternal separation from Him in Hell.

(Ephesians 2:1-3) "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath."

"What Does the Bible Say about Hell?" - www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-hell

In Christ, what are the rewards of Christ's atonement? The reward of our response to Jesus' atonement through faith is eternal union with Him in Heaven.

- (Isaiah 53:8-12) By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?...[11b] by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities...[12b]because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.
- (Romans 6:5) For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.
- (1 John 5:13) I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

"What Does the Bible Say about Heaven?" - www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-heaven

What Does the Bible Say About Christian Identity?

The greatest gift of Christianity is not merely a future existence in Heaven, but it is the present and eternal reality of a relationship and union with Christ (John 15:1-11, 1 Corinthians 6:17). As Christians we must realize that we are not products of our past or present decisions, failures, or successes. Our identity, value, & worth are rooted in our new name and identity in Christ. We focus on knowing, enjoying, & exalting God first and foremost and simultaneously discover our amazing nature as God's forever adopted children.

In Christ, I am...

- **Accepted.** (Romans 15:7)
- **Alive. Truly & Forever.** (Romans 6:23, John 11:25-26, Romans 6:8, Philippians 1:21)
- **Aroma of Christ.** (2 Corinthians 2:14-17)
- **Born of God** (John 1:12-13)
- **Blessed.** (Ephesians 1:3)
- **Called to Not Fear or Worry.** (John 14:1, Isaiah 41:10, Joshua 1:8-9, Phil 4:6-7, Heb 13:6)
- **Child and Heir of God.** (Romans 8:16-17, Galatians 4:6-7, 2 Cor 6:18)
- **Chosen and Adopted.** (Ephesians 1:4-5)
- **Citizens of Heaven.** (Philippians 3:20-21, Hebrews 13:14, Ephesians 2:19)
- **Comforted and Comforters.** (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
- **Crucified, Buried, Risen, and Free with Christ.** (Romans 6:4-8)
- **Empowered Representatives.** (2 Corinthians 5:20, Acts 1:8)
- **Filled with God's Holy Spirit.** (John 7:38-39)
- **Free.** (John 8:32-36)
- **Friend.** (John 15:15)
- **Forgiven.** (Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:13-14, Colossians 2:13-14)
- **Heard.** (1 John 5:14-15)
- **Inconceivably Rich.** (2 Corinthians 8:9)
- **Justified and Made Righteous.** (Romans 5:17-19, 2 Corinthians 5:21)
- **Known.** (John 10:14, Jeremiah 1:5)
- **Light of the World.** (Matthew 5:14-16)
- **Loved.** (Romans 8:31, Jeremiah 31:3, John 3:16)
- **Never Alone.** (Matthew 28:20)
- **New Creation.** (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- **Part of the Body of Christ.** (Romans 12:4-5, 2 Corinthians 5:20)
- **Purchased and Purposed.** (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Ephesians 2:10, 2 Corinthians 5:18-19)
- **Reconciled with God.** (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)
- **Redeemed, Rescued, and Saved.** (Ephesians 1:13-14, Matthew 20:28, Romans 5:8)

- **Saints.** (Ephesians 5:3, Philippians 4:21, 1 Peter 2:9-10)
- **Salt of the Earth.** (Matthew 5:13)
- **Sealed.** (2 Corinthians 1:22)
- **Secure.** (Romans 8:38-39, Ephesians 2:4-7)
- **Strengthened.** (2 Corinthians 12:10, 1 John 4:4, Philippians 4:13)
- **The Temple of God and of Priceless Worth.** (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
- **United with God.** (1 Corinthians 6:17, Colossians 3:3-4)
- **Victorious.** (Romans 8:37)
- **Washed. Cleaned. Declared Innocent. Atoned. Not Condemned.** (Isaiah 6:7, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Romans 8:1-2)

What Does the Bible Say About Sanctification?

What is sanctification?

Sanctification is the process by which God's Spirit changes the heart, mind and soul of a Christian to conform to His will in joyful obedience to and imitation of the holiness of God.

- Romans 6:19-22 “For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.”
- Acts 26:18 “to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3 “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;”

How does sanctification happen?

- Acts 26:18 “sanctified by faith”
- 1 Corinthians 11:1 “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”
- Philippians 3:17 “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.”
- Philippians 4:9 “What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13 “God chose you as the first fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.”
- Colossians 4:12 “Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.”

What speeds & impedes sanctification?

17. New Self VS. Old Self – Colossians 3 & Ephesians 4
18. Ephesians 4:30 “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”
19. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 “Do not quench the Spirit.”

What is God's role and my responsibility?

- Passive VS. Active
- 1 Peter 1:22 “Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart”

- John 17:17,19 “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ... And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.”
- Galatians 3:3 “Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”
- Romans 15:16 “sanctified by the Holy Spirit”, 1 Peter 1:2 “sanctification of the Spirit”
- 1 Corinthians 1:30 “And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption”
- Hebrews 13:12 “So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.”

What about “Carnal Christians”?

Although there are varying degrees of maturity and fruitfulness among believers, there is no such category of Christians who do not bear fruit of God's Spirit.

- 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 “But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? 4 For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human?”
- 1 John 3:6 “No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.”
- James 2:26 “faith without works is dead”

Can we be “perfected” (i.e. “entire sanctification” or “sinless perfection”)?

No, "perfection" does not happen as Christians will continue to struggle with sin while on earth. "Glorification" describes the guarantee of true believers receiving their resurrection bodies when they enter into Heaven.

- Romans 8:30 "And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."
- Hebrews 10:14 “For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”
- Romans 7:14-24 v.15 “For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.”

Why is it so important?

- 1 Thessalonians 5:23 "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"
- 1 Peter 1:14-19 “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” 17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, 18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”

What Does the Bible Say About Human Sin?

In order to understand, respond to, and appreciate God's saving and atoning work, we must understand the seriousness of human sin. Also, to understand different specific sorts of sin, through the lens of the Ten Commandments, check out "What Does the Bible Say about Sin?" under the section called "Christianity Questions." Here are some essential Scriptures on human sin and Christ's atoning work:

Bible Verses on Human Sin

(Romans 3:10-12) "As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹²All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

(Isaiah 64:6) "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away"

(Jeremiah 17:9) "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"

(Psalm 51:5) "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."

(Ephesians 2:1-3) "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath."

(John 3:19) "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil"

(John 8:34) "Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin"

(John 8:44) "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

(1 Corinthians 2:14) "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

(Romans 1:18) “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness”

(Proverbs 14:12) “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.”

(Romans 8:7) “the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.”

(1 John 3:10) “By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.”

(Ephesians 2:1-10) [1] And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—[3] among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. [4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—[6] and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. [8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast. [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Bible Verses on Christ's Atonement

(2 Corinthians 5:21) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

(Colossians 2:14) by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

(Romans 10:14-15) How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? [15] And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

(John 10:15) just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

(Isaiah 53:8-12) By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?...[11b] by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities...[12b]because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

What Does the Bible Say About God's Grace and Call?

Seeing God's grace (gift) and call through His work in salvation will overwhelm you with His great love. Wayne Grudem explains that grace is "God's goodness towards those who deserve only punishment." In salvation, it is important to understand "irresistible grace" which Grudem explains is "A term that refers to the fact that God effectively calls people and also gives them regeneration, both of which guarantee that we will respond in saving faith. This term is subject to misunderstanding since it seems to imply that people do not make a voluntary, willing choice in responding to the gospel." Here are some important Bible passages describing how, like with Lazarus, Jesus' has called us from death to life!

Bible Verses on God's Grace and Call

(Ephesians 1:4) even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

(John 6:37-39) All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. [38] For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. [39] And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

(Titus 3:5) he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit

(Colossians 2:13) And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses

(Ephesians 2:1-10) And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— [3] among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. [4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— [6] and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. [8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast. [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

(John 1:12-13) But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, [13] who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

(1 Corinthians 15:22) For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (ESV)

(John 11:43-44) When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” [44] The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

(Matthew 27:50-54) And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. [51] And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. [52] The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, [53] and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. [54] When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

(Colossians 1:13-14) He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, [14] in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

(Acts 13:48) And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

(Romans 8:29-30) For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. [30] And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

(2 Corinthians 4:3-6) And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. [4] In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. [5] For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. [6] For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

(Acts 16:14) One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

(John 6:44a) No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

(1 Corinthians 1:26-31) For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. [27] But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; [28] God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, [29] so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. [30] And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, [31] so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

(John 10:26-28) but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock. [27] My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. [28] I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

(Isaiah 64:7) No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins.

(Galatians 1:15) But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace

(John 8:36) So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

(Romans 9:6-23) But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, [7] and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” [8] This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. [9] For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.” [10] And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, [11] though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— [12] she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” [13] As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

[14] What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! [15] For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” [16] So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. [17] For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” [18] So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

[19] You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” [20] But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” [21] Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? [22] What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, [23]

in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory.

What Does the Bible Say About Saving Faith?

Saving faith is one of the most important things to understand in this life! Wayne Grudem explains that saving faith is “trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God.” Do you trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Do you treasure, love, and value Him above all else?

Bible Verses on Saving Faith

(Ephesians 1:13-14) In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

(Philippians 1:6) And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

(Romans 8:38-39) For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(1 John 2:19) They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

(John 10:27-30) My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. [28] I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. [29] My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. [30] I and the Father are one.

(Matthew 7:21-23) Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. [22] On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ [23] And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

(James 2:17,19) So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead...[19] You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

(1 John 2:3-4) And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. [4] Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him

(2 Corinthians 13:5) Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?— unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

(2 Peter 1:10) Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

(1 Peter 1:4-5) to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, [5] who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

(Jude 1:1) To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ.

Salvation Quotes and Terms

“Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.” 1 Timothy 4:16

Here are some helpful quotes and terms that will guide you as you seek to understand God’s scriptural truth on salvation.

Helpful Quotes on Salvation

"Salvation is from our side a choice; from the divine side it is a seizing upon, an apprehending, a conquest by the Most High God. Our accepting and willing are reactions rather than actions."

A.W. Tozer

"Since no man is excluded from calling upon God the gate of salvation is open to all. There is nothing else to hinder us from entering, but our own unbelief." – John Calvin

"God has promised forgiveness to your repentance, but He has not promised tomorrow to your procrastination." - Augustine

"Is it not wonderful news to believe that salvation lies outside ourselves?" – Martin Luther

“I am myself persuaded that the points of the Calvinist alone is right upon some points, and the Arminian alone is right upon others. There is a great deal of truth in the positive side of both systems, and a great deal of error in the negative side of both systems. If I were asked, ‘Why is a man damned?’ I should answer as an Arminian answers, ‘He destroys himself’. I should not dare to lay man’s ruin at the door of divine sovereignty. On the other hand, if I were asked, ‘Why is a man saved?’ I could only give the Calvinist answer, ‘He is saved through the sovereign grace of God, and not at all of himself.’” – Charles Spurgeon

A Helpful Term.

Antinomy : a contradiction between two apparently equally valid principles or between inferences correctly drawn from such principles **2** : a fundamental and apparently unresolvable conflict or contradiction

(Greek *αντι-*, against, plus *νομος*, law) literally means the mutual incompatibility, real or apparent, of two laws. It is a term used in logic and epistemology.

Essential Theological Terms

Here are some important, foundational theological terms, that are defined by Wayne Grudem's in his book *Systematic Theology*. If you are ever looking for a comprehensive resource to understand what the whole Bible says about a particular topic, *Systematic Theology* by Grudem is your best investment of time and money!

“Order of Salvation: A theological term referring to a list of the events in which God applies salvation to us in the specific order in which they are believed to occur in our lives (sometimes referred to by the Latin phrase *ordu salutis*).”

- NOTE: the terms below are shared in alphabetical order. A simple way of seeing the order of salvation is offered here: <http://www.challies.com/visual-theology/visual-theology-the-order-of-salvation> and described simply as Election, Calling, Regeneration, Conversion, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, Perseverance, Glorification.

“Adoption: An act of God whereby he makes us members of His family.”

“Conversion: Our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of our sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation.”

“Effective Calling: An Act of God the Father, speaking through the human proclamation of the Gospel, in which He summons people to Himself in such a way that they respond in saving faith.”

“Election: An Act of God before creation in which He chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of His sovereign good pleasure.”

“Free Will: (a) with respect to God: All things that God decided to will but had no necessity to will according to His nature. (b) with respect to man: The ability to make willing choices that have real effects (however, other people define this in other ways, including the ability to make choices that are not determined by God).”

“Foreknowledge: Relating to the doctrine of election, the personal, relational knowledge by which God thought of certain people in a saving relationship to Himself before creation. This is to be distinguished from mere knowledge of facts about a person.”

“Glorification: The final act in the application of redemption. It will happen when Christ returns and raises from the dead the bodies of all believers for all time who have died, and reunites them with their souls, and changes the bodies of all believers who remain alive, thereby giving all believers at the same time perfect resurrection bodies like His own.”

“*Grace*: God’s goodness towards those who deserve who deserve only punishment.”

“*Inherited Corruption*: The sinful nature, or tendency to sin, which all people inherit because of Adam’s sin (often referred to as ‘original pollution’). This idea entails that (1) in our natures we totally lack spiritual good before God; and (2) in our actions we are totally unable to do spiritual good before God.”

“*Irresistible Grace*: A term that refers to the fact that God effectively calls people and also gives them regeneration, both of which guarantee that we will respond in saving faith. This term is subject to misunderstanding since it *seems* to imply that people do not make a voluntary, willing choice in responding to the gospel.”

“*Justification*: An instantaneous legal act of God in which He (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us, and (2) declares us to be righteous in His sight.”

“*Limited Grace or Particular Redemption*: The Reformed view that Christ’s death actually paid for the sins of those whom he knew would ultimately be saved. A preferable term for this view is ‘particular redemption’ in that the power of the atonement is not limited, but rather it is fully effective for particular people.”

“*Mercy*: God’s goodness towards those in misery and distress.”

“*Perseverance of the Saints*: The doctrine that all those who are truly ‘born again’ will be kept by God’s power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives and that only those who persevere until the end have been truly ‘born again.’”

“*Penal Substitution*: The view that Christ in his death bore the just penalty of God for our sins as a substitute for us.”

“*Predestination*: Another term for ‘election’; in Reformed theology generally, this is a broader term that includes not only election (for believers), but also reprobation (for nonbelievers).”

“*Propitiation*: A sacrifice that bears God’s wrath to the end and in so doing changes God’s wrath

“*Reconciliation*: The removal of enmity and the restoration of fellowship between two parties.”

“*Redemption*: Christ’s saving work viewed as an act of ‘buying back’ sinners out of their bondage to sin and to Satan through the payment of a ransom (though the analogy should not be pressed to specify anyone to whom a ransom was paid).”

“Regeneration: A secret act of God in which He imparts new spiritual life to us, sometimes called ‘being born again.’”

“Repentance: A heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.”

“Reprobation: The sovereign decision of God before creation to pass over some persons, in sorry deciding not to save them, and to punish them for their sins and thereby to manifest His justice.” (read and study Romans 9 if you have not recently studied it)

“Sanctification: A progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and more like Christ in our actual lives.”

“Saving Faith: Trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God.”

“Sin: Any failure to conform to the moral law of God in an act, attitude, or nature.”

“Sovereignty: God’s exercise of power over all of His creation.”

“Union with Christ: A phrase that summarizes several different relationships between believers and Christ, through which Christians receive every benefit of salvation. These relationships include the fact that we are in Christ, Christ is in us, we are like Christ, and we are with Christ.”

“Unpardonable Sin: The usually malicious, willful rejection and slander against the Holy Spirit’s work attesting to Christ, and attributing that work to Satan.”

What Does the Bible Say About God's Sovereignty?

Creation and the Bible are full of examples of God's sovereignty. Wayne Grudem defines sovereignty as "God's exercise of power over all of His creation."

God is described as existing eternally (Ephesians 1:4), the Creator (Genesis 1:1), knowable (Jeremiah 9:24), independent (Acts 17:24-25), unchangeable (Malachi 3:6), omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscient (1 John 3:20), all-wise (Romans 16:27), all-good (Luke 18:19), all-loving (1 John 4:8), omnipotent (Genesis 18:14, Matthew 19:26) and sovereign (Ephesians 1:11). It is particularly helpful to see how God works in salvation to see His saving power over His creation.

Top Bible Verses on God's Sovereignty

(Romans 11:33-36) Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! [34] "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" [35] "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" [36] For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Job 38-39

(Romans 4:17) God "who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist."

(Job 40:1-5) And the LORD said to Job: [2] "Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it." [3] Then Job answered the LORD and said: [4] "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. [5] I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further."

(Romans 11:36) For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever.

(1 Corinthians 8:6) yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

(1 Corinthians 15:10) But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

(Ephesians 1:11) In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will

(Acts 4:27-28) for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, [28] to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

(Matthew 6:10) Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

(James 4:15) Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."

Top Books on Divine Sovereignty and Human Will

20. *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility* by D.A. Carson
21. *The Doctrine of God* by John Frame
22. *Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem
23. *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God* by John Piper and Justin Taylor. Available free at: www.desiringgod.org/books/suffering-and-the-sovereignty-of-god.
24. *Whomever He Wills: A Surprising Display of Sovereign Mercy* edited by Matthew M. Barrett and Thomas J. Nettles
25. *Five Points by John Piper*. Available free at: www.desiringgod.org/books/five-points

What Does the Bible Say About Human Responsibility?

We have responsibility to respond to God's goodness, glory, and law. Here are some Bible passages for you to seek God's voice on our responsibility:

Bible Verses Concerning Human Responsibility in Responding to God's Salvation

(Romans 10:9-15) because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. 13 For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

(Luke 9:23-24) And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

(Mark 1:14-15) Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

(Acts 2:37-38) Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

(James 2:26) For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

(James 1:22,25) But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ... [25] But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

(Hebrews 3:12-14) Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. [13] But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the

deceitfulness of sin. [14] For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

(2 Peter 1:5-8) For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, [6] and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, [7] and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. [8] For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(2 Peter 1:10) Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

(2 Timothy 2:10) Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

What Does the Bible Say About Assurance?

God's truths about assurance are so encouraging. Here are some helpful Scriptures for you to hear what the Lord has to say on this important topic:

Bible Verses on Assurance

(Romans 8:1) There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

(Hebrews 10:19-22) Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, [20] by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, [21] and since we have a great priest over the house of God, [22] let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

(Romans 6:5) For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

(Luke 1:1,4) Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ...[4] that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

(Acts 17:31) he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

(1 John 5:13) I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

(Acts 2:36) Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

(Romans 9:33) whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

(Romans 8:31-39) What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? [32] He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? [33] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. [35] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36] As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." [37] No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. [38] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor

rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Jude 1:24-25) Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, [25] to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

(1 Peter 1:3-7) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, [5] who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. [6] In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, [7] so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

(Philippians 1:6) And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

(1 Corinthians 1:7-9) so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, [8] who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9] God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

(1 John 2:19) They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

(Luke 8:9-15) And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, [10] he said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’ [11] Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. [12] The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. [13] And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. [14] And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. [15] As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

What Does the Bible Say About Perseverance?

God's truths about perseverance are so amazing. Here are some helpful Scriptures and truths to consider:

“If we have it, we never lose it. If we lose it, we never had it.” R.C. Sproul

Bible Truths on Perseverance

- **God Strengthens and Enables Us to Endure** (Philippians 1:6, Jude 1:24, Colossians 1:11-14)
- **We Are Called to Be Present in Fellowship** (1 John 2:19)
- **We Are Called to Be Unifiers** (1 Corinthians 11:18-19 & Romans 15:4-7)
- **Endurance Is a Sign of Salvation** (Luke 21:16-19, Matthew 24:13, Mark 4:14-20, 2 Timothy 2:12, Acts 14:22, & Romans 11:22, 1 Corinthians 15:1-2)
- **Sin Must Be Put Off & Escaped** (Hebrews 12:1-2 & 1 Corinthians 10:12-13)
- **Discipline and Self-Control are Essential Elements of Endurance** (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)
- **Persevere in Prayer** (Ephesians 6:18, Colossians 4:2, & Acts 4:29)
- **Continue through Suffering, Don't Quit** (1 Corinthians 4:11-13 & 2 Corinthians 1:6-7)
- **Remain in Biblically-Faithful Teachings & Path** (2 Timothy 4:3 & 2 Timothy 3:14-17)
- **Endurance Is Part of Growth and Discipline** (Hebrews 12:3-7, Romans 5:3-5, & 1 Peter 2:20-23)
- **Perseverance & Assurance are Connected!** (Hebrews 10:32-36 & Revelation 14:12-13)

Bible Verses on Perseverance

26. (Philippians 1:6) And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.
27. (Jude 1:24) Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy
28. (Colossians 1:11-14) May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, [12] giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. [13] He

has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, [14] in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- (1 John 2:19) They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.
- (1 Corinthians 11:18-19) For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, [19] for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.
- (Romans 15:4-7) For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. [5] May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, [6] that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. [7] Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.
- (Luke 21:16-19) You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. [17] You will be hated by all for my name's sake. [18] But not a hair of your head will perish. [19] By your endurance you will gain your lives.
- (Matthew 24:13) But the one who endures to the end will be saved.
- (Mark 4:14-20) The sower sows the word. [15] And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. [16] And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. [17] And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. [18] And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, [19] but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. [20] But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”
- (2 Timothy 2:11-12) The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; [12] if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us
- (Acts 14:22) strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.
- (Romans 11:22) Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.
- (Romans 11:22) Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

- (1 Corinthians 15:1-2 ESV) Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.
- (Colossians 1:21-23) And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, [22] he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, [23] if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.
- (Hebrews 12:1-2) Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2] looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.
- (1 Corinthians 10:12-12) Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. [13] No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.
- (1 Corinthians 9:24-27) Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. [25] Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. [26] So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. [27] But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.
- (Ephesians 6:18) praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints
- (Colossians 4:2) Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.
- (Acts 4:29) And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness
- (1 Corinthians 4:11-13) To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, [12] and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; [13] when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.
- (2 Corinthians 1:6-7) If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. [7] Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.
- (2 Timothy 4:3-4) For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, [4] and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.
- (2 Timothy 3:14-17) But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have

been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- (Hebrews 12:3-7 ESV) Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. [4] In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. [5] And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him [6] For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” [7] It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?
- (Romans 5:3-5) Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
- (1 Peter 2:20-23) For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. [21] For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. [22] He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. [23] When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.
- (Hebrews 10:32-36) But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, [33] sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. [34] For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. [35] Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. [36] For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.
- (Revelation 14:12-13) Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. [13] And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”

“The doctrine of the assurance of salvation differs from the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, but it is closely related. The two doctrines may be distinguished from one another, but they never can be separated.” R.C. Sproul

Church Life Questions

What Does the Bible Say About Church Membership?

Church attendance is essential, not optional Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near”

We are the Body of Christ

- Ephesians 1:22-23 “the church, which is his body”
- *Ekklesia* – “called out ones,” “assembly”
- Universal Church – positionally identified
- Local Church – practically identified

What is God’s plan for the church?

- **Offense: Reaching the Lost with the Gospel**

Matthew 16:18 “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

29. Defense: Teaching, Rebuking, & Correcting with Biblical Truth

Matthew 18:17-20 “If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

- **United: Working Together for the Glory of God**

1 Corinthians 12:21, 26 “The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you. ...If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”

What are the purposes of the church? (Acts 2:42-47)

- Individual Responsibility – letting the Holy Spirit grow and use me in God’s good work
- Fellowship – developing caring and committed relationships
- Service – sharing towards each other in times of need & reaching outside the church to show Christ’s love in a tangible way
- Worship – ascribing glory to God
- Evangelism - connecting people to Christ by intentionally sharing the Gospel message
- Prayer – speaking with God personally, regularly, and for one another
- Teaching – a great place to ask questions and to learn from others about God’s Word

What are the roles in the church? What is your role?

1 Corinthians 12:20 “As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.”

1 Corinthians 12:27-31 “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third

teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.”

What Does the Bible Say About Online Church?

Is "Online Church" Really a Church?

True followers of Christ are always described as part of God's "universal church" (all genuine believers across history). But what about the "local church"? Can we BE the church merely through our virtual attendance? Although the concept of "internet live streams" would be foreign to biblical times, across the Bible we see important descriptions, commands, and principles for the "local church" gathering together...

Why We Gather: 12 Biblical Reasons the Church Gathers in Person

1. We Gather because God Chose and Called Us Out of Isolation and Into Our Purpose Together

1 Corinthians 12:18 "But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose." (ESV)

- Modern day "Christianity" has advocated for an individualism ("Lone Ranger Christianity") that is far from the biblical descriptions of corporate responsibility and accountability. The biblical church (*Ekklesia*) is BOTH the people who gather and the act of gathering.

2. We Gather because We Need Each Other; the Body Assembled, Not Disassembled

1 Corinthians 12:21 "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'"

- If a piece of your body were physically severed, its disconnection would both evidence & lead towards the severed-member's damage & death. Likewise, the "believer" who severs themselves from the local body of Christ will both evidence & lead themselves on a path towards spiritual damage & death.

- 1 John 2:19 "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us."

3. We Gather to Suffer & Celebrate Together

1 Corinthians 12:26-27 "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."

- God created us for relationships where we lovingly share the ups and downs of life together.

- Genesis 2:18 "Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone"

4. We Gather to Serve God

1 Corinthians 12:27 "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."

- We were created and gifted with purpose to love God and one another, in and through our local church. Don't waste the life and gifting God has given to you. You are not called to be a consumer, you are called and created to be a contributor.

- 1 Peter 4:10 "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace"

5. We Gather, because Outside the Church is Dangerously Described as Satan's Realm

1 John 5:19 "We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

(see also... 1 Corinthians 5:5, Luke 4:5-6, & Ephesians 2:2)

- We live in dangerous times and the local church is a place where our presence together brings wisdom, encouragement, safety, and strengthening as we engage in real spiritual battle with our eternal enemies.

6. We Gather In Person, In Spite of Risk, Because God Commands Us

Hebrews 10:24-25 "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near"

- The early church faced great risk of persecution when they gathered. Many "underground" churches today gather together in spite of the very real possibility of financial consequences, arrests, beatings, and death.

- "What Does the Bible Say about Risk" - www.trustworthyword.com/risk

7. We Gather Together As a Foretaste of our Heavenly Gathering

1 Thessalonians 4:17 "Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord."

- The act of gathering together in a biblical church service is a picture, shadow, and foretaste of the delightful activities of worshipping and enjoying God's presence together in Heaven.

8. We Gather for Lasting Joy in God and One Another

2 John 12 "Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete."

- The early church had a safe alternative to physically gathering together - letter writing - but they never saw such a connection as being a sufficient replacement to physical presence in gathering. Gathering together in worship through a local church brings unique joy that can't be fully experienced by other means of connection.

9. We Gather, Because Separation Leads to Grief

Acts 20:37-38 "And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship."

- When physical separation occurred between Paul and his church family, it brought sorrow and grief. Likewise, true believers should discover a sincere and pressing desire to be together in person consistently whenever possible.

10. We Gather, as a Local Flock of Sheep Waiting, Preparing, and Uniting for the Chief Shepherd

1 Peter 5:2–4 “shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

- One of the most common descriptions of both the universal and local churches is that of a flock of sheep with a chief Shepherd (Jesus) and under-shepherds (pastors). When a sheep wanders from the flock, the distance and separation results in a lack of nutrition, protection, and guidance. Our local gatherings help us to grow, heal, strengthen, and prepare for the return of Christ.

11. We Gather, because “Online Church” Is Not A Real Church - Don’t Settle for Less than what God Commands

3 John 14 “I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.”

- Although connecting to your church family via online live streams may be an occasional and temporary necessity, “online church” does not meet the Biblical purposes, functions, and commands of gathering in person.

12. We Gather because We Have Been Purchased for Purpose

Acts 20:28 “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.”

- The practice of going to church, is the practice being the church - loving God and loving others. We have great purpose when we come together. Our coming together prepares us to go out and live lives that radiate God’s love and truth. Let’s not miss out on our purpose in life and as a church.

- Acts 2:42–47 “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. [43] And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. [44] And all who believed were together and had all things in common. [45] And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. [46] And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, [47] praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

5 Purposes of Live Streaming a Church Service

If “online church” is not a real church, should we still stream our services? Where possible, Yes!

Online Live Streaming of Our Church Services Serves As...

1. Outreach to believers disconnected from a local church...to reconnect them to presence in a local fellowship.

2. Evangelism to unbelievers needing to hear the Gospel...to connect them to Jesus in salvation.

3. Encouragement to those temporarily disconnected from our local church due to travel, sickness, or disability...to overwhelm them with God's love and strength.

4. A blessing to our homebound church members who are unable to leave their home...to help them remain faithful to Christ until they meet Him face to face.

5. A supplemental discipleship tool to compliment your belonging in a local church...to help one another mature and grow as followers of Christ.

6 Things that Happen When We Don't Gather Together...

1. We disobey God.

2. We miss our purpose.

3. We endanger ourselves to Satan, the world, and our flesh.

4. We grieve our local body of Christ.

5. We disable and weaken our local body of Christ.

6. We isolate ourselves relationally, emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually.

How have you handled gathering with your local church in the past? How can you grow and improve?

1 Thessalonians 2:17 "But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face"

8 of Satan's Best Temptations to Keep You Out of Church

Here are some of the most common thoughts that Satan tempts us with to try to disconnect us from our local church family. While there are often times that God calls His people to a new church, Jesus will never call His people away from gathering with a local church altogether.

1. "I don't need to go to church to be a Christian"

God describes true Christians as desiring corporate worship, instruction, fellowship, & being obedient to His commands. The biblical church (*Ekklesia*) is BOTH the people who gather and the act of gathering.

2. "The church is not a building; the people are the church."

God calls the people of the church out of their homes to gather together in worship. The church is not passive, it is active.

3. "I'm safer at home"

God calls us to gather, even in the midst of risky situations.

4. “_____ Church is a bunch of cliques”

God calls us into small groups and fellowship, even if it is hard.

5. “_____ Church is a bunch of hypocrites”

God calls uses the church gatherings to heal & grow the sinful.

6. “_____ Church doesn’t meet my needs...I’m not getting fed”

God calls us to serve, not to be served. Church is about God, not us.

7. “There are better sermons/worship online”

God calls us into local fellowships, not just online resources. Watching at a distance can never replace participating in person.

8. “It’s too early... I’m too busy... I’m too tired”

God calls us to give Him one full day a week & to prepare for His return.

***Your Presence Reveals Your Priorities:
5 Steps Forward Together to Gather***

- 1) Admit** Your Need to Gather with Your Local Church.
- 2) Confess** Your Past Sinful Failures in Attitude and Action Towards God and His Church.
- 3) Ask** God for Help to Resist Satan’s Temptations.
- 4) Protect** Your Lord’s Day - One Day a Week.
- 5) Make** Your “Church Ethic” Exceed Your “Work Ethic” & Practice Mutual Accountability.

*Let’s learn and grow together as we await the return of our Lord and Savior!
He died for us, let’s live & gather for Him!*

What Does the Bible Say About Church Discipline?

What is church discipline? Church discipline is a process clearly described by Matthew 18:15-20 that describes a progression from personal/private confrontation/rebuke to a small group confrontation/rebuke to a level of church awareness of the unrepentant state of huge church member. The process ends either with repentance or the eventual expulsion of the unrepentant individual outside of the church.

What are the goals of church discipline? The goals of church discipline are:

- 1) Restore the relationship between a Christian in sin and Christ (Galatians 6:1).
- 2) Restore the relationship between a Christian in sin with other believers and their church in a spirit of love (2 Corinthians 2:5-11).
- 3) Rebuke and expel an unrepentant church member for the sake of their salvation (1 Corinthians 5:3-5).
- 4) Rebuke and expel an unrepentant church member for the protection of the flock (1 Corinthians 5:2, Matthew 18:17, 1 Corinthians 5:6).
- 5) Rebuke and expel an unrepentant church member as a warning for church members (1 Timothy 5:20).

Why is church discipline so important? Church discipline is so important because Satan is constantly attacking the love, forgiveness, and unity of the church (2 Corinthians 2:11). Satan also uniquely attacks and seeks to divide and misdirect the church through false teachers (2 Peter 2, 3:17-18). Public punishment and discipline is difficult, but necessary for obedience to the Lord in His plan for the shepherding of His children (2 Corinthians 2:6). When repentance occurs, loving forgiveness and restoration is a beautiful picture of God's mercy and grace. Churches are warned of the danger of not confronting sin and unrepentant believers within their churches (Revelation 2:20-25).

How is church discipline to be done? Church discipline is designed to be done with truth-filled conviction but also grace-filled gentleness (Galatians 6:1). In that process Christians are also reminded to be watching their own attitudes and thoughts to prevent themselves from also falling into temptation (Galatians 6:1).

What do these stages of discipline look like today? The stages should always be done one on one first, secondarily through the inclusion of a pastor or church leader, thirdly through the church leadership as a whole before the issue being carried in front of the church in a godly and orderly manner. In the case of a charge against a pastor, the charges must be verified by two or three witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19).

What is an example of a mutual decision to "part ways"? Paul and Barnabas and Mark in Acts 15:36-41 are an example of a mutual decision to “part ways.” Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement over using Mark (Barnabas' cousin, Colossians 4:10) in ministry. Paul's concern was over Mark's faithfulness after Mark had previously abandoned them on a mission trip to Pamphylia and had proved unfaithful to do the work he was called to do (Acts 15:38). Paul replaced Barnabas and Mark with Silas whose faithfulness was attested to by other Christian brothers.

Were Paul and Barnabas and Mark ever restored? Although that we do not see a restoration between Paul and Barnabas, we do see a restoration between Paul and Mark in 2 Timothy 4:11 Paul states "Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry." Time in faithful ministry evidenced Mark's restoration to Gospel service alongside Paul and his instruction to the church at Colossae to welcome Mark (Colossians 4:10).

What are the Steps of Biblical Discipline?

How is Matthew 18:15-20 to be conducted? Biblical discipline continues until either true repentance or expulsion from the church results. The spirit to which it is done is a spirit of love and gentleness, with an emphasis on prayer towards God granting repentance (2 Timothy 2:8, 24-26). The intent is not to embarrass or humiliate the offender with a self-righteous attitude. The goal is forgiveness and restoration of unity within the church (2 Timothy 2:10). The church must diligently follow Matthew 18:15-20 to completion with the awareness that Satan seeks to destroy and divide churches (2 Timothy 2:11). A little tolerated sin within the church threatens to spread and corrupt the entire church (1 Corinthians 5:7, Revelation 2:20, Romans 6:17-20).

What sins are to be dealt with according to Matthew 18:15-20? Although no specific list of sins is given, it appears that public sins against the holiness of God, the unity and leadership of the church, and the teachings of the Scriptures are the areas of sins most commonly dealt with by church discipline.

When has true repentance happened? True repentance ends the process of discipline within Matthew 18:15-20 and is the optimal goal. True repentance is not made merely in the fear of consequences, but is clearly heartfelt, sincere, and lasting. True repentance shows an understanding of the particular sins committed, confessing them completely and specifically to those to whom they have been against. True repentance does not make excuses for one's sin, verbally apologizes without qualification, asks for forgiveness, and demonstrates repentance through a changed life (Acts 26:20).

Who does the apology need to be directed towards? The scope of the apology needs to be as wide as the scope of the offense. In simple terms, the offender needs to apologize to as many people as they sinned against. If they sinned against the whole

church, the apology should be to the gathered congregation in an orderly and appropriate manner.

What is biblical discipline? Discipline is a form of punishment designed to correct the offender back to a right practice that demonstrates true repentance. Biblical discipline may be implemented “by the majority” (2 Corinthians 2:7) in “the presence of all” (1 Timothy 5:20) and seems to almost always to involve an expulsion from church membership (1 Corinthians 5:1-10).

What if the offending individual is in church leadership? If the offender is in church leadership, but repents, they should be restored but wisdom should be used in regard to the roles of leadership they are within. Even though they may remain within the membership of the church it may be wise for them to take a voluntary or enforced sabbatical from leadership until they demonstrate trustworthiness and “obedience in everything” (2 Timothy 2:9). If the offender is unrepentant, then the process should continue to follow Matthew 18:15-20 towards a public rebuke and expulsion.

What if the individual is ordained as a deacon or pastor? In the case of a charge against a pastor, the charges must be verified by two or three witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19). Pastors and Deacons should be reevaluated to see if they continue to meet their biblical qualifications for their position (1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9, Acts 6:1-6). If they do not meet these qualifications, they do not need to be serving in such a role and should be removed from active service. Furthermore, if they were licensed or ordained as a church affirmation, such an affirmation may need to be suspended or revoked. If the offender is unrepentant, then the process should continue to follow Matthew 18:15-20 towards a public rebuke and expulsion.

When and how does expulsion occur? When an individual demonstrates a persistence in sin (1 Timothy 5:20) they are to be treated as a non-believer (“Gentile and a tax collector,” Matthew 18:17). This punishment and expulsion is also referred to as:

- “rebuke them in the presence of all” (1 Timothy 5:20)
- “removed from among you” (1 Corinthians 5:2)
- “deliver to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 5:5)
- “cleanse out the old leaven” (1 Corinthians 5:7)
- “not to associate with” (1 Corinthians 5:11)
- “purge the evil person from among you” (1 Corinthians 5:13)
- “must be silenced” (Titus 1:11)
- “rebuke them sharply” (Titus 1:13)
- “handed over to Satan” (1 Timothy 1:20)

What happens after an individual is cast out of a church? Part of treating an individual like a “Gentile and a tax collector” (Matthew 18:17) is the understanding that by their unrepentance they have demonstrated their spiritual deadness and lostness. The primary efforts and focus of prayers should be towards the salvation of the

individual (Acts 26:18). Their impact and influence of their sinful teachings or practices must be minimized.

What if an individual leaves the church instead of repenting or facing church discipline? Running away from accountability is helpful to neither the individuals involved, the current congregation, or any future congregations involved. Avoiding accountability is a form of unrepentance that should be brought to the attention of the church. It may also be necessary and helpful to warn a future church of the unrepentant church member's aggrieved condition upon their departure. This warning may occur through the form a formal church letter or a pastor to pastor warning (2 Timothy 4:14-15).

What is an example of a church constitution and by-laws that includes church discipline? Here is an excerpt from our church. A more comprehensive version of church discipline procedures and comments can be found at: peacemaker.net & alliancedefendingfreedom.org.

- (1) In cases of differences between members or broken fellowship with the church, reconciliation rather than punishment shall be the objective, which governs the attitude of one toward another. It is our purpose to pursue every reasonable measure to assist any troubled member. The pastor, staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance.
- (2) Should any unhappy difference arise between members, the aggrieved member shall follow in a tender spirit the rules of Christ given in Matthew 18:15-22, in an effort to settle the difficulty.
- (3) Should a member repeatedly become an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, public scandal, persistent breach of our Church Covenant, or undermine the mission of the church, the deacons with the counsel of the pastor, following the Matthew 18:15-22, shall attempt to correct the offense; and if such an effort fails, they shall report the case to the church.
- (4) In case of grave difficulty, the church may request the advice of an acceptable council of brethren from churches of like faith and order.
- (5) In such cases the church may withdraw church membership by a three-fourths (3/4) majority ballot vote of those members present and voting, but only after notice and hearing and faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and reconciliation.

What Does the Bible Say About Baptism?

15 Truths and Examples

1. FORESHADOWED in the Flood & Old Testament

(1 Peter 3:20-21) because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. 21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

2. John's ministry of baptism POINTS TO JESUS

(Mt 3:11) I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

3. Jesus was baptized because it was GOD'S PLAN

(Mt 3:15) But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.

4. In Jesus' baptism we SEE THE TRINITY

(Mt 3:16-17) And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

5. Jesus LED HIS DISCIPLES

to baptize others (John 3:22) After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing.

6. Baptism was the FIRST STEP of being a disciple

(John 4:1) Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John

7. Jesus COMMANDS us to baptize believers

(Mt 28:19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

8. Baptism was always connected with REPENTANCE AND BELIEF

(Acts 2:37-41) v.38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

9. Baptism was always IMMEDIATE

(Acts 2:37-41) v.41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

10. Baptism was always by IMMERSION

(John 3:23) “baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there”

11. Baptism is always by a biblical, Christian church leader, with a BIBLICAL understanding of baptism

(Mark 1:1-11) “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”

12. Jesus said baptism is a PICTURE of faith

(Acts 1:5) for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

13. For UNITY, not division

(1 Corinthians 1:10-17) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

14. BAPTISM ALWAYS FOLLOWS SALVATION

Peter commands the Gentiles (non-Jews) to be baptized when they had already received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:47-48) “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

The Ethiopian eunuch was EAGER when he saw water, asking, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” (Acts 8:38)

What Does the Bible Say About the Lord's Supper?

THE LORD'S SUPPER IS... (from 1 Corinthians 11:17-34)

Part of Regular Gathering

v.17 But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse

Designed for Unity

v.18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, 19 for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

God-Focused: What not to do...

v.20 When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. 21 For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

Important: Christ Delivered and Modeled

v.23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you,

A Symbolic Remembrance & Proclamation: Received as a Gift of God

v.23 that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Purposed for Self-Examination

v.27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

Serious: Judge Yourself or Be Disciplined in Love

v.29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

Selfless: Put Others First

v.33 So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another—34 if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

What Does the Bible Say About Worship Through Singing?

What is worship? *Worship is a truth-based, spiritual relationship with God that responds to God's greatness by a daily dying to oneself, internalization of His truths, and practice of faith-filled actions in Christ.* Romans 12:1-2 "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." 1 Corinthians 10:32 "whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Why does God want us to sing? *Singing is one aspect by which we worship God, publicly proclaiming His glory and holiness and our gratitude to Him for who He is and for the gift of Son for our salvation.* Hebrews 12:28-29 "Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire."

What does God want us to sing? *Scripture-Focused Songs:* Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

What sorts of methods & instruments should we use for worship in song?
(Ps 150:3-6)

- *All Sorts of Passionately-Played Instruments:* Psalm 150:3-5 "Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!"
- *Dance:* Psalm 150:4 "Praise him with...dance"
- *Human Singing:* Psalm 150:6 "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!"

How does God want us to sing? (Ephesians 5:18-21, 1 Chronicles 15:16, 2 Chronicles 30:21)

- *Spirit-Filled:* Ephesians 5:18 "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit"
- *Congregationally-Sung:* Ephesians 5:19 "addressing one another"
- *All Sorts of God-Focused Songs:* Ephesians 5:19 "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs"
- *Singing with your heart to God:* Ephesians 5:19 "singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart"
- *Thanks-Filled:* Ephesians 5:20 "giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father"

- *Focused on Jesus' Name:* Ephesians 5:21 “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” Hebrews 13:15 “Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.”
- *Self-less:* Ephesians 5:21 “submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”
- *Loudly to Raise Joyous Sounds:* 1 Chronicles 15:16 “David also commanded the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their brothers as the singers who should play loudly on musical instruments, on harps and lyres and cymbals, to raise sounds of joy.”
- *Mightily & Passionately:* 2 Chronicles 30:21 “...praised the Lord day by day, singing with all their might to the Lord”

Do we need to sing in tune? *Our hearts need to be in tune with God*, for “those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24) as we make our “joyful noises” (Psalm 98:4).

How does singing happen in the Bible?

30. **Are there solos/special music?** *Almost exclusively in Scripture, all singing seems to be led by large groups and sung congregationally.* An exception may be seen in Mary’s “Magnificat” (Luke 1:46-55), but that seems to be a more private song that she sings devotionally to God. Miriam’s song in Exodus 15:21 is another possible example, but it is only one verse that follows 20 verses of congregational singing and is accompanied by all of the women playing tambourines and dancing. Deborah, a judge of Israel, and Barak, a military leader, sing a song together after defeating a foreign army (Judges 5). David is spoken of playing music (not singing) with his lyre as Saul is attacked by demons (1 Samuel 16:14-23). Solos seem to be a rare exception in biblical examples of singing.
31. **Are there choirs?** *The Levites were commanded by their spiritual leaders to function as a band, choir, with leaders who organized and led the nation of Israel to worship God.*
2 Chronicles 29:28-30 “The whole assembly worshiped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded. ...And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed down and worshiped.”
- **Who picks the songs?** *God’s appointed leaders are responsible for the praying, reading, teaching, and singing of God’s Word.* (Judges, Kings and priests in Old Testament, pastors/shepherds/elders in New Testament) 2 Chronicles 29:30 “Hezekiah the king and the officials commanded the Levites to sing praises to the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the seer.”
 - **Are there bands/praise teams?** *Yes, Israel was led in worship by a group of skilled musicians and singers.* 1 Chronicles 16:4-7 “Then he appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the Lord, to invoke, to thank, and to praise the Lord, the God of Israel. Asaph was the chief, and second to him were Zechariah, Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Jeiel, who were to play harps and lyres; Asaph was to sound the cymbals, and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests were to blow trumpets regularly before the ark of the covenant of God. Then on that day David first appointed that thanksgiving be sung to the Lord by Asaph and his brothers.”
 - 2 Chronicles 34:12 “The Levites, all who were skillful with instruments of music”

- **What instruments are used?** *Every sort available.* 1 Chronicles 16:42 “Heman and Jeduthun had trumpets and cymbals for the music and instruments for sacred song. The sons of Jeduthun were appointed to the gate.” (see also Psalm 150 and many other passages)
 - 1 Chronicles 23:5 “4,000 shall offer praises to the Lord with the instruments that I have made for praise.”
 - Genesis 4:21 – Jubal, the great-x-6-grandson of Adam was “the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe”
- **How does Jesus sing?** *Jesus sings congregationally:* Hebrews 2:12 “I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation, I will sing your praise.”
 - Matthew 26:30 “And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”
- **Do we stand or sit?** *Worship in song involves active participation, not passive listening.*

2 Chronicles 7:6 “The priests stood at their posts; the Levites also, with the instruments for music to the Lord that King David had made for giving thanks to the Lord—for his steadfast love endures forever—whenever David offered praises by their ministry; opposite them the priests sounded trumpets, and all Israel stood.”
- **Do we need worship leaders?** *Biblical worship in song involves leadership over the congregation.* 2 Chronicles 23:5 “all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets, and the singers with their musical instruments leading in the celebration.” Multiple references to “the choirmaster” who selects songs and leads the singers and musicians. Habakkuk 3:19, multiple introductions to Psalms.
- **Do we sing new songs or old songs?** *We sing both unfamiliar (new) and familiar (old) songs.* ‘New songs’ (Psalm 40, 149, Isaiah 42:10, Revelation 14) and ‘Hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs’ (Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:19) are biblical phrases used to describe what we sing.

How important are lyrics? *Lyrics are the most essential aspect of singing; they must be rooted in God’s truths and wisdom.* David, (2 Samuel 23:1) “the sweet psalmist of Israel”, wrote over half of the 150 psalms, but King Solomon, known for his God-given wisdom, wrote the most songs of any biblical author (1 Kings 4:32), “He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005.”

Can singing be spontaneous in worship? Can just anyone “bring a song” as they feel led? *God commands orderly worship with the leadership and execution of both music and teaching.* Since leading worship has the inescapable elements and focus of teaching and authority, it is wise and biblical to have godly male leaders that both plan and lead worship in song, along the other elements of a congregational service (1 Timothy 2:12-14). According to the service expectations of teaching and leadership, worship leaders should fit the qualifications of overseers/elders/pastors/shepherds (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9). Likewise, in an era full of heretical teachings, lyrics, and songs, it is wise to have an equipped and prepared leader to shepherd by ensuring that false teachings are not introduced or supported in song or statement. These steps help ensure that God’s people are properly built up through the teaching, prayer, and singing

of the Word of God. 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 “v.40 But all things should be done decently and in order.”

What is the role of our minds in singing? *Spiritual singing cannot be only with spiritual passion and emotions, but must be rooted in truth and processed through our minds.* 1 Corinthians 14:15 “What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.”

Is singing dangerous? *We are warned of the danger of self-centered and self-entertaining singing.* Amos 6:4-5 “Woe to those who...stretch themselves out on their couches...who sing idle songs”

What will we sing in Heaven? *Worshiping God in song is one of our joyous responses to experiencing God’s greatness in heaven.* Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8 depict angelic, living creatures unceasingly singing “Holy, Holy, Holy.” Revelation 5:2 and 16:8 reference the angelic and human use of harps in worship. Angels are described as singing a “new song” (Rev 5:9-10) and the people of God are described as singing a “new song” to God (Rev 14:3) as well as the song of Moses (Rev 15:3).

What songs are shallow? *Any song that emphasizes our subjective personal experience and emotions over God’s objective truths and biblical responses to those truths are extremely shallow and potentially heretical.*

What songs are heretical? *Songs that fail to present a biblical understanding of God and His work in salvation are heretical and dangerous.* They often are written in a mystical or romantic manner to focus on an emotional understanding of who God is (a diminished view of God’s majesty and greatness, more emphasis on us than on God), an imbalance emphasis on hope for Heaven (rather than a biblical focus on a hope in and for God as our central desire), or how “we achieve” salvation (rather than God’s work in saving us).

- Early Church History Examples:
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/messenger/earlyhymns.c5.html>
- More Recent Church Examples:
<http://www.modernreformation.org/default.php?page=articledisplay&var2=698>

What Does the Bible Say About Pastors and Deacons?

What are the biblical offices within a church? While all Christians are spiritually gifted by God for ministry work (Romans 12:6–8, Ephesians 4:11, and 1 Corinthians 12:7–11, 28) “for the common good”, pastors and deacons are the two offices within the church. The term pastor is used synonymously with overseer, elder, and bishop across the Bible to describe the same role (example: Acts 14:23, Acts 20:17, 28). Their qualifications and purposes are listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The qualifications and calling of deacons are listed in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The office of pastor is distinguished from the office of deacon in function by the call for pastors to be the teachers and authoritative leaders over a local church.

Top Bible Passages to Consider

A simple reading of the below passages will be the most helpful answer to understanding the qualifications, role, and functions of pastors and deacons:

1 Timothy 2:8-15 I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; [9] likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, [10] but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. [11] Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. [12] I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. [13] For Adam was formed first, then Eve; [14] and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. [15] Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control. (1 Timothy 2:8-15 ESV)

1 Timothy 3:1–7 “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. [2] Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, [3] not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. [4] He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, [5] for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? [6] He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. [7] Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.” (ESV)

1 Timothy 3:8–13 “Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. [9] They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. [10] And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. [11] Their wives likewise must be

dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. [12] Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. [13] For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”

1 Corinthians 14:33-35 “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, [34] the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. [35] If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.”

Acts 14:23 “And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

Acts 15:6 “The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter.”

Acts 20:28 “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.”

Philippians 1:1 “Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons”

1 Timothy 4:14 “Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.”

1 Timothy 5:17 “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.”

Titus 1:5–9 “This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—[6] if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. [7] For an overseer, as God’s steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, [8] but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. [9] He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”

1 Peter 5:1–5 “So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: [2] shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; [3] not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. [4] And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. [5] Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you,

with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

What Does the Bible Say About a Call to Ministry?

What does the Bible say about a call to ministry? A call to ministry is important to discern. All Christians are called to the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18) and to be equipped for such work through their local church (Ephesians 4:12). Every Christian has a call to bear witness to Gospel truth and love in both familiar and unfamiliar relationships through evangelism and discipleship (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8). Here are some biblical truths to consider in evaluating God's call for you to serve within His kingdom:

Satan – Beware the False Call of Satan.

- *Adam & Eve* – “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?” Genesis 3:1
- *False Prophets* - “Behold, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, declares the LORD, and who tell them and lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness, when I did not send them or charge them. So they do not profit this people at all, declares the LORD.” Jeremiah 23:32
- *False Teachers* – “they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.” 2 Timothy 4:3b,4
- *Anti-Christ* – “Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son.” 1 John 2:22

Abraham – Step Away from the Familiar when Called.

- “Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.” Genesis 12:1

Moses – Don't Make Excuses when God Calls.

32. “Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say” Exodus 4:12

Aaron – Don't Call Yourself.

- “No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was” Hebrews 5:4

Isaiah – Be Willing to Answer God's Call without Qualifications.

- “Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’” Isaiah 6:8

Jonah – Don't Run Away from God's Call.

- “But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish” Jonah 1:3

Jeremiah – Go to Whomever and Speak Whatever God Calls You To Do.

- “I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations....Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. ^s Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD...Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.” Jeremiah 1:5-9

Ezekiel – Follow even when God’s Call is Difficult

- “he said to me, ‘Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel, to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me” Ezekiel 2:3

Disciples Chosen – God’s Call Means He Chose You & Appoint You to Bear Fruit.

- “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.” John 15:16

Sending of the Twelve – Answer God’s Dangerous Call.

- “If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town... I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” Matthew 10:14, 16

Peter – Do Not Doubt God’s Call.

- “‘Lord, if it's you,’ Peter replied, ‘tell me to come to you on the water.’ ²⁹‘Come,’ he said... Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. ‘You of little faith,’ he said, ‘why did you doubt?’” Matthew 14:28,29a,31

Jesus to the Cross – God’s Call is for God’s Will.

- “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done” Luke 22:42
- “offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” – Romans 12:1-2

Disciples Sent – God’s Call involves Great Power and Distance.

- “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” Acts 1:8

Christ’s Ambassadors – God’s Call is for Us to be Messengers.

- “We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.” 2 Corinthians 5:20

Paul & Barnabas – Be Willing to Part Godly Company in Order to Follow God’s Will.

- “They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, ⁴but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.” Acts 15:39,40

Paul – God’s Call Often Involves Unplanned Situations and Unfinished Work.

- “But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain.” Romans 15:23,24a

Elder/Shepherd/Pastor/Overseer/Bishop – God’s Call has Standards.

- “Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. ⁵(If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.” 1 Timothy 3:2-7 (also Titus 1:6-9)

John Bisagno – *Letters to Timothy* - “Find God’s tailor-made will for you and do it...Don’t be deterred. If God has called you, God will use you...don’t drift from your call. Better to be on a side street in Calcutta in the will of God than in the White House in Washington, D.C., out of his will. If you’re called to be a servant of the king, don’t stoop to be president. The body of Christ has many parts and many different kinds of folks, and the toes are just as important as the hands.” (38)

John Bisagno – *Letters to Timothy* - Read Charles Spurgeon’s “How to Know the Call of the Ministry” in *Lectures to My Students*...summarizes the five main points that influenced him (p.34-36)

- **Desire** – “There was a time when I was passionate about the music ministry, but simultaneously that passion began to fade and a new passion to preach begins to grow. I wanted it more than anything else, and I knew it to be the call of God. He will put the desire in the sincere heart to do what he wants done...if you can do anything else but preach, by all means, don’t preach. But if the passion burns, then you must preach. If it is your all-consuming, magnificent obsession, then do it.”
- **Ability** – “This is not to say you will be the greatest orator....God gives us some natural abilities and gifts to do what he wants us to do...If you have the ability to organize your thoughts and express them, let alone some special skills in communication, and this is reinforced with a passion to sue them, then the call of God is indicated.”
- **Opportunity** – “Where God leaves us to serve and gifts us to serve, he provides opportunity to serve. Open and closed doors are important in reading the hand of God in our lives...God will open the door for you to do what he wants you to do. A closed door is usually an indication of wrong timing or a detour.”

- **Blessing** – “There should be some degree of visible affirmation of your ministry as you pursue it.”
- **The Opinion of Others** – “Discuss your decision with those in whom you have great spiritual confidence. Ask their advice; seek their counsel. Let them hear your heart, and listen to them.”

Curtis C. Thomas – *Practical Wisdom for Pastors: Words of encouragement and counsel for a lifetime of ministry* (21)

Six Questions to Consider:

- “Does the man reach out for the work?”
- “Is he qualified biblically?”
- “Does he possess the gifts necessary to fulfill the functions?”
- “Do the elders and the church think he is gifted and morally qualified?”
- “Are his life and doctrine sound?”
- “Will he live as an example before the flock?”

Charles Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, “The Call to Ministry”

- “an intense, all-absorbing desire for the work...this desire must be a thoughtful one...the desire I have spoken of must be thoroughly disinterested...[no] other motive than the glory of God and the good of souls...[a desire] that continues with us, a passion which bears the test of trial” (27-28)
- “aptness to teach and some measure of the other qualities needful for the office of a public instructor...mere ability to edify, and aptness to teach, is not enough; there must be other talents to complete the pastoral character. Sound judgment and solid experience must instruct you; gentle manners and loving affections must sway you; firmness and courage must be manifest; and tenderness and sympathy must not be lacking...Gifts administrative in ruling well...be fitted to lead, prepared to endure, and able to persevere...read carefully the qualifications of a bishop, given in 1 Tim. iii. 2-7 and in Titus i. 6-9” (28-31)
- “must see a measure of conversion-work going on under his efforts...if the Lord gives you no zeal for souls...avoid the pulpit as your heart’s peace and your future salvation” (31-32)
- “your preaching should be acceptable to the people of God...none of you can be pastors without the loving consent of the flock...the sheep will know the God-sent shepherd” (32-33)

John Newton’s letter to a friend on the call to ministry:

- “A warm and earnest desire to be employed in this service...[not] from a selfish principle...[but] from the Spirit of God”
- “some competent sufficiency as to gifts, knowledge, and utterance”
- “a gradual train of circumstances pointing out the means, the time, the place, of actually entering upon the work”

What Does the Bible Say About False Teachers?

Ephesians 4:11-14 “that we may **no longer be children**, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.”

Colossians 2:8 “**See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition**, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.” (ESV)

What is a prophet? How can I recognize a true prophet from a false prophet? A prophet is a messenger of God who carries a message directly and personally related and is held to 100% consistency with Scripture and 100% fulfillment of any predictive statements. (Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18: 15-22)

What is the difference between a prophet and a teacher? Both roles include the element of teaching, but a prophet claims a direct encounter with God (dream, vision, meeting, voice, event, etc.) where God revealed or spoke a particular message to him.

How can I recognize a true teacher from a bad teacher? A bad teacher from a false teacher? A bad teacher may misunderstand issues in Scripture or just do a poor job at instructing and exhorting people. A false teacher teaches “a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Timothy 6:3) and goes against “sound doctrines” (Titus 1:9) specifically with an understanding towards who God is, what salvation is, and what the Scriptures say.

Isn't it wrong to publicly call out preachers, teachers, Christians, etc.? The issue of “opinions” between Christian brothers is different from the issue of “false teachings.” Paul warns “not to quarrel over opinions” (v.1) in Romans 14, pointing out the dangers of “passing judgment” on a brother in Christ and how it can “destroy the work of God” (v.20). However, God commands us to “judge” those inside the church when their lifestyles (1 Corinthians 5:9-13) do not line up with God's Word. God also commands us to watch out for and confront false teachers who “teach a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Timothy 6:3). Pastors are specifically tasked to 1) "give instruction in sound doctrine" and 2) "rebuke those who contradict it" (Titus 1:9).

Should a false teacher be called out by name? If so, when? When a specific false teaching or teacher is affecting a body of believers (i.e. family, small group, church, denomination, region, nation), that false teaching and teacher must be named and confronted. Paul does this with both false teachings (1 Timothy 1:3-20 ; 6:2-10, Jude 1,

2 Peter 2, & many more) and with particular names (Alexander, Hymenaeus, & Philetus in 1 Timothy 1:20 and 2 Timothy 2:17)

What are some examples of false teachings? What are some characteristics of false teachers?

There are many examples of false teachers with common descriptions (Galatians, 2 Peter, 1 & 2 Timothy, 1 & 2 John, Jude) that they may look and sound like Christians but that their teachings and lifestyle are not consistent with Scripture.

False Teachers: Watch Out!

(2 Peter 2, ESV)

Believers Mature At Different Paces

3rd Level Issues: Allowable Individual Differences “As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. ...So then each of us will give an account to God.” (Romans 14:1-12)

Less Faithful Teachers: Believing Christians, in Error

2nd Level Issues: Denominational Differences “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.” (James 3:1)

False Teachers Misrepresent God & the Gospel

1st Level Issues: Christian vs. Non-Christian: Essential Teachings “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:20)

- *Who is God? What is the Gospel? What are the Scriptures?*

- **PREPARE!** Their Presence is Guaranteed but is not Obvious to All – v.1

33. WATCH! False Teachers Are Characterized by:

False Words – v.3 ; Speaking Ignorantly – v.12 ; Endorse Sin – v.2, 13-15, 18 ; Greedy v.3, 14 ; Proud w/no accountability – v.10, 18 (Jude 8) ; Make Empty Promises – v.19 ; Rely on Experience/Dreams (Jude 8) ; Speak Flippantly To Satan/Demons (2 Pet 2:10-13; Jude 8-10) Have Some Scriptural Knowledge, But Wander from It – v.20-22

- **CORRECT & WARN** Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. (Jude 1:3)
- **Their Teachings Are Dangerous – v.1-3 – “destructive heresies”**
- **False Teachings Are Characterized by: (Example, Pergamum, Revelation 2:12-17)**

Positive Thinking (self-focused prayers, name it/claim it, declarations)

Partial Truths (highlight the “positive”/easy, ignore the “negative”/difficult)

Promises (worship the gifts, not the giver)

Health, Wealth, & Prosperity (worldly-focused: good things into god things)

Legalism (works-based salvation, self-righteousness)

License (freedom to sin) “pervert the grace of our God into sensuality” (Jude 1:4)

False Religions “deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (Jude 1:4)

- **Their Punishment Is Guaranteed – v.1-10 (Jude)**

The Lord Knows How to Rescue the Righteous

(v.7-9) The Righteous Are... “distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked”... “as that righteous man [Lot] lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard”

Matthew 15:1–9 “Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, [2] “Why do your disciples **break the tradition of the elders?** For they do not wash their hands when they eat.” [3] He answered them, “**And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?** [4] For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ [5] But you say, ‘If anyone tells his father or his mother, “What you would have gained from me is given to God,” [6] he need not honor his father.’ So **for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God.** [7] You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: [8] “**This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; [9] in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**” (ESV)

Mark 7:1–13 “[7] **in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**’ [8] **You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.**” [9] And he said to them, “You have a fine way of **rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!** ... [13] **thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.**” (ESV)

Galatians 1:13–16 “For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. [14] And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, **so extremely zealous was I for the traditions** of my fathers.” (ESV)

How can you call them false teachers when some of these people have doctrinal statements on their website and do many good things in getting the Bible and gospel into the hands of so many? Christianity is not a salvation of works and although some “good fruits” may seem exist in these ministries, they only mask the lies. The ends of a ministry (salvations, missions, good works) do not justify the means (a false gospel).

When false teachers lead people to Christ, are these converts false believers? Not necessarily. If these believers have understood the gospel falsely, then their trust and faith in Jesus may be out of a greater love of Jesus’ gifts rather than Jesus. Even if they have become true followers of Jesus, they need to study the Word of

God, test their teachers, and be extremely cautious before recommending a teacher to someone else.

What is the Word of Faith movement and “prosperity gospel”? Why is it a problem? The Word of Faith movement and “prosperity gospel” teaches several false doctrines such as (quotes of summary issues from

<http://www.watchman.org/profiles/pdf/wordfaithprofile.pdf>, p.2-4):

- **“There are ‘anointed’ apostles and prophets today.”**
- **“God speaks words of faith with his mouth.”**
- “Human beings were created to be gods.”
- “Jesus Christ is God incarnate – and so are we.”
- “Jesus died spiritually and was born again.”
- **“We should speak words of faith like God does”**
- **“God wants us to be healthy and wealthy now”**

Why are these wrong? Here some short summary corrective statements:

- **“Modern revelations should be viewed with skepticism”**
- **“God does not need to speak ‘words of faith.’”**
- “Human beings were never gods and never will be gods.”
- “Jesus is uniquely God incarnate.”
- “Jesus did not die spiritually and was not born again.”
- **“Faith means trusting in God for the future, not claiming rights for the present.”**
- **“Christ’s redemption assures us of perfect health and wealth – in the resurrection.”**

www.gotquestions.org/prosperity-gospel.html

www.gotquestions.org/Word-Faith.html

What are some examples of Scriptures that are commonly misinterpreted and misapplied by the Word of Faith movement and “prosperity gospel”?

References are to *Health, Wealth, & Happiness: Has the Prosperity Gospel Overshadowed the Gospel of Christ?* By David Jones and Russell Woodbridge

HEALTH-FOCUSED

- **3 John 2** – **“Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.”** – “Prosperity teachers interpret this verse to mean that God wants all believers to ‘prosper in all things.’...John’s purpose in writing 3 John 2 was not to teach doctrine; rather, he was simply opening his letter with a greeting. ...the Greek term translated ‘prosperity,’ which is only used four times in Scripture, does not connote prosperity in terms of gaining material possessions. Rather, the word means ‘to grant a prosperous expedition and expeditious journey’ or ‘to lead by a direct and easy way.’” (Jones & Woodbridge, 99-100).
- **Isaiah 53:4-5** “Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the

chastisement that brought us peace, and **with his wounds we are healed.**” Prosperity preachers will reference the later part of verse 5, “with his wounds we are healed” and will focus on God’s atonement (sacrifice on the cross) being focused on our physical healing. “First Peter 2:24 further clarifies the meaning of Isaiah 53:4-5. Peter writes, ‘He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we may die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ...the context of Isaiah 53:5 indicates that the healing cited by the prophet is spiritual in nature – that is, the remission of sin.’” (Jones & Woodbridge, 91).

WEALTH-FOCUSED

- **Malachi 3:10** “**Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.**” “One of the most prominent characteristics of prosperity theologians is their seeming fixation with the act of giving...often promot[ing] a give-to-get mentality. All believers need to do is sow a seed of faith – that is, donate money to the ministry- and God will bless their marriages, finances, or whatever help is desired. Within the prosperity system, the goal in giving is ultimately to serve oneself instead of others.” (Jones and Woodbridge, 100-101). Prosperity teachers misunderstanding of prayers to God for provision shows itself when they emphasize greedy wants instead of basic needs (“give us each day our daily bread” in Luke 11:3, “if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content” in 1 Timothy 6:8, & “no more need” in Malachi 3:10).
- **Galatians 6:7** “**Do not be deceived, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.**” Prosperity gospel preachers emphasizing “sowing” in order to “reap” using this verse, missing the context that this passage is about reaping eternal life verses reaping corruption, not about reaping temporal/earthly rewards.
- **2 Corinthians 9:6** “**The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.**” The greater context of this passage (v.6-15) is that what we reap is spiritual fruit for the purpose of meeting one another’s needs (not greed...see 2 Corinthians 9:11-12, ‘the needs of the saints’). Prosperity gospel preachers will often redefine their wants/desires as “needs.”

PROSPERITY-FOCUSED

- **John 10:10** “**The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.**” Life that is abundant is synonymous with “eternal life” or “the life to come” which is ultimately focused on God and heavenly things, not on earthly/temporary things. Prosperity theologians like to emphasize “abundant living” here and now, redefining it as material and worldly success, ignoring the warnings of Scripture such as 1 John 2:15-16 “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the

Father but is from the world.” Abundant life is all about an eternity with Jesus, not an accumulation of material possessions.

- **Philippians 4:19** “**And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.**” Prosperity gospel preachers will point to God’s desire to satisfy us here and now with his “riches,” ignoring the countless Scriptures warning against wealth, embracing a right understanding of suffering and perseverance, and overlooking the fact that our “rich” inheritance is found only in Christ.
- **2 Corinthians 8:9** “**For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.**” “Paul is not teaching that Christ died on the cross for the purpose of increasing one’s material net worth. In fact, he is actually teaching the exact opposite. Contextually, it is clear that Paul was teaching the Corinthians that since Christ accomplished so much for them through the atonement, they ought to empty themselves of their riches in service of the Savior. This is why just five verses later Paul urges the Corinthians to give their wealth to their needy brothers, writing “your abundance at the present time should supply their need...that there might be fairness.’ (2 Corinthians 8:14).” (Jones and Woodbridge, 90).

WORDS OF FAITH

- **Proverbs 18:21** “**Death and life are in the power of the tongue,** and those who love it will eat its fruits.” “Prosperity gospel teachers stress that there is power in our words. In support of their claim they quote verses such as Proverbs 18:21. ...Yet, a look at the full context of this verse [including v.20] sheds more light on its meaning...Old Testament scholar Duane Garrett writes, “The purpose of these verses is to warn against being too much in love with one’s own words.’ ...this verse does not suggest that words have creative power, but rather that words can have both positive and negative effects upon people. As the Bible exhorts elsewhere, then, use your tongue wisely (see James 3:1-12).” (Jones & Woodbridge, 96)
- **Romans 4:17** “as it is written, ‘I have made you the father of many nations’—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and **calls into existence the things that do not exist.**” This passage is often used to explain that Christians have “creative power” as “little gods” with their “faith-filled” words. The context of the passage shows that it is God who “calls into existence the things that do not exist” and that it is not a power that has been given to people. Unfortunately prosperity preachers use this passage to encourage people to pray self-focused prayers.
- **James 4:2** “**You do not have, because you do not ask.**” – “Prosperity gospel preachers often note that we ‘have not because we ask not’ (see James 4:2). They encourage believers to pray for personal success in all areas of life. ...but the prosperity gospel’s overemphasis on people turns prayer into a tool that believers can use to obtain their desires from God. Within prosperity theology, people - rather than God - become the focal point of prayer. Curiously prosperity gospel preachers often ignore the second half of James’ teaching on prayer, which reads,

'You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your own passions.' (James 4:3). God does not answer selfish requests that do not honor His name." (Jones and Woodbridge, 96-97)

- **Philippians 4:6** "do not be anxious about anything, but **in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**" We are called to make all of our requests known to God...but these are requests, not demands, not "claimed promises," and not "declarations." The problem is that the "prosperity gospel focuses so much on people's desires that it can lead us to pray selfish, shallow, superficial prayers that do not bring God glory ...when coupled with the prosperity doctrine of faith, the teaching about prayer encourages people to try manipulating God to get what they want – indeed a futile task. This is far removed from praying to God to see His will accomplished." (Jones and Woodbridge, 99).

Many more Scriptures are twisted for the sake of health and wealth. Here is a great resource to understanding more: www.watchman.org/articles/other-religious-topics/how-the-health-and-wealth-gospel-twists-scripture/

Who are people associated with the Word of Faith movement? Some of the most commonly known Word of Faith movement and prosperity gospel leaders are: Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, Kenneth Copeland, TD Jakes, Joyce Meyer, Joseph Prince, Kenneth Hagin, & many more. Some may deny their connections to WOF & the PG, but their teachings demonstrate their connection and justify such labeling.

What is "positive profession," "name-it claim-it," and declarative/claiming prayers and why is it a problem? Positive thinking/profession/confession was popularized by Norman Vincent Peale in 1952 through his book *The Power of Positive Thinking* (publisher of *Guideposts* and an endorser of many New Age, Mormon, and Occultic teachings, writers, and leaders). Some of the leading teachers and authors on the subject are: Joel Osteen (*I Declare: 31 Promises to Speak Over Your Life, Your Best Life Now, Become a Better You*), Joyce Meyer (*Power Thoughts, Change Your Words, Change Your Life, The Power of Being Positive*). A modern day summary of the "positive confession" movement is "the belief that if a believer speaks 'spiritual' or 'faith-filled' words then he can have what he says (Watchman.org on "Positive Confession"). A good Christian response is found in understanding that truth is the focus and sometimes it is negatively focused (confronting us in our sin, putting off our old self, negative confessions in the Psalms) and at other times positively focused (practicing righteousness, putting on our old self). Positive confessions often devolve into declaring/claiming/telling God what to do instead of saying "thy will be done" (Matthew 6:10, 26:42) and asking "according to His will" (1 John 5:14).

<http://www.gotquestions.org/power-positive-thinking.html>

<http://www.gotquestions.org/positive-confession.html>

<http://www.watchman.org/articles/other-religious-topics/positive-confession/>

<http://www.watchman.org/articles/other-religious-topics/norman-vincent-peale/>

Why are the “prayer rebukes” of Satan and his demons a problem? Why is this connected with false teachers? Prayer rebukes can be best described by those who practice naming particular spirits/demons (demon of falsehood, spirit of adultery, etc.) or speak towards the demonic ('I rebuke you' or 'I bind you'). This problem is scripturally seen in Jude 8-10 and 2 Peter 2:10-12.

Is it possible for false teachers to turn to truth and become true teachers? Yes, until we die, it is possible for anyone who is separated from God to turn to Him in salvation. Pray for their repentance and turning to the true Gospel of Christ.

If I have been following a false teacher, should I be embarrassed or ashamed? What does God want me to do in response to realizing that I was following a false teacher? If you find that you have been following a bad or false teacher, repent of believing the lies that you heard/read and put on God's truths. If you have led or encouraged others towards those teachings/teachers, guide them into the truth.

Why did you pick *Heaven is for Real* and *Jesus Calling* as examples of false prophecies? These are highly influential and popular titles that many Christians do not realize are false claims of prophecy.

Why is *Heaven is for Real* by Colton, Todd, & Sonja Burpo an example of a false prophecy? The authors claim that Colton went to heaven and that what is shared within the book is a description of heaven. Since this is claimed to be a divine experience with God the Father, Son, & Spirit, it must be 100% accurate and consistent with what is already presented in Scripture about heaven (i.e. Isaiah 6, Revelation). Here are some errors within the books that demonstrate inconsistencies with Scripture, thus making *Heaven is for Real* an example of false prophecy and its authors false prophets: Jesus on a rainbow horse (p.63, vs. white horse in Rev 6 & 19), people with wings (p.72, 87, 121 vs. no biblical description that matches, only seraphim and cherubim are described with wings), Colton deceived by dad (p.87 vs. Deut 18:22), Gabriel described sitting next to God's throne (p.101 vs. never being described in the Scriptures), angels with swords to “keep Satan out of heaven” (p. 133 vs. Job 1 & 2 – Satan's access to heaven, Jude 9 – Satan confronted by Michael with “the Lord rebuke you” and not a sword, 1 Chronicles 21 & Numbers 22 showing angels using swords vs. people not Satan), no bodies in Hell (p.136 vs. Matt 10:28, John 5:29, Luke 16, Daniel 12:2, Mark 9:43-48, Rev 20:13).

Why is *Jesus Calling* by Sarah Young an example of a false prophecy? Sarah Young claims in her introduction to have had a personal revelation with Jesus on multiple occasions (ix-xv). She states that the devotionals within her book have been directly given to her by God. Even though she claims her writings to not be on the same level of Scripture, she simultaneously claims her book to be divine revelation with God, making it necessary for her writings to be 100% accurate (Deuteronomy 18:20-22). She says “I have continued to receive personal messages from God as I meditate on Him...so

I want to share some of the messages I have received.” (xiii-xiv). She places her experiences and messages ahead of Scripture, weaving Scripture into her devotions as an almost afterthought. Her writings present an inaccurate and shallow view of Jesus, that is therapeutically focused on peace and comfort and ignores Christ's commands towards obedience (descriptive rather than prescriptive). Her theology is also wrongly influenced by Keswick piety (higher/victorious life, second blessing) through Andrew Murray's *The Secret of the Abiding Presence* (xi).

Why did you pick the Word of Faith movement and “prosperity gospel” as false teachings to highlight? Although many Christian cults could have been highlighted for their false teachings, the Word of Faith movement and “prosperity gospel” is a problem within my church congregation and friends. As a loving friend and pastor, it is my responsibility to rebuke false teachings in order to shepherd my flock and lead friends away from dangerous teachings.

Why are you so concerned with TBN (the Trinity Broadcasting Network)? Although TBN is a Christian station seeking to reach the world with the gospel, its messages are not always consistent. On one given Sunday (12/9/13) there were at least four faithful sermon broadcasts on TBN (James Merritt, Ed Young Sr., Adrian Rogers, Michael Youssef), but there were many more heretical, unfaithful broadcasts (Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, Kenneth Copeland, TD Jakes, Joyce Meyer, Joseph Prince, Kenneth Hagin, & many more...). The vast majority of broadcasts were from the Word of Faith movement. My concern is that a Christian may tune in to a faithful sermon and then continue to watch while unfaithful messengers “teach a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Timothy 6:3).

Why did you pick Joel Osteen and Joyce Meyer as false teachers to highlight? Joel Osteen and Joyce Meyer are two of the more influential speakers and authors among my church congregation and represent a spectrum of the Word of Faith movement (little Scripture used to no Scripture used) that helps warn us about the spectrum of heresies.

Why do you state that Joel Osteen is a false teacher? Mr. Osteen is an entertaining and encouraging speaker but fails to share the Gospel completely and uses Scripture out of context. Mr. Osteen makes these errors: (1) The Bible is about me and my glory rather than God's glory (2) Minimizes and ignores sin, thus failing to present the Gospel (3) Disregards a biblical understanding of suffering (4) Places the object of faith on oneself (5) Makes salvation more about my life now than an eternity with Christ (6) Consistently uses Scripture out of context (7) Ongoing association and endorsement of other Word of Faith leaders (8) Misrepresents what “need” is, characterizes it being okay to want more (9) He ignores a biblical understanding of suffering, that sometimes such suffering is God's will (10) Many of his teachings follow the Word of Faith and “prosperity gospel” misunderstandings of who God is and what salvation is ultimately all about.

- “When you say of the Lord you are healthy, you are whole, you are free, you are blessed, you are prosperous – when you say it, God has promised He will do it. ...If you are not sharing in His favor, you might want to watch your words. Here's the key: If you don't unleash your words in the right direction, if you don't call in favor, you will not experience those blessings. Nothing happens unless we speak. Release your faith with your words.” (*It's Your Time*, 121-23.)
- “Our thoughts have tremendous power. Remember, we draw into our lives that which we constantly think about. If we're always dwelling on the negative, we will attract negative people, experiences, and attitudes.” (*Your Best Life Now*, 109)
- “Our words have tremendous power, and whether we want to or not, we will give life to what we're saying, either good or bad... Words are similar to seeds, by speaking them aloud, they are planted in our subconscious minds, and they take on a life of their own.” (*Your Best Life Now*, 122)
- “I've come to expect to be treated differently. I've learned to expect people to want to help me. My attitude is this: I'm a child of the Most High God. My Father created the whole universe. He has crowned me with favor; therefore, I can expect preferential treatment. I can expect people to go out of their way to want to help me.” (*Your Best Life Now*, 38-39).
- “there is a miracle in your mouth. If you want to change your world, start by changing your words...If you'll learn how to speak the right words and keep the right attitude, God will turn that situation around.” (*Your Best Life Now*, 125)
- “Everything I put my hands to prospers and succeeds! Friend, when you make those kinds of bold declarations, all heaven comes to attention to back up God's Word.” (*Your Best Life Now*, 130)
- “with our words, we can prophesy our own future” (*Your Best Life Now*, 114)
- “God has breathed His life into you. He planned seeds of greatness in you. You have everything you need to fulfill your God-given destiny....It's all in you. You are full of potential. But you have to do your part and start tapping into it...You have the seed of Almighty God on the inside of you...We have to believe that we have what it takes.” (*Becoming A Better You*, p.5)
- “We have to conceive it on the inside before we're ever going to receive it on the outside. If you don't think you can have something good, then you never will.” (*Your Best Life Now*, p. 3)
- “I can guarantee you that your difficult situation will never improve as long as you stay in a negative frame of mind. But if you'll develop an attitude of faith and expect events to change positively, then at the right time, that situation will turn around.” (*Your Best Life Now*, p. 16)
- “God wants to increase you financially, by giving you promotions, fresh ideas, and creativity.” (*Your Best Life Now*, p.5)
- “God wants you to live an overcoming life of victory. He doesn't want you to barely get by. He's called *El Shaddai*, 'the God of more than enough.' He's not 'El Cheapo,' the God of barely enough!” (*Your Best Life Now*, p.33)
- “No, God wants to give you your own house. God has a big dream for your life.” (*Your Best Life Now*, p.35)
- “God wants to make your life easier. He wants to assist you, to promote you, to give you advantages.” (*Your Best Life Now*, p.38)

- “You don't have to dwell on every thought that comes to your mind. The first thing you need to do is ascertain where that thought is coming from. Is that thought from God, is it your own thought, or is it a destructive thought from the enemy? How can you tell? Easy. If it's a negative thought, it's from the enemy.” (*Your Best Life Now*, p.109)
- “Forgive the people who did you wrong. Forgive yourself for the mistakes you have made. You may even need to forgive God.” (*Your Best Life Now*, p.144).
- “I am blessed; I am prosperous; I am healthy; I am continually growing wiser.” (*Become a Better You*, 131)
- Beginning of messages, claiming his messages are rooted in Scripture: “This is my Bible. I am what it says I am, I have what it says I have, I can do what it says I can do. Today I'll be taught the Word of God. I boldly confess my mind is alert, my heart is receptive, I will never be the same, in Jesus name.” (Sermon online, December 1, 2013)
- Typical “Gospel presentation”: “We never like to close our broadcast without giving you an opportunity to make Jesus the Lord of your life. Would you pray with me? Just say, 'Lord Jesus, I repent of my sins, come into my heart, I make you my Lord and Savior.’” (Sermon online, December 1, 2013)

Why do you state that Joyce Meyer is a false teacher? Mrs. Meyer is an articulate speaker with a great knowledge of the Bible. My concerns with Mrs. Meyer that make me warn others that she is a false teacher are: (1) Claims of personal revelation from God and angels that she shares verbatim her audience (2) Years of financial improprieties and greed within her ministry organization (3) Failing to distance or deny her association with the Word of Faith movement and “prosperity gospel” (4) Continued emphasis on God’s blessings through health, wealth, and prosperity instead of presenting a biblical understanding and balance (5) Ongoing misunderstanding on the essence of faith through the “power” of words (6) Improper descriptions and actions towards the demonic (naming of spirits and rebuking) (7) Ongoing association and endorsement of other Word of Faith leaders (8) Misrepresents what “need” is, characterizes it being okay to want “as much as I can handle properly” (Power Thoughts message, part 4) (9) She ignores a biblical understanding of suffering, that sometimes such suffering is God’s will (10) Many of her teachings follow the Word of Faith and “prosperity gospel” misunderstandings of who God is and what salvation is ultimately all about (see <http://carm.org/joyce-meyer>)

- “I don't want to spend my whole life talking about the promised land without ever getting there. I want to live in it”(Joyce Meyer, “What Does Your Future Hold” May 21, 2004)
- “Words are containers for power” (*The Name, The Word, The Blood*, p. 37)
- “I prosper in everything I put my hand to. I have prosperity in all areas of my life – spiritually, financially, mentally, and socially. I take good care of my body. I eat right, I look good, I feel good, and I weigh what God wants me to weigh. Pain cannot successfully come against my body because Jesus bore all my pain. I lay hands on the sick and they recover. I receive speaking engagements in person, by

- phone, and/or by mail every day. I walk in the spirit all of the time.” (Joyce Meyer, “List of Confessions”)
- “If you stay in your faith, you are going to get paid. I am now living in my reward.” (Jones and Woodbridge, 67)
 - “The key to partaking of the life and healing energy in the Word is feeding on it until it penetrates your spirit where it deposits that life and energy.” (Joyce Meyer, “Healing Scriptures”)
 - “‘I will’ is the strongest assertion that can be made in the English language. God is speaking to me now saying ‘I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.’ God is watching over this Word, performing it in me now. He is taking sickness away from the midst of me. Good-bye, sickness! The Lord is taking you away from the midst of me. Thank you, Father, for taking sickness away from me. I thank You for doing what You said...I’m abiding under the shadow of Jehovah-Rapha, the Lord that healeth me. No plague shall come nigh my dwelling or my body. I resist sickness and disease. I refuse to accept it! It’s not mine! I refuse to be sick in Jesus’ Name. Sickness cannot trespass in my body. Sickness, (name it), you can’t come nigh my dwelling. I refuse you! I resist you!” (Joyce Meyer, “Healing Scriptures”)
 - “By His stripes I was healed. Healing belongs to me. ...I’ve already got healing, because by His stripes I was healed!” (Joyce Meyer, “Healing Scriptures”)
 - “Will help you to take inventory of what you’ve been saying and begin speaking faith filled words that will bring to pass God’s good plan for your life” (May 14, 2000 LeSea broadcasting)
 - “But you cannot throw out positive confession, and you cannot throw out all the faith teachers, and you cannot throw out positive thinking. And you cannot get rid of those kinds of things because they’re in the Bible from one end of it to the other” (Joyce Meyer, PFO Quarterly Journal, April-June 2002, p. 6., Witchcraft and Related Spirits, pt. 1, sides 1 and 2).
 - “Romans 4:17 says God gives life to the dead and speaks of the nonexistent things as if they already existed. He created the world with faith-filled words (see Genesis 1). We are created in His image, and we can also call things that are not as though they are. We can speak positive thoughts about ourselves into the atmosphere and thereby ‘prophesy our future.’” (Joyce Meyer, “Your Mouth is a Weapon,” Life in the Word March 1997, p. 4.)
 - “You got a storage bin, a storage locker in heaven that has a lot of stuff in it that needs to be claimed.” (Joyce Meyer, “What Does Your Future Hold” May 21, 2004)
 - “Even though she had had the problem for twelve years, and the crowds looked impossible to penetrate, she pressed through and received her miracle. Her faith was released through her words. What a powerful example for you and me” (Joyce Meyer, Enjoying Everyday Life Magazine, “Crossing Over to the Other Side,” May 2004).
 - “Sowing and reaping is a spiritual law...Sow generously and you will reap generously...We need to claim as much of that inheritance as we possibly can...One of the things you can do right now is speak positive things about your future right now” (Joyce Meyer, “What Does Your Future Hold” May 21, 2004).
 - “Remember whatever you are willing to do for God, God is willing to do for you” (week of Sept.20-26, 2005 LeSea broadcasting)

- “Now spirits don't have bodies, so we can't see them. Okay? There probably is, I believe there is, and I certainly hope there is several angels up here this morning that are preaching with me. I believe that right before I speak some anointed statement to you, that one of them bends over and says in my ear what I'm supposed to say to you.” Joyce Meyer (“Witchcraft & Related Spirits” (Part 1) - 2 A-27 Audiotape)
- “There is no hope of anyone going to heaven unless they believe this truth I am presenting. You cannot go to heaven unless you believe with all your heart that Jesus took your place in hell” (Joyce Meyers, *The Most Important Decision You Will Ever Make* 1991).
- “We laid hands on the check and prayed. I went and got all of our checkbooks and my pocketbook and Dave got his wallet and we laid hands on them and put the blood on them, asking God to protect our money, to cause it to multiply and to see to it that Satan could not steal any of it from us” (p.111 *The Name, The Word, The Blood*).

I still don't believe _____ is a false prophet/teacher, so how does this message matter for me? What should I do next? If you haven't been convinced from this outline, you need to be very concerned about your understanding of God, the Gospel, and His truths. Invest some time in reading the Scriptures, the included links, and *Health, Wealth, and Happiness: Has the Prosperity Gospel Overshadowed the Gospel of Christ?* to make sure you understand the teachings of Scripture. Even if you haven't become convinced that one of the individuals mentioned is a false teacher, you need to begin to listen very closely to what you hear and read in the future. You need to make sure that who you listen to is trustworthy and is teaching the whole counsel of God accurately.

What Does the Bible Say About Preaching Someone Else's Sermon (Pastoral Plagiarism)?

Is it wrong to preach someone else's sermon? Intentionally using someone's sermon or sermon outline/structure is plagiarism, even if the author allows it, unless you clearly and specifically communicate that it is someone's sermon/outline. In every other field of employment/work education, media/journalism, politics, academics, writing, the arts, etc. plagiarism is condemned as stealing & misrepresentation...so why would the pastorate be justified for such a practice?

We need to be careful not to justify a practice that God speaks quite clearly to. The issue of plagiarism is not merely offensive to the person you take your sermon/outline from, or merely an offense to the congregation to whom you misrepresent your sermon preparation, but plagiarism in preaching is a direct offense to God.

“Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, declares the Lord, who steal my words from one another.” (Jeremiah 23:29-30, ESV)

D.A. Carson summarizes the issue of plagiarism well in “When Has a Preacher Crossed the Line into Plagiarism in His Sermon?” “Taking over another sermon and preaching it as if it were yours is always and unequivocally wrong, and if you do it you should resign or be fired immediately. The wickedness is along at least three axes: (1) You are stealing. (2) You are deceiving the people to whom you are preaching. (3) Perhaps worst, you are not devoting yourself to the study of the Bible to the end that God's truth captures you, molds you, makes you a man of God, and equips you to speak for him.

If preaching is God's truth through human personality (Phillips Brooks), then serving as nothing more than a kind of organic recording device in playback mode does not qualify. ...Taking over the structure, perhaps the outline in exact wording, and other significant chunks, while filling in the rest of the substance yourself, is not quite so grievous but still reprehensible.”

“So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.” (James 4:17, ESV)

May pastors be men who intentionally encounter God through His Word in sermon preparation and humbly lead His sheep into His presence. Do not steal God's words from one another, lest the Lord come against and discipline you.

Other helpful resources:

- “What is plagiarism?” by Matt Perman

- “On Ghostwriters” by John Piper

“To base the structure of your sermon on someone else’s sermon, but to use your own words, is plagiarism. ... The central problem with plagiarism is twofold: (1) it is stealing; and (2) it bears false witness. Obviously, both of these are unacceptable for Bible-believing Christians (see Exodus 20:15; Mark 10:19; Matthew 15:19, etc). Stealing and bearing false witness fail to love your neighbor as yourself (Romans 13:9).” Matt Perman

What Does the Bible Say About Divorced Men Serving as Deacons and Pastors?

Many people have their own answer to this sensitive question, but have largely based their answer on experience and tradition rather than Scripture (Acts 6:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:8-13, & Titus 1:5-9). In light of the possibility of divorced or remarried deacons and pastors, the verses to consider are 1 Timothy 3:2 “Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife,” 1 Timothy 3:12, “Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children & their own households well,” and Titus 1:6 “if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife”

“Husband of One Wife” or “One Woman Man”? *The phrase “husband of one wife” in the Greek is better translated as “one-woman man” (i.e. a faithful husband):*

- The Greek word for “husband” (*aner*) is actually translated as “husband/husbands” 52 times and “man/men” 143 times in the New Testament (biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/aner.html)
- The Greek word for “wife” (*gune*) is actually translated as “wife/wives” 82 times and as “woman/women” 130 times in the New Testament (biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/gune.html)

Note the similar phrase in 1 Timothy 5:9-10 which considers which widows are worthy of being supported by the church. “Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.” (1 Timothy 5:9-10 ESV)

- Note that this is also a listing of characteristics that point towards her current faithfulness.
- Would a twice-widowed (i.e. widowed-remarried-widowed, a.k.a. wife of two husbands) woman not be considered for the care of the church?
- The “wife of one-husband” phrase is best understood as a “one-man woman” (i.e. a faithful wife).

5 Important Points About Which Men Can Serve as Deacons and Pastors (Acts 6:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:8-13, & Titus 1:5-9)

- These biblical characteristics are all present-tense (verbs = Present-Active-Participles and Present-Active-Imperative)...i.e. “Who are they now?” NOT past-tense...i.e. “Who were they?” ***Christians are all considered by who they are now in Christ, not who they were (past-tense) in their sins. That stated, their past sin must not be so recent that they might not be considered “of good repute” (Acts 6:3).***
- Would you ever select a former murderer as a deacon or pastor? *If not, you eliminate the Apostle Paul.*
- Would you ever select a former thief as a deacon or pastor? *If not, you eliminate the Apostle Matthew, a tax collector who would’ve taken more than he legally needed to collect for taxes.*

- Would you ever select a single man (unmarried, i.e. not a “husband”) as a deacon or pastor? *If not, you eliminate Jesus and the Apostle Paul.*
- Would you ever select a widower or a remarried widower as a deacon or pastor (i.e. not a “husband” or a “husband of one wife”)?

IN SUMMARY... *The act of selecting a man to serve as deacon or pastor, who has been in any past sin* (to include remarriage after divorce...see Matthew 5:32, 19:3-12, Mark 10:1-12, Luke 16:18, 1 Corinthians 7:10,39, Romans 7:2-3), ***does not condone the sin, but recognizes God’s grace and faithfulness in the life of a believer over time.*** Christians are now considered dead to sin and alive in Christ (Romans 6:11) but yet we continue to struggle with sin (Romans 6:12-14, 7:15-20). Christians are consistently referred to as saints (Ephesians 1:1; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1 and many more) while non-believers are identified by their sins (Romans 1:28-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). As servants in the church, deacons and pastors are called meet or display specific characteristics that evidence the fruit of God’s Spirit within them (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-13). ***So in summary, a man’s past divorce does not automatically disqualify him from the possibility of serving as a deacon or pastor.***

What Does the Bible Say About Women Pastors?

Does gender matter? Are gender and sex different? What does it mean to be made male and female? God has created our gender identity and gender purpose in line with our biological sex. Men and women are equal in value and worth but distinct in particular aspects of their roles, purposes, and responsibilities.

Some have attempted to redefine gender by arguing that gender is a separate concept of cultural influence or personal choice. Others have resisted the differences God has created between genders, instead arguing that no distinctions or boundaries should be placed on either gender in any setting.

Genesis 1:27 “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (ESV)

What is egalitarianism and complementarianism?

Egalitarianism argues accordingly that there should be no limitations on the service of women within the church, to include the position of pastor.

Complementarianism is the biblical position and argues that God clearly creates men and women as equal in value and worth, while laying out particular differences and responsibilities for men and women within the family, church, and society. The Bible specifically teaches that the role and functions of the pastorate are designed and ordered for men.

Isn't complementarianism misogynistic and hateful towards women?

Complementarians hold to the biblical understanding that men and women are equal in value, but different in role and function. It is extremely loving and views highly the roles and calling of women.

Is it ok to call a woman in ministry “pastor” as long as she doesn't teach men or exercise leadership authority over men? (i.e. Children's Pastor, Women's Pastor, etc.?). It is confusing and unhelpful to use a title that does not correspond most accurately with the functions and office with which it is biblically connected (teaching and authoritative leadership over the church).

Isn't it chauvinistic and misogynistic to not allow women to serve equally in the church? Does denying women ordination or service in the office of pastor deny or belittle their personhood?

Women are equal in value and worth, with undeniable gifting from the Lord, however God has designed them to have different roles within marriage and the church. Christians cannot be true believers and have hatred or condescension towards women. There is no place for chauvinism in the church, even if the culture surrounding it

condones such practice. In many cultures and seasons of history, women have (and continue to be) mistreated and disrespected. It is a wicked lie to believe, teach, or treat women as inferior to men.

We need to treat women with respect, created in the image of God with equal value and worth as men. We need women and need them to use their God-given gifts within the church. The bible gives countercultural prominence to the value, worth, & purposes of women and so should we. See the amazing ways God uses and speaks about women in the Bible: www.trustworthyword.com/women

What does the Bible say about a woman serving as a pastor/overseer/elder/bishop?

The Bible is clear that this office is reserved for men and rooted in God's order for creation and Consequences of the Fall. www.trustworthyword.com/pastors-deacons

What does the Bible say about a woman serving as a deacon?

Some churches and denominations teach that as long as this office does not connote teaching and authoritative leadership over men, it may be open to women (a "deaconess"). Both biblical and early church evidence do not support or model the practice of women serving as deacons.

What about women who feel the desire and "calling" to serve?

Many define their calling by their subjective feelings and experiences rather than by the objective truth of the Scripture. The Bible must be our guide and authority on such questions and issues.

What about Phoebe in Romans 16:1? Isn't she called a "deacon"?

When Paul calls Phoebe a "δῆακονος" (in Greek) in Romans 16:1, the word must be understood in its context. Just preceding this statement, in Romans 15:8, Paul also calls Jesus a "δῆακονος." It is important to note that the word "δῆακονος" can be understood to mean "servant" and not exclusively as a referral to the church office of deacon.

What about "there is no male or female" in Galatians 3:28?

Galatians 3:28 is commonly misinterpreted. It says "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This verse is not talking about different roles, responsibilities, and functions within the church. This passage is speaking about our union together with Christ in salvation.

Can women serve in ministry or function ministerially?

What does the Bible say about a woman serving as _____?

The Bible is clear that every Christian, male or female, is called to serve the Lord ministerially in proclaiming the Gospel message of reconciliation. They have been placed by God into homes, workplaces, churches, and in missions settings in order to be purposeful in making disciples.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ... [20] Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

Although the offices of pastor and deacon are clearly set aside within the Scriptures for men, other roles within the church may be places that women are both gifted and called for ministry. Different churches have varying perspectives on whether or not women should be in various positions based on the amount of teaching and leadership influence each role would have over adult men. 1 Timothy 2:12-14 and Titus 2:3-5 are particularly helpful to consider when evaluating roles within the church. While some may argue that this was a cultural practice, this passage explains that the foundation of this command is trans-cultural and rooted in both the Creation and the Fall.

- 1 Timothy 2:12-14 “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. [13] For Adam was formed first, then Eve; [14] and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.”
- Titus 2:3-5: “Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, [4] and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, [5] to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”

All Christian women are called to serve in ministry with the gifting, time, relationships and resources that God has given them. Their place of ministry may be at home, in the workplace, in their local church, or in the mission field.

A helpful resource in considering specific positions within a church is *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. Section IV helps covers some areas of application and implication that would be helpful to study. A free PDF is downloadable here: <https://document.desiringgod.org/recovering-biblical-manhood-and-womanhood-en.pdf>

**What is the difference between serving in ministry and pastoral ministry?
Can women be ordained or serve in pastoral ministry?
Isn't this just an issue of different interpretations and understandings of
Scripture?**

While women are ordained by many churches and denominations, the greater question is not contemporary practice, but what the biblical qualification is for teaching authority within the church. The office, role, and function of the pastorate is distinguished by its teaching and leadership authority over men within the local church. That functionally means that men are called by God to be the pastoral leaders and teachers within a church body. The Bible is extremely clear on the issue, demonstrating that this is not merely an issue of differing opinions, understandings or interpretations.

Aren't these just cultural descriptions common to that period of time?

Paul is clear to explain that it is not his mere contextual application or understanding, but that “the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:37). Paul also follows God’s truths within 1 Timothy 2 with the connection being back to the creative plans of God and to the consequences of the fall of man when he concludes that “For Adam was formed first, then Eve; [14] and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (1 Timothy 2:13-14). Paul then continues explaining the high calling of women by highlighting one of their many particular giftings, blessings, and responsibilities in the example of motherhood (1 Timothy 2:15).

Do these passages mean women can speak at all? Can’t even pray in churches?

No. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 11, verses 5 and 13 references are made to women praying and prophesying within a church context. The issue is not sharing a heartfelt prayer to God or speaking a comment or impression from the Lord on a particular teaching. The issue at hand in the above passages involved women who would usurp the God-assigned male role and authority of the pastorate. The covering of a woman’s head is merely a cultural symbolic means of demonstrating their biblical submission to their husband’s and pastor’s authority.

Top Bible Passages to Read, Study, and Consider

- **1 Timothy 2:8-15** “I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; [9] likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, [10] but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. [11] Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. [12] I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. [13] For Adam was formed first, then Eve; [14] and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. [15] Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.”
- **Titus 2:3-5** “Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, [4] and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, [5] to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”
- **Romans 16:1** “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae,”
- **1 Corinthians 11:3,8, 11-13, 16** “But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. ... [8]For man was not made from woman, but woman from man... [11] Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; [12] for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. [13] Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? ...

[16] If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.”

- **1 Corinthians 14:33-35** “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, [34] the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. [35] If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.”
- **1 Timothy 3:1-7** “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. [2] Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, [3] not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. [4] He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, [5] for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? [6] He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. [7] Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.”
- **Titus 1:5-9** “This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— [6] if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. [7] For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, [8] but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. [9] He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”

Helpful Resources to consider:

- **WATCH: “Can women be pastors or deacons?”** By Stephen Wellum
www.youtube.com/watch?v=zicoQ6foE_8
- **WATCH: “Should women preach in church?”** by Albert Mohler
www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDezFVoJWQw
- ***Men and Women in the Church*** by Kevin DeYoung
- **“Where Can Women Teach: Eight Principles for Christian Churches”**
www.desiringgod.org/articles/where-can-women-teach
- **Women Teaching Men - How Far is too Far?”**
www.desiringgod.org/articles/women-teaching-men-how-far-is-too-far
- **“A Challenge to Women”** - <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-challenge-to-women>
- ***50 Crucial Questions about Manhood and Womanhood***
www.desiringgod.org/books/50-crucial-questions-about-manhood-and-womanhood
- ***Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*** - <https://document.desiringgod.org/recovering-biblical-manhood-and-womanhood-en.pdf>
- **The Danvers Statement - CBMW** <https://cbmw.org/about/danvers-statement/>
- **“What does the Bible say about a call to ministry?”**
www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-a-call-to-ministry
- **“Essential and Indispensable: Women and the Mission of the Church”**
<https://www.9marks.org/article/essential-and-indispensable-women-and-the-mission-of-the-church/>
- **“Can Male Elders Serve the Whole Congregation?”**
www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/male-elders-serve-congregation
- **“What Does the Bible say about women as pastors?”**
www.trustworthyword.com/women-pastors
- **“What Does the Bible say about a call to ministry?”**
www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-a-call-to-ministry
- **“What Does the Bible Say About divorced men serving as deacons?”**
www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-divorced-men-serving-as-deacons
- **“What Does the Bible Say About Pastors and Deacons?”**
www.trustworthyword.com/pastors-deacons
- **“What Does the Bible Say About Marriage Roles?”**
www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-marriage-roles
- **Complementarianism - A Moment of Reckoning (several helpful articles):**
<https://www.9marks.org/journal/complementarianism-a-moment-of-reckoning/>
- **Complementarianism As a Second Order Doctrine** (“that frequently implicates first order doctrines”): <https://www.dennyburk.com/complementarianism-as-a-second-order-doctrine/>

Helpful resources from GotQuestions.org

- **“What does the Bible say about women pastors?”**
www.gotquestions.org/women-pastors.html

- **“Complementarianism vs. Egalitarianism - which is biblically correct?”**
www.gotquestions.org/complementarianism-vs-egalitarianism.html
- **"What does it mean that women are the `weaker vessel` (1 Peter 3:7)?"**
<https://www.gotquestions.net/Printer/weaker-vessel-PF.html>
- **What roles can women fill in ministry?** <https://www.gotquestions.org/women-in-ministry.html>
- **"Why do women have such a small role in the Bible?"**
<https://www.gotquestions.org/women-in-the-Bible.html>
- **Do women have to remain silent in church?**
<https://www.gotquestions.org/women-silent-church.html>

Should Churches Compare Giving, Baptism and Attendance Numbers?

It is a common occurrence in Western church contexts to see the public displays and announcements of baptism, attendance, and giving numbers in churches.

Have you noticed any such or similar practices?

- Evangelists or pastors talking about how many they've "saved" or "baptized"
- Giving plaques attached to every "donated" or "funded" item in a church.
- Funded accounts or buildings with the names of givers attached.
- Sunday school attendance pins, awards and ribbons.
- Churches recognized for rapid attendance or baptism growth.
- Associations listing and comparing the attendance, baptism, or giving records between churches.
- Denominations awarding and recognizing high givers, baptizers, or giving milestones among churches.

Such means may have originated and be common and helpful in the business, entertainment, or sports worlds and the end goals and intents of such practices may be good, to encourage and promote growth.

The question we should be asking is whether these practices are biblical?

At best, the practice of making baptism, attendance, and giving numbers public or comparative can be unwise and dangerous.

At worst, the practice of making baptism, attendance, and giving numbers public or comparative can be worldly and demonic.

*"But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts,
do not boast and be false to the truth.*

*This is not the wisdom that comes down from above,
but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.*

*For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist,
there will be disorder and every vile practice."*

James 3:14–16 (ESV)

While not everyone who has been part of such practices has been tempted towards jealousy, covetousness, or pride we should still evaluate such practices within churches and denominations.

"All things are lawful,' but not all things are helpful.

'All things are lawful,' but not all things build up." 1 Corinthians 10:23 (ESV)

Here are some Scriptures to consider regarding the practice of counting, publicizing, and comparing baptism, attendance, and giving numbers in churches or believers:

- **Boast Only In Knowing the Lord** - Jeremiah 9:24 “but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.” (ESV)
- **David Pridefully Counts Numbers, Incited by Satan, Warned by Joab** - 1 Chronicles 21:1–3 “Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel. [2] So David said to Joab and the commanders of the army, “Go, number Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, and bring me a report, that I may know their number.” [3] But Joab said, “May the LORD add to his people a hundred times as many as they are! Are they not, my lord the king, all of them my lord’s servants? Why then should my lord require this? Why should it be a cause of guilt for Israel?”
- **David Repents for the “Foolishness” of Numbering Israel, Israel Suffers 70,000 Deaths as a Consequence** - 2 Samuel 24:10 “But David’s heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly.”
- **Caution Against Publicizing Righteous Works** - Matthew 6:1 “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.”
- **Give in Secret, Command to Let Your Giving be Private** - Matthew 6:2–4 “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [3] But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, [4] so that your giving may be in secret.”
- **Motivation for Generous Giving to be God’s Reward & Recognition** - Matthew 6:4 “And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”
- **Pray in Secret, Watch for Hypocrisy** - Matthew 6:5–6 “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [6] But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”
- **Fast in Secret, Watch for the Temptation to Get Attention** - Matthew 6:16–18 “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [17] But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, [18] that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”
- **Small Amount of Individual, Secret Giving Is Praised, All She Had to Live On** - Mark 12:41–44 “And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people

putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. [42] And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. [43] And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. [44] For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

- **Public Praise of Generous Giving Is Given to a Region of Churches, Out of Severe Affliction and Extreme Poverty** - 2 Corinthians 8:1–4 “We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, [2] for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. [3] For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, [4] begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints”

- **Paul Confronting and Rebuking Believers for Boasting in Particular Groups, Followings, or Leaders:**

1 Corinthians 1:10–17 “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. [11] For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. [12] What I mean is that each one of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.” [13] Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? [14] *I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,* [15] so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. [16] (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) [17] For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.”

- **Commands Not to Boast** - 1 Corinthians 1:29–31 “so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ... ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’”
- **Reminder that All Spiritual Growth is From God** - 1 Corinthians 3:5–7 “What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”
- **Command Not to Boast in the Names of Men** - 1 Corinthians 3:21 “So let no one boast in men.”
- **Warning of Pride** - 1 Corinthians 4:6–7 “that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. ... What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?”
- **Reminder that All Spiritual Gifts, Service, & Activities are Empowered by God** - 1 Corinthians 12:4–6 “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.”

- **Instruction to Understand Rightly Who Is Honorable** - 1 Corinthians 12:22–24 “On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor ... But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it”
- **Love Does Not Envy or Boast** - 1 Corinthians 13:4 “love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant”
- **The Danger of Seeking the Approval of Others** - Galatians 1:10 “For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.”
- **Jealousy & Selfish Ambition Is Earthly, Unspiritual, and Demonic** - James 3:14–16 “But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.”

Pastor and Deacon Accountability Questions

Below is a sample process our church has used in both considering new pastors and deacons as well as a form of ongoing accountability.

Why are we doing this? How is this anyone's business? God has given us the personal responsibility to examine ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5) to see God's work of faith in us. He has also called His church to a process of holding one another accountable to God's standards for pastors and deacons (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:7-9). Accountability, confession and discipline is tough and painful but yet so helpful and fruitful (Proverbs 27:5-6, 27; Hebrews 12:3-17). We do this together that we might be faithful to God's call to select qualified pastors and deacons for His church and to our ever-present responsibility to be growing in holiness as He is holy (1 Peter 1:13-19, Psalm 139:23-24).

When will we do this? This will be an annual process of accountability to God's biblical standards for all pastors and deacons at our church, just as God has called us to "test" ourselves in order to "prove" ourselves "blameless" (1 Timothy 3:1-13).

What if I have failed? If you are willing to sincerely confess and turn from your specific sin, we are confident God will provide His healing. We will come alongside you in extending grace, praying with you, and helping with your growth (James 5:13-20). We encourage you not to take this process lightly, as God warns us through the example Israel's corporate guilt of Achan's sin (Joshua 7) and in the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11 as they are held accountable for their giving record.

Why must I (if married) discuss this with my wife? If you are married, God describes you as united in "one flesh" with your wife (hence their own qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:11). Accordingly, apart from sinning against God (and his church), our sin is secondarily against our wives. Since our marriage and family are so essential to our Gospel witness, such accountability with our spouses helps us to ensure that we honestly and completely confess and repent of our sin.

Are you going to keep this as a legal record? No, this is about the process, not the paper. Once you have shared this verbally or in writing, you are welcome to keep your copy of this paper for yourself. Retaining this for yourself might be a helpful reminder towards spiritual growth and encouragement over the years.

Current Pastors and Deacons: Please answer the following questions and bring this questionnaire with you when we will meet and share our answers together.

Nominated Deacons/Deacons-In-Training: If you feel the Lord leading you to serve as a deacon/deacon-in-training at South Fork, please answer the following questions and bring this questionnaire with you to share with the pastors and deacons.

What is your favorite part of our church? Why?

How are you currently serving God at our church?

When did Jesus save you? What was your life like before Jesus was in control? How has your life changed since? (1 Timothy 3:6)

What do your current Bible study habits look like? What has Jesus been teaching you recently? (Acts 6:3)

What is your current practice of prayer and fasting? How is God growing your prayer life this year? How is God challenging and teaching you through fasting this year?

Please describe a recent experience of when you shared the Gospel with someone and how you saw God work through you.

How do you see God calling you to serve as a pastor or deacon at our church? (1 Timothy 3:1,10)

How may have you compromised your Gospel witness this past year? (Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:7,10)

Where does your wife (if married) and children (if given them) stand in their relationship with God? Please share how you are leading your wife (if married) and family to love Jesus more deeply. (1 Timothy 3:4, 12; Titus 1:6)

If married, how does your wife meet the qualification of being “dignified, not slanderer(s), but sober-minded, faithful in all things”? (1 Timothy 3:11)

Please share if your wife (if married), family, or friends have any concerns about you serving as a pastor or deacon. (Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:7,10)

What is your greatest temptation? How are you seeing victory in your battle against this temptation?

Would my wife, kids, and close friends describe me as gentle, sober-minded, self-controlled, dignified, faithful, upright, holy, disciplined, and above reproach? Or would they describe me as quarrelsome, violent, double-tongued, a slanderer, arrogant, and quick-tempered? (1 Timothy 3:3,8; Titus 1:7-8)

Please share details about your practice of using any addictive substances or behaviors. (1 Timothy 3:3,8; Titus 1:7)

What percentage of your gross income did you and your wife (if married) give to God through our church's undesignated offerings last year? (1 Timothy 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7)

This past year, when and how have you intentionally looked at images or persons with the intent of being sexually aroused? How are you currently struggling with lust (be specific)? How are you seeing victory in your battle against sexual temptation? (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6)

What additional information do you feel God leading you to share with the pastors and deacons?

Are there any answers you have included above that you have misrepresented, exaggerated, or not fully shared?

Have you read and are in agreement with the biblical and church expectations of a pastor or deacon, the church covenant, and our statement of beliefs?

(CIRCLE) YES / NO

If married, please discuss your answers with your wife and have her sign below.

My husband has discussed and shown me his above answers, and to my knowledge, he is telling the truth. I believe he is biblically qualified to continue serving as a pastor/deacon.

Wife of Pastor/Deacon

Date

Biblical Health

What Does the Bible Say About Spiritual Health?

Am I Spiritually Healthy?

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. [2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2 ESV)

Take a Diagnostic Exam (Romans 12:9-21)

- **Am I increasing in my love of God? (v.9, 11, 12)**
- **Am I increasing in my hatred of sin? (v.9)**
- **Am I increasing in holy living? (v.9)**
- **Am I increasing in my love of others? (v.10,14-18)**
- **Am I increasing in the fruits of God's Spirit? (v.12, 21)**
- **Am I increasing in generosity to God & others? (v.13,21)**
- **Am I increasing in forgiveness? (v.18-20)**

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. [10] Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. [11] Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. [12] Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. [13] Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. [14] Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. [15] Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. [16] Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. [17] Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. [18] If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. [19] Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." [20] To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." [21] Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:9-21)

How to Increase in Spiritual Health

- **Fulfill your purpose with the body of Christ**
(Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12, Acts 2:42-47)
Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them... (Romans 12:6)
- **Take Individual Responsibility** - let the Holy Spirit grow and use you in God's good work through His church

- **Intentionally Fellowship** – develop caring and committed relationships
- **Humbly Serve** – share towards each other in times of need & reach outside the church to show Christ's love in a tangible way
- **Passionately Worship** – ascribe glory to God and enjoy His presence!
- **Courageously Evangelize** - lovingly connect people to Christ by intentionally sharing the Gospel message
- **Constantly Pray** – speak with God personally, regularly, and for one another
- **Teach Yourself & Others** – personally and corporately study God's Word

What Does the Bible Say About Physical Health?

8 Dimensions of Physical Health

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Safeguards - Do I unnecessarily put my or others' lives at risk?

Diet - Am I given to gluttonous or unhealthy eating habits?
The one who keeps the law is a son with understanding, but a companion of gluttons shames his father. (Proverbs 28:7)

Addictions – Do I take in substances which can harm me?
“All things are lawful for me,’ but not all things are helpful. ‘All things are lawful for me’ but I will not be dominated by anything.” (1 Corinthians 6:12)

Hygiene – Do I have good health habits to protect myself?

Medicine – Do I utilize the gift of medical wisdom?

Exercise – Do I use my body physically for its purposes?
The sluggard says, “There is a lion in the road! There is a lion in the streets!” As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed. The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth. (Proverbs 26:13-16)

Stewardship – Do I recognize that my body is not my own?

Suffering – Do I trust God when He chooses or allows for my health or life to be taken away?
“Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?’ In all this Job did not sin with his lips.” (Job 2:10)

Take Action & Improve Your Physical Health

1. **Endurance:** There is no easy or quick fix.
2. **Diet:** Watch what you take in. Discipline yourself.
3. **Exercise:** Work out creatively, effectively, regularly.
4. **Rest:** Pace yourself according to God’s plan.
5. **Vanity:** Avoid living in self-righteousness.
6. **Guilt:** Avoid living in self-condemnation.

7. **Medical advice:** Seek it, take it, obey it.
8. **Addictions:** Recognize it, confess it, find help.
9. **Protection:** Protect yours and others' health and lives.
10. **Honor** the Lord with your health.
11. **Trust** the Lord in sickness and health

1 Timothy 4:8 “for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”

What Does the Bible Say About Mental Health?

Am I Mentally Healthy? Mind Games: What is going on in my head?

Satan, the World, and Our Flesh Wage a Mental War

- We destroy arguments & every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God (2 Cor 10:5)
- David (1 Chronicles 21:1), Judas (John 13:2), Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10), Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:34-37)

Pursue Mental Obedience: Take Every Thought Captive

- and take every thought captive to obey Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5)
- Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

How to Be Mentally Healthy

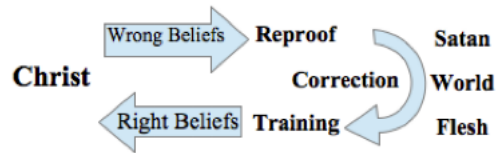
(2 Timothy 3:10-17 ESV)

- **Fill Your Mind...with Truths from Trustworthy Lives** [10] You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, [11] my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.
- **Mental Suffering Happens** [12] Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, [13] while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.
- **Continue to Fill Your Mind with God's Truths** [14] But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it

God's Truths are the Key to...

Eternal Life [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

A Valued Life [16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,



- **Reproof – Stop Wrong Beliefs** – Recognize Lies
- And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)
- “For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.” (Rom 14:23)
- “Sin is anything that displeases God and since without faith you can't please God, therefore, if you don't have faith, everything you do it sin, because everything yo do displeases God.” John Piper
 - **Correction - Fix Wrong Beliefs** – Replace Lies with Truth
 - **Training – Remain in Right Beliefs** – Fill your mind with God's truth
- **Live a Complete & Purposed Life** [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

What Does the Bible Say About Emotional Health?

How to Be Emotionally Healthy (Psalm 55 ESV)

Seek God in Truth-Filled Prayer 1 Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy! 2 Attend to me, and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and I moan,

Acknowledge Your Circumstances 3 because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked. For they drop trouble upon me, and in anger they bear a grudge against me.

Honestly Share Your Emotions with God 4 My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen upon me. 5 Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me. 6 And I say, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest; 7 I would wander far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; Selah 8 I would hurry to find a shelter from the raging wind and tempest.”

Ask God to Act Righteously 9 Destroy, O Lord, divide their tongues; for I see violence and strife in the city. 10 Day and night they go around it on its walls, and iniquity and trouble are within it; 11 ruin is in its midst; oppression and fraud do not depart from its marketplace.

Prepare for Deep Emotional Wounds 12 For it is not an enemy who taunts me—then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me—then I could hide from him. 13 But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. 14 We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng.

Stand Confident in the Lord's Deliverance 15 Let death steal over them; let them go down to Sheol alive; for evil is in their dwelling place and in their heart. 16 But I call to God, and the Lord will save me. ... 22 Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

Constantly Go to God 17 Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice. 18 He redeems my soul in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me.

Trust in the Lord's Justice 19 God will give ear and humble them, he who is enthroned from of old, Selah, because they do not change and do not fear God. 20 My companion stretched out his hand against his friends; he violated his covenant. 21 His speech was smooth as butter, yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet

they were drawn swords. ... 23 But you, O God, will cast them down into the pit of destruction; men of blood and treachery shall not live out half their days.

Listen to and Trust His Voice 23 But I will trust in you.

Anger – James 1:19-20, Despair – Colossians 3:1-2, Worry – Matthew 6:27, Fear – Joshua 1:9, Sadness – Philippians 4:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Shame – Romans 8:1-2, Self-Righteousness – Matthew 22:29, Hatred – Matthew 5:43-44, Envy – 2 Corinthians 12:10, 1 Timothy 6:8-10

What Does the Bible Say About Financial Health?

Give us this day our daily bread (Matthew 6:11)

How to Be Financially Un-Healthy

1. Think Things Are Yours (Exodus 13:1-2)
2. Whine & Forget His Previous Provision (Exodus 12:33-39)
3. Fear for the Future (Ex 13:13)
4. Reminisce on the Past (Ex 16:3)
5. Greedily Gather an Excess (Ex 16:4-5, 20)
6. Complain about Your Finances (Ex 16:8)
7. Be Too Lazy to Work (Ex 16:16)
8. Seek Provision Apart from God (Ex 16:27-28)
9. Doubt in the Present (Ex 17:3)
10. Forget the Lord's Presence (Ex 17:7)
11. Spend on the Silly (Ex 20:22-23)
12. Refrain from Giving (Ex 20:24)
13. Give Publicly to Be Seen (Matthew 6:1)
14. Turn Good Things Into God Things (Matt 6:19)
15. Be Careless with God's Possessions (Matt 6:19)
16. Treasure Treasure (Matt 6:21)
17. Focus on the Forbidden (Matt 6:23)
18. Fail to Honor God with Your Wealth (Matt 6:24)
19. Worry about God's Basic Provision (Matt 6:25)

5 Truths for Financial Health

1. Seek God's Face (Exodus 19:3)
2. Know God's Truths (Exodus 19:3)
3. Remember God Is God (Exodus 19:4)
4. Honor & Obey God (Exodus 19:5)
5. Understand Everything Is God's (Exodus 19:5)

4 Actions for Financial Health

1. You Need a Budget (Luke 14:28-30)
2. Prioritize Sacrificial, Secret Giving (Matt 6:4)
3. Ask God For Specific Needs (Matt 6:11, 7:7)
4. Guard Your Eyes, Mind, Ears, & Heart from Greed (1 John 5:21, James 4:1-4)

"Every time you doubt that you can live on 90% of your income, let the glorious promise of God strengthen your faith: 'My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus' (Philippians 4:19)." John Piper

What Does the Bible Say About Home Health?

(Deuteronomy 6:4-9 ESV)

Fix Your Priorities - How can I tell what my priorities are? (Ephesians 5:15-16)

- o How do I spend my time when I am home?
- o What do I find myself thinking most about?
- o What do I get excited, angry, or depressed about?
- o How do I allocate money?
- o Whom do I invest my talents in?
- o What subjects are easy for me to talk about?
- **Who are God's priorities for me?**
 - o God. Spouse. Kids. Family.
 - o Home-less: Orphans & Widows
 - o Fellow Christians.
 - o Coworkers. Neighbors. Strangers.
 - o Self.

Make Your Home God-Centered (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

Devotional – individual and family, Scripture – teach, memorize, live, Quality Time Together - Love

Make a Home for Your Marriage (Ephesians 5:22-33)

- Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. (Hebrews 13:4)
- However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Ephesians 5:33)

Make a Home for Your Kids (Ephesians 6:1-4) Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

- Commanding –> Coaching –> Cheering

Make a Home for Your Family (1 Tim 5:1-8) But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Make a Hospitable Home (1 Peter 4:8-9)

- Christian brothers & sisters (Romans 12:10,13)
- Neighbors, Friends, Strangers (Hebrews 13:2)

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. (1 Peter 4:8-9)

Make a Home for the Home-Less (James 1:27) Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

- **Unborn:** Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. (Psalm 82:3-4)
- **Orphans** (John 14:18, Romans 8:15) - Adoption & Foster Care
- **Widows with Family** (1 Timothy 5:4)
- **Widows without Family** (1 Timothy 5:16)
- **Prisoners:** “Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.” (Hebrews 13:3)

What Does the Bible Say About Work Place Health?

(Ephesians 6:5-9 ESV)

Work Is a Gift & Responsibility, Not a Right v.5 Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,

- Know Your Role
- Obey Your Boss
- Respect Your Boss – Humbly & Sincerely
- Work As If Jesus Is Your Boss
- Be Thankful for Your Job
- Be Thankful for Your Talents & Abilities

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17 ESV)

Watch Out for Temptations To... v.6 not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,

- Settle for the Minimum Standard
- Fake It
- Gossip
- Complain
- Argue
- Be Half-Hearted
- Forget that Work is Part of God's Will

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. [32] Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, [33] just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. (1 Corinthians 10:31-33 ESV)

Be a Great Employee [7] rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, [8] knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

- Serve Others: Bosses, Fellow Employees, Customers
- Do Good: Look for Opportunities, Take Opportunities
- Trust in God's Reward, Not Your Position or Paycheck

“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12 ESV)

Be a Great Boss [9] Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

- Be Fair, Be Merciful, Be Gracious, Be Peace-making

Work Is Your Every-Day Mission Field [12] Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, [13] bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. [14] And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. [15] And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. (Colossians 3:12-15 ESV)

What Does the Bible Say About Retirement Health?

A “Typical American” Retirement Is Not a Biblical Command or Concept

Life & retirement isn't about us - it is about glorifying God by enjoying & sharing Him!

Retirement Is a Gift & Responsibility, Not a Right - Don't Waste It!

Psalm 71:18 "So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come." (ESV)

8 Opportunities In Retirement - Seize the Season!

- 1) **More Spiritual Growth** - additional time allows for purposeful and intentional reprioritization, consider how to enjoy God more through your Bible and prayer!
- 2) **More Service** - within your church, among family, in your community
- 3) **More Missions** - cross some boundaries to go and tell the Good News of Jesus wherever He calls with fearless love
- 4) **More Generosity** - if you've been wise financially you will have less significant expenses that may free you for more chances to invest God's resources back into ministries and missions
- 5) **More Relationships** - a slower pace creates space to be with you spouse, children, family, friends and neighbors more
- 6) **More Travel** - God's creation is amazing; free time allows more chances to enjoy God's blessings in His creation with those whom you love
- 7) **More Learning** - more time freed up from no work schedule can allow time to read, listen, and watch teachers and authors for personal growth that overflows to others
- 8) **More Rest** - many of us have worked at too furious of a pace and it has taken a toll, retirement can serve as a season of rest and reprioritization

5 Temptations in Retirement - Watch Out!

- 1) **Self-indulge** - living for self and the pursuit of the pleasures and temptations of the world
- 2) **Self-harm** - overeating and under-exercising, lack of medical oversight or intervention
- 3) **Self-destruct** - over-committing, over-working, not adjusting your pace to the physical realities of aging
- 4) **Self-isolate** - over-sleeping, overly-lazy and sedentary lifestyles lead to depression
- 5) **Self-love** - it's easy to prioritize yourself and your needs over others through self-focus

Be Intentional in Your Season of Retirement!

Ephesians 5:15–17 “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, [16] making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (ESV)

Retirement Is a Mission Field to Proclaim God’s Goodness to the Next Generation

2 Timothy 4:7 “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

A Helpful and Free Resource! “Rethinking Retirement: Finishing Life for the Glory of Christ” by John Piper <https://www.desiringgod.org/books/rethinking-retirement>

Proverbs 17:6 “Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, & the glory of children is their fathers.”

What Does the Bible Say About Relational Health?

The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:31 ESV)

When do we love? Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)

At all times. At desperate times. A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. (Proverbs 17:17)

Why do we love? For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers (Romans 9:3)

Because Christ loved & died for us. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Eph 5:2-3)

Who do we love? But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, [45] so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:44-45)

• *Spouses. Children. Family. Church. Friends. Strangers. Enemies.*

What does it mean to love? Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" [37] He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise." (Luke 10:36-37)

Love thinks, feels, and gives mercy & grace. How do you love yourself?

• *5 Ts – Thoughts & Feelings – Talk - Time – Talents – Treasures*

Walk in Christ-like obedience and holiness. put on the armor of light. [13] Let us walk properly as in the daytime...[14] But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13:12-14)

How do we love others? Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. (Romans 10:1)

• We ought to lay down our lives for the brothers (1 John 3:16)
• 5Ts – Thoughts & Feelings – Talk - Time – Talents – Treasures

Share the Gospel Love: Warnings & Promises: Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. [9] For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." [10] Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:8-10)

• Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4)

6/10 Commandments: Exodus 20:12-17 (see Ephesians 4:17-32)

- 5. Honor & Respect Others** (v.12) “Honor your father and your mother”
- 6. Grant Forgiveness** (v.13) “You shall not murder.”
- 7. Be Sexually Pure** (v.14) “You shall not commit adultery.”
- 8. Give Rather than Take** (v.15) “You shall not steal.”
- 9. Speak Truth** (v.16) “You shall not bear false witness”
- 10. Love God More Than Things** (v.17) “You shall not covet your neighbor's house...wife...servant...ox...donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.”

What Does the Bible Say About Sexual Health?

1 Corinthians 7:1-7 (ESV)

Sexual Virginity Is Precious and Beautiful [1] Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”

God-Given Singleness Is a Gift [6] Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. [7] I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

Marital Fidelity Is the Solution to Sexual Immorality [2] But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

Sex Is for Heterosexual Marriage. [3] The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband.

- God’s plan for marriage is “the joining of one man and one woman with the promise of being faithful to one another for a lifetime” (Baptist Faith & Message). Marriage is a spiritual, covenantal, and lifetime union of two souls by our Creator God. (Mark 10:1-12)

Your Body Belongs to God, But Is Placed Under the Authority of Your Spouse

(Past, Present, or Future) [4] For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

Willing Sexual Abstinence In Marriage...

...Is Not an Option ([5] Do not deprive one another,)

...Unless Both Spouses Agree (except perhaps by agreement)

...For a Brief Period of Time (for a limited time,)

...For the Purposes of God-Focus (that you may devote yourselves to prayer)

...With an Intentional Plan for Sexual Re-Union (but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control)

We Will Be Held Accountable for Our Sexual Health Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. (Hebrews 13:4)

How to Be Sexually Healthy

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. (Ephesians 5:3)

Single? Remember you have an enemy. Repent where you have failed. Don't have sex... in your mind...in your heart...with yourself...with others. Don't take steps towards sex outside marriage. Save sex until you are married according to God's plan.

Married? Remember you have an enemy. Avoid the appearance of sexual immorality. Avoid temptations towards sexual immorality. Avoid all sexual immorality. Have sex regularly (aim for twice a week). Make sex special, spiritual, and significant. When sex is not possible, find alternatives (HINT: hands & mouths & bodies...read Song of Solomon).

Spiritual Warfare

What Does the Bible Say About Spiritual Warfare?

What is “spiritual warfare” though? Spiritual warfare, based on Ephesians 6:12, is “the battle of the followers of Christ against the unseen spiritual forces of evil.”

6 Important Biblical Truths About Spiritual Warfare

1. Satan is real. Demons are real. There is a real battle, a conflict that is largely unseen. Satan and his demons are at war with the followers of Christ and are constantly seeking avenues to attack God’s children, sometimes directly, but oftentimes through the world and our fleshly desires. *We cannot ignore the reality of the unseen world and unseen beings.*

"Satan is the greatest intelligence agent in the world. ... Study Satan’s tricks, and acquaint yourself with his tactics." William Gurnall

2. God is real. Jesus is God. Salvation is offered as a divine rescue from slavery to sin and Satan. Without Jesus being in control of your life there is no hope. Christians must not live in fear, but must walk in the peaceful and powerful presence of God’s real and present Holy Spirit. Treasure Jesus.

"A false interpretation of Scripture causes that the gospel of the Lord becomes the gospel of man, or, which is worse, of the devil." Jerome

3. God is a warrior. No government, no leader, no nation, and no demon stands a chance when it opposes God’s work. Satan is on a leash and can only do what God allows. Lucifer’s days are numbered and his eternal destruction and punishment are certain.

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright. O LORD, save the king! May he answer us when we call.” (Psalm 20:7-9 ESV)

4. God is with us. This is our hope. This is our promise. We must daily renew our minds with the truth and powerful presence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus will never leave us or forsake us and nothing and no-one (the devil and his demons included) can separate us from His loving grip. Greater is He who is in us, than He who is in the world (1 John 4:4).

"Like a good chess player, Satan is always trying to maneuver you into a position where you can save your castle only by losing your bishop." C.S. Lewis

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9 ESV)

5. We have responsibility. We must submit to God and resist the devil. Christians must fill their minds with God’s truth, that they may recognize the subtle yet significant errors and lies of the evil one. We do not wrestle with flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:11-12). We have personal accountability to turn away from sin and to walk in righteous and obedient living.

"The devil can counterfeit all the saving operations and graces of the Spirit of God."
Jonathan Edwards

6. Our primary weapon is the Word. Read the Bible. Love the Bible. Speak the Bible. Pray the Bible. It is our “sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17) and how we are able to discern between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. Satan will not stop sending his accusing thoughts and tempestuous attacks. We must not stop listening, loving, and obeying the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Bible.

“The trumpet still plays the notes of war. You cannot sit down and put the victory wreath on your head. You do not have a crown. You still must wear the helmet and carry the sword. You must watch, pray, and fight. Expect your last battle to be the most difficult, for the enemy’s fiercest charge is reserved for the end of the day.” Charles Spurgeon

Spiritual Warfare in Ephesians

“Satan wants you to mess up, give up, and puff up.” Chuck Lawless

Here are some important lessons about spiritual warfare from the book of Ephesians:

1) KNOW WHO YOU BELONG TO (EPHESIANS 1)

- God - Father, Son, Spirit
- Blessed, Blessing, Beloved
- Sovereign, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Eternal
- Immeasurable Greatness of His Power
- Far Above All Rule, Authority, Power, and Dominion
- Above Every Name that is Named - Forever
- All Things Under His Feet
- Head Over All Things to the Church

2) KNOW WHO YOU ARE (EPHESIANS 1:1-14)

- Part of God’s Will
- Saints - To the saints who are in Ephesus
- Faithful
- Given Grace and Peace
- Blessed
- Chosen for Holiness
- Lovingly, Purposefully Adopted
- Freed and Forgiven
- Infinitely Rich
- Secured

3) UNDERSTAND THE BATTLE

- Remember Your Past (Ephesians 2:1-3)
- Rejoice at God’s Intervention (Ephesians 2:4-9)
- Remain in Your Purpose (Ephesians 2:10)
- Rest In Union with Christ & His Peace (Ephesians 2:11-22)

4) BE PURPOSED AND PREPARED

- As Gospel Light (Ephesians 3:1-13)
- Strengthened and Empowered in Christ’s Love (Ephesians 3:14-21)

5) ENGAGE THE ENEMY

- In and Through Your Church (Ephesians 4:1-16)
- In Your Changed and Maturing Life (Ephesians 4:17-5:10)
- In Your Marriage (Ephesians 5:21-33)
- In Your Family (Ephesians 6:1-4)
- In Your Workplace (Ephesians 6:5-9)

- Against the Enemy (Ephesians 6:11-12)
- Armored for Battle (Ephesians 6:10-20) – GOD IS YOUR ARMOR
- Personally Invested In Disciple-Making (Ephesians 6:21-24)

Bible Verses on Spiritual Warfare

- Scriptural accuracy is the primary concern of this and any critique of a work on spiritual warfare.
- We must evaluate writings to determine if they consistently present the whole scriptural message on spiritual warfare, or if they omit, overemphasize, or present any areas in an imbalanced manner.
- Furthermore, we must examine their usage of particular biblical passages to understand if the author accurately communicates the biblical meaning.

Here are some of the most helpful Scriptures and passages to prioritize in understanding Spiritual Warfare in the Bible:

Genesis 3:1,4 “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"... ‘You will not surely die,’ the serpent said to the woman.”

Deuteronomy 7:25-26 “The carved images of their gods you shall burn with fire. You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. And you shall not bring an abominable thing into your house and become devoted to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest and abhor it, for it is devoted to destruction.”

2 Chronicles 7:14 “if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land”

Job 1 & 2

Job 1:7-12 “The LORD said to Satan, ‘From where have you come?’ Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.’ And the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?’ Then Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.’ And the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.’ So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.”

Job 1:20-22 “Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked

shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.' In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong."

Job 2:2-6 "And the LORD said to Satan, 'From where have you come?' Satan answered the LORD and said, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.' And the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason.' Then Satan answered the LORD and said, 'Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face.' And the LORD said to Satan, 'Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life.'"

Job 2:9,10 "Then his wife said to him, 'Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.' But he said to her, 'You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?' In all this Job did not sin with his lips."

Job 33:29-30 "Behold, God does all these things, twice, three times, with a man, to bring back his soul from the pit, that he may be lighted with the light of life"

Job 35:9 "Because of the multitude of oppressions people cry out; they call for help because of the arm of the mighty."

Job 37:14 "Hear this, O Job; stop and consider the wondrous works of God."

Job 42:1-3,6 "Then Job answered the LORD and said: 'I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know... therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Job 42:12 "And the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning."

Matthew 4

Matthew 4:10-11 "Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him."

Matthew 10:1 "He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness."

Matthew 12:22-32

Matthew 12:28-30 "But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and

carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house. 'He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters'"

Matthew 24:35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away"

Matthew 26:53 "Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

Mark 1:27 "The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him."

Mark 5

Mark 5:19-20 "Jesus did not let him, but said, 'Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.' So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed."

Mark 9:14-29

Mark 9:28-29 "After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, 'Why couldn't we drive it out?' He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."

Luke 10:17-20 "The seventy-two returned with joy and said, 'Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.' He replied, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ***I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.*** However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but ***rejoice that your names are written in heaven.***"

Luke 11:24-26 "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first."

Acts 10:38 "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him."

Acts 19:11-26

Acts 19:14-16 "Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" And

the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

Acts 19:18-20 “Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.”

Romans 8:1-2 “**Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus** because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.”

Romans 8:15 “**For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship.** And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’”

Romans 8:26-27 “²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.”

Romans 8:31-39 “What, then, shall we say in response to this? **If God is for us, who can be against us?** He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ **No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**”

Romans 12 & 13

Romans 12:1-2 “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. “

Romans 12:9, 11-12 “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good...Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

Romans 12:19-21 “Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord. On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Romans 13:1-2 “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.”

Romans 13:11-14 “And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 “And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.”

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 “So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Galatians 6:1,2 “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

Galatians 6:7,8 “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”

Ephesians 2:1-7 “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. **But because**

of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”

Ephesians 2:12-13 “remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.”

Ephesians 4:26-27 “In your anger do not sin’: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and **do not give the devil a foothold.**”

Ephesians 6:10-20 “**Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. **And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.** With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Hebrews 13:5-6 “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’”

James 1:12-15 “Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

James 1:22-25 “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.”

James 2:10, 18-19 “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it...But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.”

James 4:3-9 “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”

James 5:13-16 “Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

James 5:19-20 “My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.”

1 Peter 5:8-9 “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings”

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 4 & 1 John 4:2-4 “This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist,

which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. ***You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.***

1 John 4:6,10-15 “We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood... This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

1 John 5:18 “***We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.***”

2 John 9 & 10 “Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.”

Revelation 12:10-12 “Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. ***They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.*** Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.”

Revelation 20 “And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time...Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. ***And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of***

***burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown.
They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”***

Spiritual Warfare in the Old Testament

Here are some of the most helpful Scriptures and passages to understand Spiritual Warfare from the New Testament:

Genesis 3:1, 4 – Satan the Serpent

Genesis 50:20 – Relationship between Evil and Good

Leviticus 16:6-10 – God’s Atoning Sacrifices

Leviticus 17:7 – Demonic Sacrifices

Leviticus 19:26 – Omens and Fortunes

Leviticus 19:31; 20:6,27 – Mediums and Necromancers

Deuteronomy 7:25-26 – Idols

Deuteronomy 18:10-12 – Human Sacrifices, Divination, Fortunes, Omens, Sorcerer, Charmer, Medium, Necromancer, Inquires of the Dead

Deuteronomy 32:16-18 – Sacrifices to Demons

1 Samuel 16:14-16, 23 – Harmful spirit from the Lord

1 Samuel 28 & 1 Chronicles 10:13-14 – Saul and the Medium of En-Dor

2 Samuel 24:1; 2 Samuel 24:10, 15; 1 Chronicles 21:1 – Numbering of Israel

1 Kings 22:19-23; 2 Chronicles 18:19-27 ; Jeremiah 14:14 – Micaiah’s Vision and the Lying Spirit, Lying Vision, Worthless Divination, and the Deceit of their Own Minds

2 Kings 6:11-23 – Elisha and his servant – horses and chariots of fire

2 Chronicles 7:14 – Repentance

2 Chronicles 33:1-13 – Manasseh’s evil but eventual repentance

Job 1 and 2 – Satan’s Access to God and Attack of Job

Job 4:12-21 – Eliphaz’s Nighttime encounter

Job 33:29-30; Job 35:9; Job 37:14; Job 42:1-3,6; Job 42:12 – Job’s Progression

Psalm 106:36-38 – Idol and Demonic worship connected together and with human sacrifice

Psalm 115:4-8 – Idols and their futility

Isaiah 8:19-22 – Futility of Mediums and Necromancers

Isaiah 9:6 – Names of God

Isaiah 14:3-23 – Fallen from Heaven

Isaiah 26:13-15 – Dead described as “shades”

Isaiah 29:4 - “Like the voice of a ghost”

Ezekiel 13:17-23 – Magic Bands, Veils, Hunting for Souls

Ezekiel 28:11-19 – King of Tyre

Daniel 2:10-11, 17-19, 27-30, 45 – Inability of Demons and Humans to Read Minds and Dreams

Daniel 4:34 – Nebuchadnezzar and reason

Zechariah 3:1-7 – The Lord’s Rebuke of Satan

Spiritual Warfare in the New Testament

Here are some of the most helpful Scriptures and passages to understand Spiritual Warfare from the New Testament:

Matthew 4:1-11—Satan’s Temptation of Jesus

Matthew 10:1 – Disciples’ Authority to Drive Out Demons, Heal

Matthew 12:28-30 – Driving Out Demons & “Strong Man”

Matthew 12:43-45 (also Luke 11:24-26) – Must be filled with God

Matthew 16:23 – Jesus’ Rebuke of Peter

Matthew 17:14-20 – Jesus’ Healing of a Boy with a Demon

Matthew 24:35 – Eternal Nature of God’s Words

Matthew 26:53 – Jesus’ Access to Angels

Mark 1:23-28 – Casting Out of a Demon in a Galilean Synagogue

Mark 1:32-34 – Many Demons Cast Out

Mark 5:19-20 – God’s Mercy Seen in Casting Out Demons

Mark 9:28-29 – Demon driven out by Jesus through prayer

Luke 8:1-2 – Mary Magdalene had seven demons, women with Jesus healed of evil spirits and physically as well

Luke 10:17-20 – 72 return

Luke 11:24-26 (also Matthew 12:43-45) – Empty House

Luke 22:31-32 – Jesus’ Prayer for Peter

John 13:2 – Devil and Judas

Acts 5:3-5 – Satan and Ananias

Acts 5:12-16 – Healed of unclean spirits

Acts 8:4-8 – Unclean spirits coming out

Acts 8:9-13 – Simon the magician

Acts 10:38 - Jesus "healing all who were under the power of the devil" (part of comprehensive gospel presentation by Peter in Acts 10:34-43)

Acts 13:8-11 - Elymas the magician

Acts 16:16-18 – Girl harassing Paul and others

Acts 19:11-12 – God's power through Paul and handkerchiefs and aprons

Acts 19:14-16 – Seven sons of Sceva

Acts 19:18-20 – Repentance, Confession, Burning of Magic Books

Romans 3:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:1-2 "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death."

Romans 8:15 "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'"

Romans 8:26-27 "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."

Romans 8:31-39 – Security of the Believer

Romans 10:9-10 "because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."

Romans 12:1-2 – Bodies offered as living sacrifices

Romans 12:9, 11-12 "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good . . . Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

Romans 12:19-21 – Do not be overcome by evil

Romans 13:1-2 – submission to government

Romans 13:11-14 – put on the armor of light

1 Corinthians 5:4-5 – “deliver this man to Satan”

1 Corinthians 7:5 – sexual intimacy in marriage and Satan’s temptation

1 Corinthians 10:20-22 – pagan sacrifices to demons

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 – manifestation of the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:27-31 – roles and gifts within the church

1 Corinthians 14:20 – infants in evil, mature in thinking

1 Corinthians 15:24-26 “Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 – forgiveness and Satan’s designs

2 Corinthians 4:3-6 – god of this world

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 “And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.”

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 “So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” NOTE: Paul’s use of “messenger” is the Greek word *angelos*, which in his 33 other uses of it in the Scriptures it is translated “angel.”

Galatians 4:3 “enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.”

Galatians 5:1 “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

Galatians 6:1-2 – restore and keep watch

Galatians 6:7-8 – sowing and reaping

Ephesians 2:1-7 - former followers of Satan

Ephesians 2:12-13 – once without God

Ephesians 4:26-27 – anger and Satan’s foothold

Ephesians 6:10-20 - the armor of God

Colossians 2:6-8 – captive to philosophy, deceit, tradition, elemental spirits

Colossians 2:15 – disarmed and shamed

1 Thessalonians 2:17-18 – Satan’s hindering

1 Thessalonians 3:5 - tempter

2 Thessalonians 2:9-11 – the lawless one and Satan’s activity

1 Timothy 1:18-20 – wage the good warfare, handed over to Satan

1 Timothy 3:6-7 – conceit and the condemnation of the devil

1 Timothy 4:1-2 – deceitful spirits and teaching of demons

1 Timothy 5:11-15 – young widows and Satan’s tactic

2 Timothy 2:24-26 – escaping the snare of the devil

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – Scripture’s profitability

Hebrews 2:14-15 –destroying the devil and delivering the slaves

Hebrews 13:5-6 – God’s protective presence

James 1:12-15 – source of temptation

James 1:22-25 – hearing and doing the Word of God

James 2:10 – guilt under the law

James 2:18-19 – demonic belief in God

James 3:15-16 – earthly, unspiritual, demonic wisdom

James 4:1 – passions at war

James 4:3-9 – resist the devil

James 5:13-16 – confession, prayer, and healing

James 5:19-20 – turning a sinner

1 Peter 5:8-9 – devil is prowling like a lion

2 Peter 2:10-13 – blaspheming the glorious ones

1 John 1:9 – confession and forgiveness

1 John 3:8-10 – children of the devil

1 John 4:1-6 – test the spirits

1 John 4:10-15 – love and acknowledgment of Jesus as the Son of God

1 John 4:18-19 – no fear in love

1 John 5:14-15 – ask according to His will

1 John 5:18 – born of God, evil one does not touch

2 John 9 and 10 – abide in the teaching of Christ

Jude 1:8-10 – Michael, the devil, blaspheming the glorious ones, and rebuking language

Revelation 2:9-10 – Smyrna, synagogue of Satan

Revelation 2:13 – Pergamum, Satan's throne

Revelation 2:24 – Thyatira, deep things of Satan

Revelation 3:9 – Philadelphia, synagogue of Satan

Revelation 9:20-21 – worship of demons and idols

Revelation 12:7-12 – war in Heaven

Revelation 16:13-14 – demonic spirits

Revelation 18:2 – fallen is Babylon

Revelation 20:1-10 “And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life

until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

"Truth is so obscure in these times, and falsehood so established, that, unless we love the truth, we cannot know it." Blaise Pascal

Spiritual Warfare in Church History

“numerous accounts of demonization and exorcism as well as descriptions of the deceptive work of demons in pagan religions fill the writings of the church fathers.”

Clinton Arnold

This survey of the historical writings, characters, and confessions of the Christian Church reinforces the importance of having an historical understanding of spiritual warfare. Early Christian references to the demonic can be found in the writings of Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, Athanasius and many other early church fathers. Not only is spiritual warfare documented constantly “through the whole time period of the ancient church,” but spiritual warfare is also seen during the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and the early post-Reformation.

More research and a free full book on the topic are available at www.SpiritualWarfare.blog

Exorcism practices seem “to diminish in the Middle Ages,” but are still referenced among the Germanic tribes, Norwegians, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Martin Luther, the Catholic Church’s 1614 *Rituale Romanum* (exorcism guidelines), and other sources. The existence and activity of the devil and demons are widely evidenced and commonly believed across the history of the church until the post-Enlightenment era.

Ante-Nicene Church Fathers

Who were the Ante-Nicene Church Fathers? They were church leaders before the First Council of Nicaea (AD 325) and they were both numerous and diverse. They almost all show some concern in addressing spiritual warfare issues among Christians and the church. Here are some short summaries and descriptions of how the early church fathers interacted with the demonic:

Clement of Rome - Clement of Rome, or Pope Clement I, is believed to have been a disciple of Peter and a co-worker with Paul (Phil 4:3; AD 57) and one of the first leaders of the church. In his letter to the church at Corinth, Clement references the war-like nature of the call for Christians to “act the part of soldiers” in following the commandments of Christ. (Clement, First Epistle of the Blessed Clement the Disciple of Peter (ANF 1:5))

Mathetes - The Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus (c. AD 130) is an early writing. The author or recipient of the letter is unknown, but Mathetes “was possibly a catechumen of St. Paul or of one of the apostle’s associates” and “is, perhaps, the first of the apologists.” References the serpent multiple times. His references surround the serpent’s attempts to deceive and place false knowledge into the lives of believers.

Polycarp - Polycarp (AD 69-155) was a disciple of John and other apostles, in contact with many eyewitnesses of Christ, and an early leader of the Christian church. Mentions little concerning spiritual warfare, but does point to the fact that “whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross, is of the devil.” “Whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is antichrist”, that “whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan.” Does not reinforce any specific encounter approaches. Reveals that there is significance in understanding that all humanity is allied with either Christ or the devil.

Ignatius - Ignatius was an early church father (AD 30-107) linked with the Apostle John, Eusebius, and Polycarp. “Scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of the testimony which the Ignatian letters offer to the dogmatic character of Apostolic Christianity.” (John Bonaventure O’Connor, “St. Ignatius of Antioch,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 7). Includes seven credible letters but early church history reveals eight additional writings that are likely later, spurious forgeries, two credible letters and three spurious letters contain spiritual warfare language. Refers to Satan as literally warring against him. Ignatius fights back through “meekness, by which the devil, the prince of this world, is brought to nought. The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians refers to Satan as the “wicked one”, “put on your guard” and to “forsee the snares of the devil.” Asserting that “all evil spirits have departed from the servants of God”. He is “an enemy to these [spirits]” in destroying “all the devices of these [evil spirits].” Clarity and certainty with which Ignatius describes demonic spirits shows that he believes the battle is real holds that believers should actively oppose Satan and his demons.

Spurious writings communicate many more references to spiritual warfare, particularly to the power encounter approach. “I salute the sub-deacons, the readers, the singers, the doorkeepers, the labourers, the exorcists, the confessors.” (Ignatius, *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Antiochians* (ANF 1:110)). Mary of Cassobelaë to Ignatius, describes some “who were possessed of a wicked spirit as being false in their speech, and deceivers of the people” as well as referencing the “deceit of the demons.” Activity of both the demons and the possessed focuses on deception. The Epistle to the Philippians, contains perhaps the most references to Satan in many of the ancient church writings with half of the chapter titles directly referencing Satan. Despite the biblical nature of many of the spiritual warfare references in the fraudulent writings, their inconsistencies lend little weight to an early date. These spurious writings, with additional emphasis on exorcism, possession, and spiritual warfare, cause concern that there was an attempt to over-emphasize and influence theology and practice where the early church did not.

Barnabas - The Epistle of Barnabas is a writing whose authorship is circumspect in many ways. Its dating is early, but its veiled authorship leaves some wondering as to its actual importance and significance. “Before we believed in God, the habitation of our heart was corrupt and weak, as being indeed like a temple made with hands. For it was full of idolatry, and was a habitation of demons, through our doing such things as were opposed to [the will of] God.”

Justin Martyr -(AD 110-165), a Gentile born in Samaria, was a philosopher who came to Christ upon witnessing the “extraordinary fearlessness which the Christians displayed in the presence of death.” In the arena of spiritual warfare, Justin Martyr provides the most significant insight into the Christian understanding of spiritual warfare in the early church.

Justin Martyr - *The First Apology*

- “since of old these evil demons, effecting apparitions of themselves, both defiled women and corrupted boys, and showed such fearful sights to men, that those who did not use their reason in judging of the actions that were done, were struck with terror; and being carried away by fear, and not knowing that these were demons, they called them gods, and gave to each the name which each of the demons chose for himself”
- “wicked and impious demons.”
- demons are accusers who seek to “divert you from reading and understanding” the writing and teaching of Christian leaders
- manifestations through “appearances in dreams” and “by magical impositions” to subdue hold mankind as “slaves and servants.”
- asserts that the believer is to “stand aloof from them (i.e. demons)” and “embrace chastity” while dedicating themselves to God and valuing Him above all other things
- Putting on righteousness is a key emphasis of Martyr’s approach to spiritual warfare
- Justin expounds on how “the demons still mislead men” through the example of the Samaritans Simon and Meander, “who did many mighty works by magic, and deceived many, and still keep them deceived”
- Simon appeared before the Roman people and senate during the reign of Claudius Cæsar, leading to his deification and honor through a statue
- shows an integration of manifestation with deception through the examples of men
- asks for the destruction of Simon’s statue as well as a reminder not to “be entangled by that man’s doctrines” but rather to “learn the truth, and so be able to escape error”
- emphasizes a truth encounter approach to spiritual warfare but also upholds the importance of destroying objects of false, demonic worship
- explains how some of the false religions, specifically in the temples of Greek gods, are but demonic imitations of biblical worship.
- He evidences this imitation in the practices of washings, libations, burnt offerings, sprinkling, and shoe removal, directly connecting this with a mockery of Moses’ encounter with God in the burning bush.

Justin Martyr - *The Second Apology*

- He describes “the evil demons” as hating Christians and endeavoring to keep unbelievers “subject to themselves”
- specifically credits the demons as influencing human judges with the purpose of putting Christians to death.

- credits the “influence of the wicked demons” for the suffering and persecution of some “earnest men, such as Socrates,” while others such as “Sardanapalus, Epicurus, and the like, seem to be blessed in abundance and glory”
- Justin upholds each man’s personal responsibility for his actions, asserting, “each man by free choice acts rightly or sins.”
- Demonic influence towards sin occurs through a multitude of avenues, “partly by magical writings, and partly by fears and the punishments they occasioned, and partly by teaching them to offer sacrifices, and incense, and libations, of which things they stood in need after they were enslaved by lustful passions.”
- Justin reminds us that Christ was incarnate partially “for the destruction of the demons.”
- Justin points to the practice of exorcism. This is one of the earliest and most well attested references to the practice and office of exorcist. He describes “numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world, and in your city,” and how “many of our Christian men [are] exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate.” He points out how these Christians “have healed and do heal, rendering helpless and driving the possessing devils out of the men, though they could not be cured by all the other exorcists, and those who used incantations and drugs.”

Justin Martyr - *The Dialogue with Trypho*

- This work is historically significant as “it is the first elaborate exposition of the reasons for regarding Christ as the Messiah of the Old Testament, and the first systematic attempt to exhibit the false position of the Jews in regard to Christianity.”
- characterizes Satan principally as a liar, “as therefore the devil lied at the beginning, so did he also in the end.”
- Satan’s battle is clearly to “to deceive and lead astray the mind of man into disobeying the commandments of God, and gradually to darken the hearts of those who would endeavour to serve him, to the forgetting of the true God, but to the adoration of himself as God.”
- call for believers to “pray to be kept by Him from strange, i.e., from wicked and deceitful, spirits.”
- before conversion, believers served such demons, but now they have the power of Jesus’ name that “even the demons do fear; and at this day, when they are exorcised in the name of Jesus Christ, crucified under Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa, they are overcome.”
- describing non-believers, Justin categorizes them alongside the demonic, as both refuse to obey the will of God and “do the works of the devil.”
- he affirms that there is no middle ground or neutral territory in spiritual warfare.
- that false religious practices originate with the devil and are but imitations of God’s great work
- points biblically to the Magi in Egypt and the false prophets in Elijah’s days but then connects such false worship to Greek gods such as Bacchus son of Jupiter, Semele, Hercules, Jove of Alcmene, and Æsculapius.

- reminds the believer of his authority in Christ they “exorcise all demons and evil spirits, have them subjected to us.”
- this authority to overcome and subdue the evil spirits is effective over “every demon.”
- Such authority is only definitively extended in the name of Christ, never in the names of “kings, or righteous men, or prophesy, or patriarchs” and only possibly if exorcised in the name of “the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”
- reminds Trypho of how other Jewish and Gentile exorcists attempt exorcism with craft, but to no avail

Justin Martyr - a summary

- exposes a comprehensive and thoroughly biblical understanding of spiritual warfare
- demonic possession and exorcism did not cease with the apostolic age but continued into the early church
- power of Christ’s name and the knowledge of truth while condemning human-crafted techniques in spiritual warfare
- some of Justin’s other writings reveal some spiritual warfare themes, the Apologies and The Dialogue with Trypho presents an accurate understanding of his views and practices

Irenæus - (AD 120-202) was a young leader in the church, a student under Polycarp, who quickly rose against the Gnostic heresies

- Against Heresies, Irenæus connects the heresies to the work of the devil to include a similar reference as Justin Martyr did to Simon Menander.
- Satan is “accustomed to lie against God, for the purpose of leading men astray.”
- work from the beginning was to murder and lie, and “the truth is not in him.”
- “Thus, then, the mystic priests belonging to this sect both lead profligate lives and practise magical arts, each one to the extent of his ability. They use exorcisms and incantations. Love-potions, too, and charms, as well as those beings who are called ‘Paredri’ (familiar) and ‘Oniropompi’ (dream-senders), and whatever other curious arts can be had recourse to, are eagerly pressed into their service. They also have an image of Simon fashioned after the likeness of Jupiter, and another of Helena in the shape of Minerva; and these they worship. In fine, they have a name derived from Simon, the author of these most impious.” Irenæus, Irenæus Against Heresies (ANF 1:348)
- length and subject of Irenæus’ work might lead one to believe he might make more spiritual warfare references
- Irenæus’ focus is principally on directly addressing the Gnostic heresies, he indicates an understanding of the underlying problem.

Hermas - The Pastor of Hermas (c. AD 160) was “one of the most popular books, if not the most popular book, in the Christian church during the second, third, and fourth

centuries. It occupied a position analogous in some respects to that of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress in modern times."

- authorship is not certain, but its writing was early and its influence was immense. Origen considered it "divinely inspired," while "Irenæus quotes it as Scripture," and Eusebius mentions that many considered it an "admirable introduction to the Christian faith"
- second book of The Pastor of Hermas has three "commandments" with overtly spiritual warfare focused titles.
- The sixth Commandment is titled, "How to Recognise the Two Spirits Attendant on Each Man, and How to Distinguish the Suggestions of the One from Those of the Other."
- The seventh Commandments is titled, "On Fearing God, and Not Fearing the Devil."
- The twelfth Commandment is titled "On the Twofold Desire. The Commandments of God Can Be Kept, and Believers Ought Not to Fear the Devil."
- The sixth Commandment describes believers as inhabited by two angels, the angel of righteousness and the angel of iniquity
- "understand them, and trust the angel of righteousness; but depart from the angel of iniquity, because his instruction is bad in every deed."
- best understood to describe the spiritual battle for our minds. The writer seeks to inspire the reader to awareness of and resistance to Satan's temptations both in deceit and in behavior
- seventh Commandment to encourage the believer not to fear the devil, "for, fearing the Lord, you will have dominion over the devil, for there is no power in him."
- fear the Lord in such a way that one not only avoids "that which is evil," but does "that which is good."
- proper understanding of the power of the Lord is essential to a biblical understanding and application of the fear of the Lord.
- twelfth Commandment of Hermas again encourages the believer not to fear the devil because he cannot "hold sway over the servants of God, who with all their heart place their hopes in Him."
- argues that the devil can wrestle against believers but true believers will resist the devil strongly and cannot be overthrown
- Satan has no way of entering into (possessing) believers and instead goes into those whom are empty (non-believers)
- the "angel of repentance" reminds believers that he was sent to be with those "who repent with all your heart, and to make you strong in faith."
- In the midst of repentance, there is not only strengthening, but there is healing of "former sins" by Christ
- No matter the "threats of the devil," the believer must "fear them not at all, for he is powerless as the sinews of a dead man."
- Apart from Justin Martyr, the writer of The Pastor of Hermas provides the most depth and understanding to seeing the spiritual warfare beliefs and practices of the early church

Tatian - Tatian (AD 110-72) was an Assyrian believer and a student of Justin Martyr who eventually lived in Antioch.

- Address of Tatian to the Greeks, he depicts demons in a frenzied attack against mankind, attacking through attempts to pervert their minds.
- describes these demons as sometimes making themselves seen, exhibiting themselves in a way that leads men to fear or honor them
- Demons, Tatian holds, “depart in terror” when “smitten by the word of God” which then leads to the sick being healed.
- Tatian describes people entering into relationships with visiting demons
- Those struggling with sickness, love, hatred, and revenge seek demonic assistance under false promises and assurances

Tertullian - (c.AD 145-220) was an early and extensively published author in the church

- In his premier work, Apology, he affirms the existence of demons, saying that they are well known by both believers and philosophers
- Socrates himself as self-attesting to a relationship with a demonic spirit from childhood
- subtleness while unashamedly seeking the ruin and destruction of mankind through disease, calamity, and temptations
- “we are not cognizant of their actions save by its effects” due to their invisible and intangible nature
- the only “authority and power we have over them is from our naming the name of Christ, and recalling to their memory the woes with which God threatens them at the hands of Christ.”
- with this fear of Christ’s judgment that demons do become “subject to the servants of God” and “at our touch and breathing . . . they leave at our command the bodies they have entered, unwilling, and distressed, and before your very eyes put to an open shame.”
- Historian, Henry Kelly, explains that “No one was more aware than Tertullian of the demonic influences that surrounded the people of his day.
- “Tertullian did not indicate the existence of, or feel the need for, any special rite designed to set men free from the demonic influence when they became members of the Christian community—in addition, that is to the act of renunciation, and, of course, baptism itself.”
- Tertullian, in his lengthy description on repentance and baptism, places great emphasis on the confession of sins
- “They who are about to enter baptism ought to pray with repeated prayers, fasts, and bendings of the knee, and vigils all the night through, and with the confession of all bygone sins, that they may express the meaning even of the baptism of John: ‘They were baptized,’ saith (the Scripture), ‘confessing their own sins.’ To us it is matter for thankfulness if we do now publicly confess our iniquities or our turpitudes: for we do at the same time both make satisfaction for our former sins, by mortification of our flesh and spirit, and lay beforehand the foundation of defences against the temptations which will closely follow. ‘Watch and pray,’ saith (the Lord), ‘lest ye fall into temptation.’”

- Tertullian's description of exorcism is consistent with an emphasis on the power of Christ's name with minimal focus on human power techniques
- The power lies in the truth of God contained in the name of Christ.
- The vast scope of Tertullian's writings necessitates much greater attention than this section allows.

Minucius Felix - contemporary of Tertullian who penned *Octavius* (c.AD 210) as a feigned dialogue between a pagan and a Christian

- describes the work of demons at several points, describing both their possession and mental attacks.
- describes in detail how the demons are connected with idols, statues, mediums, oracles, and predictive signs
- demons "are both deceived, and they deceive."
- These false spirits "weigh men downwards from heaven, and call them away from the true God to material things"
- vividly describes demonic possession, exorcism, and dialogue as well, explaining how they have communicated themselves as the gods of the Greeks and seek to keep unbelievers away from Christians.
- describes a plethora of power-encounter type approaches to spiritual warfare while reinforcing that their goal is to deceive and distract humanity away from the truth of God
- "They disturb the life, render all men unquiet; creeping also secretly into human bodies, with subtlety, as being spirits, they feign diseases, alarm the minds, wrench about the limbs; that they may constrain men to worship them, being gorged with the fumes of altars or the sacrifices of cattle, that, by remitting what they had bound, they may seem to have cured it. These raging maniacs also, whom you see rush about in public, are moreover themselves prophets without a temple; thus they rage, thus they rave, thus they are whirled around. In them also there is a like instigation of the demon, but there is a dissimilar occasion for their madness. . . . A great many, even some of your own people, know all those things that the demons themselves confess concerning themselves, as often as they are driven by us from bodies by the torments of our words and by the fires of our prayers..."
- "... Saturn himself, and Serapis, and Jupiter, and whatever demons you worship, overcome by pain, speak out what they are; and assuredly they do not lie to their own discredit, especially when any of you are standing by. Since they themselves are the witnesses that they are demons, believe them when they confess the truth of themselves; for when abjured by the only and true God, unwillingly the wretched beings shudder in their bodies, and either at once leap forth, or vanish by degrees, as the faith of the sufferer assists or the grace of the healer inspires. Thus they fly from Christians when near at hand, whom at a distance they harassed by your means in their assemblies. And thus, introduced into the minds of the ignorant, they secretly sow there a hatred of us by means of fear. . . . Thus they take possession of the minds and obstruct the hearts, that men may begin to hate us before they know us; lest, if known, they should either imitate us, or not be able to condemn us."

Origen -(AD 185–254) was an early leader of the church at Alexandria, helping to develop many of the foundational doctrines of the early church. Although some of his hypotheses would later be exposed as incorrect and heretical, his writings and teachings are of immense value to understanding the theology of the early church

- Origen de Principiis, he describes the devil and his demons and how “the Church has laid down that these beings exist” but “had not explained with sufficient clearness” what they are or how they exist”
- describes a renunciation of the devil in baptism, “We come to that moment when we made these promises, this declaration to the devil. Each of the faithful recalls when he came to the waters of baptism, when he received the first seal of the faith and approach the fount of salvation, the words that he pronounced then; he recalls his renunciation of the devil. He promised to resort to none of his pomps and his works and not to submit to any of his servitudes and his pleasures”
- Contra Celsus, Origen references the exorcisms that Christ performed and refers to how Christians of the day powerfully performed exorcisms through the “grace which is in the word of Christ,” rather than through the wisdom and learning of men
- emphasizing the power of prayer in exorcism of both humans and animals
- directly connects false religions and their worship in idols, altars, and temples to direct demonic worship
- “Because for the most part it is unlettered persons who perform this work; thus making manifest the grace which is in the word of Christ, and the despicable weakness of demons, which, in order to be overcome and driven out of the bodies and souls of men, do not require the power and wisdom of those who are mighty in argument, and most learned in matters of faith.” Origen, Contra Celsus (ANF 4:395, 613)
- “For ourselves, so far are we from wishing to serve demons, that by the use of prayers and other means which we learn from Scripture, we drive them out of the souls of men, out of places where they have established themselves, and even sometimes from the bodies of animals; for even these creatures often suffer from injuries inflicted upon them by demons.” (Origen, Contra Celsus (ANF 4:639))
- “Hence we are determined to avoid the worship of demons even as we would avoid death; and we hold that the worship, which is supposed among the Greeks to be rendered to gods at the altars, and images, and temples, is in reality offered to demons” (Origen, Contra Celsus (ANF 4:640))

Cyprian - (AD 200-258) was the “spiritual son and pupil of Tertullian” but also known as the “Ignatius of the West.”

- Treatises, he begins by emphasizing the unity of the church. He argues that as Satan’s schemes are thwarted, such as when Christians leave false religions, he attacks in new ways through infiltration and division.
- Cyprian specifically describes these enemy attacks as occurring through “flattering and deceiving” and by Satan equipping his own ministers to invade the Christian church.

- Cyprian’s awareness of the reality of spiritual warfare continues to reveal itself throughout his work in reference to the enemy and his ongoing, strategic attacks

Eusebius - Eusebius of Cæsarea (c.AD 260-340) was especially known for his historical accounts of the early church

- His writings offer early and extensive accounts of the office of exorcist when referencing the existence of “52 exorcists” during the time of a Roman bishop named Cornelius (c.AD 250)
- Eusebius references how a convert named Novatian, who would eventually become a presbyter, was delivered of Satan’s possession by the exorcists.
- Eusebius describes Novatian’s possession spatially, saying Satan “entered and dwelt in him for a long time” but does not relate how that possession manifested itself.
- He also describes how following his exorcism he became sick to the point of death. Novatian’s illness continued, but was relieved immediately following his baptism which is described as “irregular” due to it being conducted by affusion as a “clinical baptism”
- “but Satan, who entered and dwelt in him for a long time, became the occasion of his believing. Being delivered by the exorcists, he fell into a severe sickness; and as he seemed about to die, he received baptism by affusion, on the bed where he lay; if indeed we can say that such a one did receive it.”
- “There is no reason to doubt that Novatian received clinical baptism, as here stated by Cornelius. This does not imply, as is commonly supposed, that he was of heathen parentage, for many Christians postponed baptism as long as possible, in order not to sacrifice baptismal grace by sins committed after baptism. We do not know whether his parents were heathen or Christians. Upon the objection to Novatian’s ordination, based upon his irregular baptism.”

Eusebius - The office of exorcist.

- “Eusebius also references exorcists being persecuted along with other leaders of the churches in “Asia Minor and Syria during the time of the emperor Diocletian (c.AD 284-305).”
- “What was to be seen after this exceeds all description. A vast multitude were imprisoned in every place; and the prisons everywhere, which had long before been prepared for murderers and robbers of graves, were filled with bishops, presbyters and deacons, readers and exorcists.”
- 19th century explanatory note: “Explanatory Note number 2125: “The Exorcists likewise constituted one of the inferior orders of the clergy; but although we find exorcism very frequently referred to by the Fathers of the second century, there seems to have been no such office until the third century, the present being the earliest distinct reference to it. In the fourth century we find the office in all parts of the Church East and West. Their duty was to take charge of those supposed to be possessed of an evil spirit; to pray with them, care for them, and exorcise the demon when possible.’ See Bingham, *ibid.* chap. 4.” (Arthur C. McGiffert “The Life and writings of Eusebius of Cæsarea” (NPNF2 1:3))
- Eusebius graphically describes this time of persecution, explaining, “What was to be seen after this exceeds all description. A vast multitude were imprisoned in

every place; and the prisons everywhere, which had long before been prepared for murderers and robbers of graves, were filled with bishops, presbyters and deacons, readers and exorcists, so that room was no longer left in them for those condemned for crimes.”

Eusebius - Martyrdom of exorcists.

- One of the first martyrs was Procopius who was “a lector, interpreter, and exorcist in the church.”
- Alphæus was another martyr who was “a reader and exorcist in the church of Cæsarea.
- One of the more graphic accounts is of Romanus, another exorcist who also served as a deacon in the parish of Cæsarea. Romanus’s execution in Antioch is described with great detail for his level of boldness and courage in facing death
- “Being arrested for his boldness, he proved a most noble witness of the truth, if there ever was one. For when the judge informed him that he was to die by fire, he received the sentence with cheerful countenance and most ready mind, and was led away. When he was bound to the stake, and the wood piled up around him, as they were awaiting the arrival of the emperor before lighting the fire, he cried, “Where is the fire for me?”. . . Having said this, he was summoned again before the emperor, and subjected to the unusual torture of having his tongue cut out. But he endured this with fortitude and showed to all by his deeds that the Divine Power is present with those who endure any hardship whatever for the sake of religion, lightening their sufferings and strengthening their zeal. When he learned of this strange mode of punishment, the noble man was not terrified, but put out his tongue readily, and offered it with the greatest alacrity to those who cut it off”

Eusebius - Demonic sacrifices

- helpfully provides examples of the ongoing demon worship during the time of the early church
- He describes a human sacrifice at Cæsarea Philippi when a Christian named Astyrius boldly intervened for God to rebuke the demon in order to “bring the men’s delusion to an end.”
- Immediately following his request to God, his prayer was publicly answered as “the sacrifice floated on the surface of the fountain. And thus the miracle departed; and no wonder was ever afterward performed at the place.”
- “Among these is also the following wonder. At Cæsarea Philippi, which the Phoenicians call Paneas, springs are shown at the foot of the Mountain Panius, out of which the Jordan flows. They say that on a certain feast day, a victim was thrown in, and that through the power of the demon it marvelously disappeared and that which happened was a famous wonder to those who were present. Astyrius was once there when these things were done, and seeing the multitude astonished at the affair, he pitied their delusion; and looking up to heaven he supplicated the God over all through Christ, that he would rebuke the demon who deceived the people, and bring the men’s delusion to an end. And they say that when he had prayed thus, immediately the sacrifice floated on the surface of the fountain. And thus the miracle departed; and no wonder was ever afterward

performed at the place.” (Eusebius, The Church History of Eusebius (NPNF2 1:783))

Much more research is available @ www.SpiritualWarfare.blog

Henry A. Kelly's *The Devil at Baptism* is also a helpful resource that describes apotropaic practice at one's baptism with the purpose of preventing future attacks or to diminish their power, directed against lapses into sin in the future.

Quotes on Spiritual Warfare

- "The devil can cite scripture for his purpose." William Shakespeare
- "The devil is a better theologian than any of us and is a devil still." A.W. Tozer
- "The devil, the proud spirit, cannot endure to be mocked." Thomas More
- "Many do not recognize the fact as they ought, that Satan has got men fast asleep in sin and that it is his great device to keep them so. He does not care what we do if he can do that. We may sing songs about the sweet by and by, preach sermons and say prayers until doomsday, and he will never concern himself about us, if we don't wake anybody up. But if we awake the sleeping sinner he will gnash on us with his teeth. This is our work - to wake people up." Catherine Booth
- "The joy of the Lord will arm us against the assaults of our spiritual enemies and put our mouths out of taste for those pleasures with which the tempter baits his hooks." Matthew Henry
- "It is no marvel that the devil does not love field preaching! Neither do I; I love a commodious room, a soft cushion, a handsome pulpit. But where is my zeal if I do not trample all these underfoot in order to save one more soul?" John Wesley
- "The devil has his elect." Thomas Carlyle
- "The devil can counterfeit all the saving operations and graces of the Spirit of God." Jonathan Edwards
- "Every devil has not a cloven hoof." Daniel Defoe
- "The devil divides the world between atheism and superstition." George Herbert
- "The enemy will not see you vanish into God's company without an effort to reclaim you." C.S. Lewis
- "Our Lord's determined purpose and design was to overcome the devil, not by the exercise of His power, but by means of His own self-abasement." Jerome
- "The devil loves 'curing' a small fault by giving you a great one." C.S. Lewis
- "The devil is nimble; he can run apace; he is light of foot; he hath overtaken many....They that would have heaven must run for it." John Bunyan
- "The world is a den of murderers, subject to the devil. If we desire to live on earth, we must be content to be guests in it, and to lie in an inn where the host is a rascal, whose house has over the door this sign or shield, 'For murder and lies.'" Martin Luther
- "Satan always rocks our cradle when we sleep at our devotions." Joseph Hall
- "Parts and parcels of truth are the most envenomed shafts which fly from the bow of Satan." William Howells
- "A false interpretation of Scripture causes that the gospel of the Lord becomes the gospel of man, or, which is worse, of the devil." Jerome
- "Like a good chess player, Satan is always trying to maneuver you into a position where you can save your castle only by losing your bishop." C.S. Lewis
- "My main ambition in life is to be on the devil's most wanted list." Leonard Ravenhill
- "Enemy-occupied territory-----that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign in sabotage." C.S. Lewis

- “The trumpet still plays the notes of war. You cannot sit down and put the victory wreath on your head. You do not have a crown. You still must wear the helmet and carry the sword. You must watch, pray, and fight. Expect your last battle to be the most difficult, for the enemy’s fiercest charge is reserved for the end of the day.” Charles Spurgeon
- “I have ever found that when I have thought the battle was over and the conquest gained, and so let down my watch, the enemy has risen up and done me the greatest injury.” David Brainerd
- “We must recognize that the Church’s real battle is not with fellow Christians “but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age” (Eph 6:12). How we as a Church fight this cosmic battle is a cosmic matter, and the armor of God is our spiritual equipment that moves us forward to victory.” Ramez Atallah
- “Spiritual warfare is not about naming territorial spirits, claiming the ground, or binding demons. It is all about the gospel. It is to live a gospel life, to preserve gospel unity and to proclaim gospel truth. It is to do this in the face of a hostile world, a deceptive enemy and our sinful natures. And it is to pray to a sovereign God for gospel opportunities. Advance comes through godliness, unity, proclamation and prayer.” Timothy Chester
- “How shall we view the world of mission? In the first place, it is not an organizational or religious effort. World missions is not, strictly speaking, the work of the Church, but the work of God. World missions means the invasion of God into a hostile world - a world filled with fiendish forces, filled with demonized forces of hell in black array.” L.E. Maxwell
- “How then must we view world missions? Is it a job? A business? A service? A mission? A commission? An assignment? A program? An investment? Perhaps in a measure, these things, but missions must be first a campaign, a conquest, a war. If it is not first that, it will never be realized in these other respects. World missions means war, total war and mobilization. The Governor General of this campaign is none other than the Captain of our salvation.” L.E. Maxwell
- “Some say this is the greatest investment in which you can put your time, substance, and life. Nonsense! It’s a war! I don’t like to hear missions described as a business investment, for there are two implications that I believe are wrong. First, when someone asks me to make an investment, I expect in reasonable time some returns. In the second place, the implication is that what I have I can choose to do with as I will. And that’s not so either. Total warfare means total commitment with no options and no returns, and past the point of no return.” Francis Steele

William Gurnall Quotes

- "God himself underwrites your battle and has appointed His own Son 'the captain of [your] salvation' (Hebrews 2:10)" William Gurnall
- "Head knowledge of the things of Christ is not enough; this following Christ is primarily a matter of the heart" William Gurnall
- "The soldier is summoned to a life of active duty, and so is the Christian. The very nature of the calling precludes a life of ease." William Gurnall
- "We have known many who have joined the army of Christ and liked being a soldier for a battle or two, but have soon had enough and ended up deserting." William Gurnall
- "Here is a word for Christians. Knowing your strength lies wholly in God and not in yourself, remain humble – even when God is blessing and using you most." William Gurnall
- "If you embezzle God's strength and credit it to your own account, He will soon call an audit and take back what was His all along." William Gurnall
- "If by negligence or choice you fail to put on God's armor and rush naked into battle, you sign your own death certificate." William Gurnall
- "It is not the man decked out in morality or philosophical virtues who will repel a full charge of temptation sent from Satan's cannon; it is the man suited up in armor – that is, in Christ." William Gurnall
- "Do not let anyone deceive you. Spiritual darkness can never be expelled except by union with Christ." William Gurnall
- "Do not doubt for a moment that Satan will hurl all his fury at those who love God's Word." William Gurnall
- "Thus thousands perish who supposed they were armed against Satan, death, and judgment – when all along they were miserable and naked." William Gurnall
- "Satan is not particular what lie he tells you; one will work as powerfully as another if he can get you to believe it." William Gurnall
- "Perhaps you are a parent with a family under your wing. They fare much as you do. If your heart is feasting on Christ, you will never find yourself in short supply when caring for their spiritual needs. On the other hand, if your own heart is malnourished, they will go hungry for spiritual food." William Gurnall
- "If Satan was too crafty for man in his perfection, how much more dangerous to us now in our maimed condition." William Gurnall
- "The devil especially likes to tempt when the Christian is newly converted." William Gurnall
- "Do not look on temptation with a wandering eye if you do not wish to be taken by it, nor allow your mind to dwell on that which you do not want lodged in your heart." William Gurnall
- "The more eminent your service for God, the greater the probability that Satan is at that very moment hatching some deadly scheme against you." William Gurnall
- "He [Satan] labors to undermine repentance and overpraise good works." William Gurnall

- "Satan is the greatest intelligence agent in the world." William Gurnall
- "Study Satan's tricks, and acquaint yourself with his tactics." William Gurnall
- "Know your heart. Be intimately acquainted with yourself, and you will better know Satan's design against you." William Gurnall
- "Be prepared for another assault." William Gurnall
- "The strength of your sorrow is not what carries you to heaven – but true heart repentance." William Gurnall
- "Your perspective should be very different from the unregenerate." William Gurnall
- "First of all, renew your repentance, as if you had never repented. Put forth fresh acts of faith, as if you had never believed, and you will beat Satan at his own game." William Gurnall
- "Telling a trusting, godly friend of your struggles often brings relief. Satan knows this too well, so in order to more freely to rifle the soul of its peace and comfort, he frightens it into silence." William Gurnall
- "God is wiser in His creatures' weak sermons than Satan is in his deep plots." William Gurnall
- "If he had been truly repentant, his sorry for one sin would have broken his heart for the others also." William Gurnall
- "The saint who has been severely tested is best equipped to help other suffering saints." William Gurnall
- "Rest easy, worried Christian. The duel is not between the church and Satan, but between Christ and Satan." William Gurnall
- "Whether you like it or not, you must go into the ring with Satan." William Gurnall
- "The man who allows one sin to command another, and thus to rule his soul, cannot be God's champion." William Gurnall
- "Jerome says one love extinguishes another – that is, the love of Christ much quench the love of sin." William Gurnall
- "Nor trust too much in spiritual leaders. They too, are flesh, and their judgment is not infallible." William Gurnall
- "Persecutors, whether by their tongues or their hands, are but the devil's instruments." William Gurnall
- "When reproached and persecuted by wicked men, look beyond them. Spend your wrath on Satan, who is your chief enemy. Men are only his puppets." William Gurnall
- "But his most powerful title of all is 'the god of this world' (2 Corinthians 4:4). It is given to him because sinners grant him a godlike worship, mistakenly holding him in reverence as the saints do God Himself." William Gurnall
- "He would not leave a soul on earth uninhabited if God did not call a halt to the procession. Christ's saving and keeping power is the only thing that protects anyone from this intruder." William Gurnall
- "If you are a saint, you do not need to fear that Satan will infiltrate your soul." William Gurnall
- "You are and always will be the chief object of his [Satan's] wrath. He wrestles with you at every opportunity." William Gurnall

- "The devil's rule is over those who are in a state of sin and ignorance, not over those who are sometimes sinful and ignorant." William Gurnall
- "Does he hear the truth in a powerful sermon? Satan will sit alongside him in the pew and whisper nonsense to distract him." William Gurnall
- "And if the sermon gets too hot, the devil will dull his senses and get him to doze until the service is over." William Gurnall
- "Suppose a man's conscience strains toward the truth. Satan may then send him to hear a cool preacher, whose senseless prattle will tickle his fancy rather than prick his conscience." William Gurnall
- "Those in darkness have no power to resist Satan. He rules the whole man, shaping his apprehensions and distorting his perceptions." William Gurnall
- "Christian, keep a loose grip on the material possessions you value most highly. Be ready at a moment's notice to throw them overboard, rather than risk the shipwreck of your faith." William Gurnall
- "Every ignorant soul is the willing slave of Satan." William Gurnall
- "Dear saint, do not be too proud to go back and learn the basic precepts of the Gospel if you have not yet mastered them." William Gurnall
- "What a clever trick on the part of Satan, to make us think that if we cannot see something, it does not exist!" William Gurnall
- "Christian, this is imperative for you to realize: When wicked or unclean thoughts first force their way into your mind, you have not yet sinned. This is the work of the devil! But if you so as much as offer them a chair and begin polite conversation with them, you have become his accomplice." William Gurnall
- "Do not pretend you want to be led into truth if you will not bother to study the whole Word of God." William Gurnall
- "Pride was the sin that turned Satan, a blessed angel, into a cursed devil." William Gurnall
- "Great gifts lift a saint up a little higher in the eyes of men, but they also tempt him to pride. Do not envy those with great gifts; instead pity and pray for them." William Gurnall
- "Where pride flourishes, the body of Christ suffers." William Gurnall
- "Never forget for a moment that you will be held accountable for the talents left in your care." William Gurnall
- "Steadfastly resist sins of the heart." William Gurnall
- "Even your good thoughts are not impervious to Satan's tampering." William Gurnall
- "Pride wants to grow where the best gifts have been bestowed. So beware of pride!" William Gurnall
- "The Christian must practice the same indifference in keeping his earthly possessions as he did in getting them." William Gurnall

Neil Anderson Quotes

I wrote my Ph.D. dissertation on Dr. Neil T. Anderson who is primarily known through his most popular books, *The Bondage Breaker* and *Victory Over the Darkness*. This comprehensive summation and evaluation of Dr. Anderson's writings is now published as a book and freely available for download at: www.SpiritualWarfare.blog

Here are some of the most helpful quotes from his writings.

BOOK ABBREVIATIONS:

- DC - *Discipleship Counseling*
- GPAWINY - *God's Power at Work in You*
- TCMH - *The Common Made Holy*
- FFA - *Freedom from Addiction: Breaking the Bondage of Addiction and Finding Freedom in Christ* by Neil T. Anderson and Mike & Julia Quarles, Regal Books, Ventura, CA
- SYCF - *Setting Your Church Free*
- TCCM - *The Christ Centered Marriage*
- HOFFIC - *Helping Others Find Freedom in Christ*
- WITL - *Walking in the Light*
- STOTD - *Stomping Out the Darkness*
- LFIC - *Living Free in Christ*
- VOTD - *Victory Over the Darkness*
- BB - *The Bondage Breaker*

- “Having the right message and method is not enough. You have to have the right people who are dependent on God.” (*Discipleship Counseling*, 12)
- “I believe that the ministries of counseling and discipling are the same in the Bible, although too often they have become separate and unrelated disciplines in the Christian community.” (*Discipleship Counseling*, 13-14)
- “Discipleship counseling is an attempt to meet people where they are and help them resolve their personal and spiritual conflicts so that can be established alive and free in Christ.” (*Discipleship Counseling*, 14)
- Foundational Principles:
 - “Scripture is the only reliable source for faith and practice (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17)” (*Discipleship Counseling*, 16)
 - “I believe that the message and method of discipleship counseling must be based on the finished work of Christ (see Colossians 1:27-2:10)” (*Discipleship Counseling*, 16)
 - “I rely totally on the present ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-15)” (16)
 - “We are limited by the faith of the counselees. We are not only saved by faith, we are sanctified by faith (see Galatians 3:1-5)” (*Discipleship Counseling*, 16)

- “We all need the support of the Christian community and we all need to renew our faith and walk with God (see Hebrews 10:17-25)” (*Discipleship Counseling*, 16)
- “This battle between the father of lies and the Spirit of truth is fought primarily in the minds of all humanity” (*Discipleship Counseling*, 25)
- “There is no time when our minds, emotions, wills, personalities and relationships are not contributing factors. Likewise, our present condition always has some spiritual basis.” (*Discipleship Counseling*, 58)
- “There are a million ways into sin, but the way out is always the same” (*Discipleship Counseling*, 61)
- “Repentance and faith in God has always been the answer, so that means we have to take personal responsibility for our own attitudes and actions” (*Discipleship Counseling*, 62)
- “Whether the demonic part is 0 percent, 5 percent, 10 percent or 50 percent does not make any difference. The critical part is submitting to God. Resisting the devil is simple if there are no unresolved issues between us and our heavenly Father.” (*Discipleship Counseling*, 148)
- “To stay free, people need to know: (1) who they are in Christ; (2) the authority and protection of the believer; (3) the nature of the battle that is going on for their minds; and (4) how to walk by faith by the power of the Holy Spirit according to what God said is true.” (*Discipleship Counseling*, 167)
- “We are positionally sanctified by faith the moment we are born again because of what Christ has already done for us. We are progressively sanctified by faith when we are transformed by the renewing of our minds, which requires repentance and faith.” (*Discipleship Counseling*, 338)
- “I believe parachurch ministries like the one I founded are meant to come and go” (Anderson, *Rough Road*, 13)
- “our purpose is to equip the Church worldwide so they can establish their people, marriages, and ministries alive and free in Christ through genuine repentance and faith in God” (Anderson, *Rough Road*, 13)
- “Neil dares to suggest that the spiritual world impacts all we do, and he equips us to deal with these challenges” by Sandy Mason (DC, 7)
- “Any part of my message that is true did not originate with me. If it is new, it is not true, and if it is true, it is not new.” (DC, 165)
- “I turned another significant corner when I discovered the spiritual battle that is going on for our minds and learned why it is so important to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.” (BB, 5)

Theology

- “my Western education has skewed my worldview, which left me with an inadequate understanding of the spiritual world. Jesus did not come just to forgive our sins and give us life; He came to undo the works of Satan (see 1 John 3:8)” (DC, 8)
- “in my educational experience, Western rationalism and naturalism had dominated my thinking” (DC, 9)

- “If our theology is right, it should cause us to fall in love with God and one another, which is the great commandment” (DC, 40)

God

- “To resolve personal and spiritual conflicts, we need to understand that God is the Wonderful Counselor, and that He will minister to the whole person and take into account all reality.” (BB, 254)
- “the invisible world is more real than the visible world” (WITL, 144)
- “the Holy Spirit enables us to discern good from evil” (WITL, 160)

Man

- “these hurting Christians had only one thing in common: none of them knew who they were in Christ” (DC, 9)
- “I am often asked if little children can come under attack. The answer is yes.” (BB, 269)

Sin Problem: Mind

- “There is no time when our minds, emotions, wills, personalities and relationships are not contributing factors. Likewise, our present condition always has some spiritual basis.” (DC, 58)
- “just as our glands are regulated by our central nervous system, our emotions are primarily a product of our thoughts” (DC, 84)
- “God never bypasses our mind. He works through our minds, and we are transformed by the renewing of our minds” (DC, 87)
- “our emotions are essentially a product of our thoughts” (DC, 88)
- “Contrary to popular thinking, the dominant function of the heart is not emotional. Instead, the heart is first, the place that we think; second, where we will; and third, where we feel. . . . Rather than understanding the heart to be the seat of our emotions, it is better to understand the heart as the seat of reflection.” (DC, 113)
- “There is a huge difference between intellectual knowledge and truth that has entered the heart.” (DC, 113)
- “The real disease of the heart is its deceitfulness (Jeremiah 17:9)” (GPAWINY, 138)
- “Let’s not waste such a precious resource that God has made available to us – our minds quickened by the Holy Spirit to be able to discern good from evil, right and wrong” (WITL, 169)

Identity in Christ

- “Understanding what it means to be a child of God is a core belief for every Christian” (DC, 69)
- “believers are called saints, holy ones, or righteous ones approximately 240 times” (DC, 71)
- “nonbelievers are called sinners approximately 340 times” (DC, 71)
- The “Being” Needs – “I am accepted in Christ,” “I am secure in Christ,” “I am secure in Christ” (DC, 75-76)

- “before we received Christ, we were slaves to sin. Now because of Christ’s work on the cross, sin’s power over us has been broken. Satan has no right of ownership or authority over us. He is a defeated foe, but he is committed to keeping us from realizing that.” (BB,11)
- “Tragically, most Christians never come to appreciate who they are in Christ” (LFIC, 7)
- “Without exception, all the people I have counseled have had some unscriptural belief the enemy has used to keep them in bondage” (LFIC, 7)
- “It is important to recognize faulty beliefs from our past, to renounced them as lies, and to reprogram and renew our minds with truth.” (LFIC, 7)
- “We are no longer products of our past. We are primarily products of Christ’s work on the cross.” (LFIC, 10)
- “Renewing our minds does not come naturally . . . We have to consciously know the Word of God so that we can understand who we are from God’s perspective.” (LFIC, 11)
- “The most important believe we possess is a true knowledge of who God is. The second most important belief is who we are as children of God” (LFIC, 11)
- “It is not what we do that determines who we are. It is who we are that determines what we do” (LFIC, 11)
- “How do you live each day consciously aware and active as a child of God? First and foremost, through Bible reading, prayer, and fellowship. As well, this book can help you remember – on a daily basis – your wonderful position in Christ” (LFIC, 13)

Satan, Flesh, World – The Trifecta of the Enemy

- “Is Satan the cause of our temptations, or is the world, or our own sinful flesh? Scripture reveals that it is difficult- if not impossible- to separate the temptations that arises from these three sources, and to so may be erroneous” (GPAWINY, 282-83).
- “Even though three enemies are involved in attempting to pull us away from God, it is important to note that the final responsibility for our sin rests on us” (GPAWINY, 284)
- “Don’t assume all disturbing thoughts are from Satan. Where the thoughts come from – the television set, our memory banks, the pit or our own creative reservoirs – doesn’t matter as understanding that the answer is always the same. Choose to think the truth.” (FFA, 291-92)
- “The father of lies can block your effectiveness as a Christian if he can deceive you in to believing that you are nothing but a product of your past – subject to sin, prone to failure, and controlled by your habits.” (BB,11)
- “We should derive our methodology for dealing with the kingdom of darkness primarily from the epistles rather than the Gospels and the book of Acts” (BB, 255)
- “There is some disagreement among Christians about how much method and theology we should extract from [Acts] . . . I stress caution in using examples of demonic expulsion from Acts as the sole basis for methodology . . . the Book of Acts does clearly reveal that demonic encounters continued after the cross and

that evil forces continued after the cross and that evil forces continue to exist in opposition to the growth of the church. But this book of history does not constitute the final word on dealing with those forces.” (BB, 256)

Salvation

- “There are a million ways into sin, but the way out is always the same” (DC, 61)
- “Repentance and faith in God has always been the answer, so that means we have to take personal responsibility for our own attitudes and actions” (DC, 62)

Sanctification

- “The next circle indicates a need to exercise tolerance. People are in transition and at various stages of growth” (DC, 41)
- “There is no such thing as instant maturity. Growth will take place when the root issues are resolved.” (DC, 140)
- “We are positionally sanctified by faith the moment we are born again because of what Christ has already done for us. We are progressively sanctified by faith when we are transformed by the renewing of our minds, which requires repentance and faith.” (DC, 338)
- “our sanctification is first and foremost the work of God” (GPAWINY, 102)
- “When we fail to recognize the spiritual matters we are responsible for, then we set ourselves up for disappointment because we either think God isn’t at work in our lives or we are spiritual failures because things didn’t go the way we expected” (GPAWINY, 103)
- “Sanctification is the process of changing the heart, which is actually a change of the whole person (that is, the mind, emotion, and will or actions)” (GPAWINY, 116)
- “we are still contending with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Because we were created in God’s image, we have the capacity to choose whom we will serve- the god of this world , or the one and only Creator of all things” (GPAWINY, 129)
- “Scripture teaches that we are changed or sanctified by the truth. It is the truth that brings people to God and then bears fruit in them” (GPAWINY, 134)
- “Renewing our mind begins with genuine repentance” (GPAWINY, 136)
- “No matter how long you are a Christian, your need to remain dependent on Christ stays constant.” (GPAWINY, 211)
- “understanding God’s will is critical since God’s will for our lives is our sanctification” (BB, 10)
- “five areas of application for each level: spiritual life, mind, emotions, will and relationships” (STOTD, 198)
- “In each area there is both a point of conflict and a step of growth” (STOTD, 198)
- “The point of conflict identifies how sin, the world, the flesh and the devil interfere in the discipleship process. The points of conflict indicate what must be resolved and replaced by specific steps of growth” (STOTD, 198)
- “help people experience freedom in Christ so they can move on to maturity and fruitfulness in their walk with Him” (STOTD, 205)
- “we need the peace of God by ordering our internal world” (WITL, 117)

Revelation

- “Special revelation refers to the written Word of God” (DC, 24)
- “Jesus Christ is the ultimate revelation of God” (DC, 24)
- “the deliverer is Christ, and He has already come. Second, we should get our information from the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, who will lead us into all truth, and that truth will set us free.” (BB, 257-58)
- “the Bible is the only infallible source” (WITL, 14)
- “we need to integrate truth into the very fabric of our lives, not simply memorize it” (WITL, 102)
- “He can guide us only if we have the knowledge of God’s Word and His will established in our minds” (WITL, 174)
- “The Bible doesn’t just give us a message, it gives us a method as well” (HOFFIC, 63)
- “I made the personal choice several years ago to understand who we are and how we can live productive lives based solely on the Word of God” (HOFFIC, 62)

Mental Health and Theology

- “when research becomes prescriptive, implying what life and human behavior should be, it distorts the truth and becomes an enemy of the gospel” (DC, 27)
- “research may illustrate, but it does not validate special revelation” (DC, 28)
- “empirical research and rationalism have formed the basis for a secular liberal arts education in the Western world” (DC, 29)
- “Humanism in secular schools is being replaced by New Age philosophies” (DC, 29)
- “there are no absolutes in sociological, psychological or anthropological studies” (DC, 30)
- “We naturally interpret the world we observe from our own perspective. Wisdom, however, is seeing life from God’s perspective.” (DC, 31)
- “I am less committed to my theology now than I was when I finished seminary, but I am more committed to the truth than I ever have been, because I have seen it set people free. Theology is our attempt to systemize truth.” (DC, 32)
- “‘Ma’am, do you believe in evolution?’ Startled, she said, ‘Of course not.’ I continued, ‘You mean to tell me that you don’t accept the scientific explanation for the origin of species?’ Again she assured me that she did not. Then I asked her, ‘Do you accept without question the psychiatric explanation of mental illness?’ ‘Yes, I do,’ she answered. ...Although she did not buy into the scientific theory of evolution, she was willing to place her trust in secular psychiatry and psychology and dismiss the possibility that her son could have a spiritual problem. Secular psychiatry can alleviate some suffering related to the natural realm, but without the aid of divine revelation, how can secular psychiatry and psychologists give us an adequate understanding of who we are and why we are here, explain the nature of our problems and describe a wholistic answer?” (DC, 43)
- “anxiety disorders are the number one mental health problem in the world today...depression is the common cold of mental illness and the second-most-common mental health problem” (DC, 66)
- “values and attitudes about life are formed in their minds in two primary ways. . . .prevailing experiences . . . traumatic experiences” (DC, 79)

- “most people do not have a healthy sense of who they are and many struggle with a poor sense of worth” (DC, 81)

Discipleship

- “I believe that the ministries of counseling and discipling are the same in the Bible, although too often they have become separate and unrelated disciplines in the Christian community.” (DC, 13-14)
- “Discipleship counseling is an attempt to meet people where they are and help them resolve their personal and spiritual conflicts so that can be established alive and free in Christ.” (DC, 14)
- Foundational Principles:
- “Scripture is the only reliable source for faith and practice (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17)” (DC, 16)
- “I believe that the message and method of discipleship counseling must be based on the finished work of Christ (see Colossians 1:27-2:10)” (DC, 16)
- “I rely totally on the present ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-15)” (16)
- “We are limited by the faith of the counselees. We are not only saved by faith, we are sanctified by faith (see Galatians 3:1-5)” (DC, 16)
- “We all need the support of the Christian community and we all need to renew our faith and walk with God (see Hebrews 10:17-25)” (DC, 16)
- “integrating God into the counseling process sets discipleship counseling apart from secular counseling” (DC, 96)
- “Caring and growing together as Christians is what being Christ’s disciples is all about.” (STOTD, 196-97)
- “Discipleship is the intensely personal activity of two or more persons helping each other experience a growing relationship with God” (STOTD, 197)
- “We have the awesome privilege and responsibility to be both teachers and learners of what it means to be in Christ, walk in the Spirit and live by faith.” (STOTD, 197)
- “In the same way, every Christian has the opportunity to be a peer counselor and to receive counsel in his Christian relationships.” (STOTD, 197)
- “A Christian cannot have an effective walk (Level III) if she is not moving into maturity (Level II), and she cannot approach maturity if she is not first rooted in Christ (Level I)” (STOTD, 198)
- “If your curriculum isn’t based on the Word of God and your program isn’t relational, then what you are doing isn’t discipleship” (VOTD, 216)
- “The missing link in discipleship is usually the personal interaction” (VOTD, 216)
- “Discipleship is a process of building the life of Christ into one another” (VOTD, 217)
- “a good disciple is a good counselor, and a good Christian counselor is a good disciple” (VOTD, 217)
- “Paul refers to three levels of maturity in Colossians 2:6-10 . . . rooted in Christ . . . built up in Christ . . . walking in Christ” (VOTD, 220)
- “Discipleship requires mental discipline. People who will not assume responsibility for their thoughts cannot be disciple.” (VOTD, 223)

- “The first goal of discipleship is to help those you disciple become firmly rooted in Christ” (VOTD, 222)
- “The second goal of discipleship is to accept God’s goal of sanctification and grow in the likeness of Christ” (VOTD, 223)
- “the third goal of discipleship is to help others function as believers in their homes, on their jobs and in society” (VOTD, 225)
- “Christian counseling seeks to help people resolve personal and spiritual conflicts through genuine repentance and faith in God.” (VOTD, 226)
- five practical tips: “help people identify and resolve root issues” (VOTD, 226) “encourage emotional honesty” (VOTD, 228) “share the truth” (VOTD, 228) “call for a response” (VOTD, 228) “help them be a part of the Christian Community” (VOTD, 229) “help people move from conflict to growth by encouraging them to develop healthy, supportive relationships” (VOTD, 229)
- “Progressive sanctification is a process that cannot be accomplished apart from the Christian community” (VOTD, 229)
- “Discipleship is an intensely personal experience between two or more people in the presence of Christ and centered in the Word of God” (HOFFIC, 63)
- “Most people’s problems are not primarily external, which could be resolved by learning to behave better. They are internal and resolved by being established in Christ, choosing to believe the truth and walking accordingly by faith.” (HOFFIC, 78)
- “Our first concern in discipleship/counseling is to get people connected to God.” (HOFFIC, 80)
- “Christ can resolve the conflicts that are keeping couples from having wonderful relationships together in Christ” (TCCM, 19)
- “If you are ready to put Christ back into the center of your lives and the center of your marriage and home, there is great hope for you” (TCCM, 19)
- “When we look to our marriages and families to find our sense of identity and worth, they become potential enemies. When we look to God to discover who we are and why we are here, then our marriages and families become the primary instruments God uses to conform us to His image.” (TCCM,74)

Responsibility in Christ

Individual

- “We are limited by the faith of the counselees. We are not only saved by faith, we are sanctified by faith (see Galatians 3:1-5)” (DC, 16)
- “whose responsibility is it to resist the devil, put on the armor of God, and take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ?” (DC, 101)
- “People’s lives are like houses where the garbage has not been taken out for weeks and spills have not been cleaned up. This attracts a lot of flies. The natural tendency is to focus on getting rid of the flies, because they are so distracting. People tend to swat flies instead of getting rid of the garbage. . . . A better solution is to get rid of the garbage and ignore the flies that will leave when the garbage is gone. Repentance and faith in God have been and will continue to be the answer in this present church age.” (DC, 108)

- “Even though three enemies are involved in attempting to pull us away from God, it is important to note that the final responsibility for our sin rests on us” (GPAWINY, 284)
- “People must assume personal responsibility for their actions to find their freedom in Christ.” (FFA, 292)
- “Because there are not instructions in the epistles to cast out demons does not mean that Christians cannot have spiritual problems. It means that the responsibility for living free in Christ has shifted from the specially endowed agent of authority to the individual believer.” (BB, 256)
- “Unless the individual assumes responsibility for his own freedom, he may end up like the poor fellow who was freed from one spirit only to be occupied by seven others who were worse than the first (Matthew 12:43-45)” (BB, 257)
- “I believe in intercessory prayer, but not if it takes the place of the individual’s responsibility to pray” (HOFFIC, 66)

Counselor

- “Having the right message and method is not enough. You have to have the right people who are dependent on God.” (DC, 12)
- “Fear has prevented many Christian encouragers and even pastors from dealing with this spiritual issue” (DC, 107)
- Regarding power encounters...”In this type of deliverance ministry, the deliverer is the pastoral agent and is getting information from the demons. Why would we believe them? . . . The deliverer is Christ and He has already come.” (DC, 109)
- The counselor/encourager “will lead the counselees into all truth, and that truth will set them free.” (DC, 109)
- “Setting a captive free is better understood as a truth encounter because it is the truth that sets the captive free, and it is never our responsibility to defeat the devil. Jesus has already done that. The encourager has the privilege of facilitating this truth-encounter process. This may explain why there are no instructions in the Epistles to cast out demons” (DC, 109)
- “the encourager is more like that of a facilitator who has the ministry of reconciliation” (DC, 110)
- “Discipleship counseling is not just a technique we learn; it is an encounter with God, who is the wonderful counselor.” (DC, 110)
- “I believe every committed Christian, especially pastors and counselors, can do what I do to help others resolved their personal and spiritual conflicts. Helping others find their freedom in Christ does not require the exercise of a special gift; it requires the loving application of truth.” (BB, 253)
- “The primary prerequisites for helping others find freedom are godly character and the ability to teach” (BB, 259)

Church

- “God conveys himself and His truth to us through other believers” (GPAWINY, 236)

- “According to Scripture, we are not designed to grow in isolation from other believers; God intends us to grow together as part of a community” (GPAWINY, 236)
- “The relationship between fellowship and growth toward holiness becomes more obvious when we consider 1) our real nature as human persons, and, 2) how our personal growth is intertwined with that of others” (GPAWINY, 237)
- “Christian growth seeks the progressive conquering of the sin that alienates us so that God’s intention of human community may be more fully realized” (GPAWINY, 240)
- “Spiritual growth, then, is more than personal; it is communal” (GPAWINY, 247)
- “One of the ways in which we can minister to each other is through prayer” (GPAWINY, 250)
- “It is too difficult for us to stand alone and be bombarded with the lies of the world” (GPAWINY, 252)
- “to see the truth modeled in another life can be more powerful than simply knowing it intellectually” (GPAWINY, 253)
- “the believer’s response to the flesh must begin with the recognition that the power to resist the self-centered life cannot come from self” (GPAWINY, 264)
- “just as sin can have detrimental effects in the life of an individual, it can also have disastrous effects to a corporate group” Dr. Robert Saucy, (SYCF,9)
- “the group can also sin collectively by failing to confront the sins of individuals and thereby engage in disobedience to the Lord of the Church” Dr. Robert Saucy(SYCF,9)
- “we believe that individual freedom must come to the leadership before organizational freedom can be accomplished” (SYCF, 15)
- “the unity of the true Church is essential to accomplish our mission on planet earth” (SYCF, 16)
- “we have often stressed our personal relationship with Christ at the expense of our corporate relationship to Him” (SYCF, 16)
- “the primary battle is not between differing theological schools, it is between Christ and Antichrist” (SYCF,17)
- “there is unity in the body of Christ because the Holy Spirit has made us one” (SYCF, 65)
- “as with individual disciplines, church disciplines must be centered in Christ as well” (SYCF, 59)
- “the problem comes when our confidence and dependence upon God shifts to confidence and dependence upon programs and strategies” (SYCF, 60)
- “many churches are in bondage; like people, churches need to resolve the issues that are critical between the church body and the Head of the Church” (SYCF, 42)

Spiritual Warfare

- “When I have asked Christian audiences all over the world if they have had a fearful encounter with some spiritual force, at least 50 percent have responded affirmatively” (DC, 52)

- “The Bible gives no indication that it is ever safe to take off the armor of God. ..Yet our tendency is to polarize into a psychotherapeutic ministry – which ignores the reality of the spiritual world – or some kind of deliverance ministry that ignores the total person and individual responsibility. I do not believe either paradigm is sufficient to deal with the whole person.” (DC, 58)
- “Whether the demonic part is 0 percent, 5 percent, 10 percent or 50 percent does not make any difference. The critical part is submitting to God. Resisting the devil is simple if there are no unresolved issues between us and our heavenly Father.” (DC, 148)
- “what enables victims to submit to God and resist the devil (James 4:7) is essentially a process of repentance” (BB, 6)

Spiritual Oppression

- “This battle between the father of lies and the Spirit of truth is fought primarily in the minds of all humanity” (DC, 25)
- “Fear is the natural emotion we fear when our physical or psychological safety is being threatened” (DC, 51)
- "To eliminate a fear object in your life, all you have to do is remove one of its attributes. For instance, physical death is no longer a legitimate fear object for us, because God has removed one of the attributes. Although death is still imminent, it is no longer potent because 'death is swallowed up in victory' (1 Corinthians 15:54)" (DC, 51)
- “Physical life is not the ultimate value – spiritual life is” (DC, 51)

Power Encounter

- In counseling the spiritually oppressed...”When we lack the expertise and the patience, we resort to some kind of power mode to correct people of circumstances.” (DC, 173)
- “I have not attempted to cast a demon out of someone for several years. . . . I no longer deal directly with demons or dialogue with them. Nor do I permit their manifestation in counseling sessions. I only work with the person by helping him or her to assume responsibility to submit to God and resist the devil (James 4:7).” (BB, 258)
- “Dealing with the demonic should be seen as a truth encounter rather than a power encounter” (BB, 258)
- “God does everything ‘properly and in an orderly manner’ (1 Corinthians 14:40)” (BB, 259)

Truth Encounter

- “In one sense, it does not matter whether the thought originated from the television set, your memory bank, your imagination or from the pit, because the answer is the same: We need to take ‘every thought captive to the obedience of Christ’ (2 Corinthians 10:5)” (DC, 49)
- “Anxiety is a fear of the unknown or fear without an adequate cause” (DC, 50)
- “Authority is the right to rule. Power is the ability to rule.” (DC, 105)
- “I am a child of God, the evil one cannot touch me. Sit down.” (DC, 106)

- “They fear being exposed and are scared to death that someone may find out what is really going on inside.” (DC, 151)
- “The only way we can overcome the father of lies is not by human reasoning, nor by scientific research, but by God’s revelation – His truth” (GPAWINY, 141)

Steps to Freedom in Christ

- “Establishing our freedom in Christ is one thing, maintaining that freedom is something else. Paul says, “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery” (Gal. 5:1). In other words, we can fall back into legalism. We can also fall back into license” (DC, 166)
- “To stay free, people need to know: (1) who they are in Christ; (2) the authority and protection of the believer; (3) the nature of the battle that is going on for their minds; and (4) how to walk by faith by the power of the Holy Spirit according to what God said is true.” (DC, 167)
- “Who sets them free is Christ, and what sets them free is their personal response to Him” (DC, 201)
- “Their freedom will be the result of what they choose to believe, confess, forgive, renounce, and forsake. You cannot do these things for them” (DC, 217)
- The “Steps to Freedom in Christ” serves to “enable us to process our issues in the seven major areas where Satan robs us of our freedom” (FFA, 143) – Mike Quarles
- “Freedom is the assurance that your needs for security, significance, love, acceptance and worth are always met in Christ. They can’t be taken away by changing circumstances or personal bondages.” (FFA, 143) – Mike Quarles
- “you can work through them [the Steps to Freedom in Christ] on your own, because Jesus truly is the Wonderful Counselor” (BB, 6)
- “I was searching for a wholistic answer, rooted in God’s Word, centered on Christ and usable for all Christians everywhere. The tool that resulted is called the Steps to Freedom in Christ” (BB,6)
- “That is the primary purpose of the Steps to Freedom, to resolve the issues that are critical between ourselves and God” (HOFFIC, 80)

Methodology

- “Some people do not want to resolve anything; they just want to argue. We cannot fall into the temptation of wanting to win the argument.” (DC, 110)
- “The deceiver will take a deceived person down 1,001 rabbit trails. We have to avoid going down these trails with them. . . . Experienced encouragers have learned to stay focused and keep the session moving in a meaningful direction.” (DC, 111)
- “What they are doing is just a result of what they are thinking and choosing to believe”(DC, 151)
- “If people are confronted with the truth and they do not repent, they either run from the light or try to discredit the source of the light.” (DC, 174)
- “Every work of Satan and every way of Satan has to be renounced in order for repentance to be complete.” (DC, 221)

False Guidance – Counterfeit vs. Real

- “I have had many people under the influence of Satan say that Jesus is Lord, but when I ask them to say ‘Jesus is my Lord,’ they simply repeat ‘Jesus is Lord.’ The devil knows that Jesus is the Lord of the universe, but he will not profess Jesus as his Lord, nor will his followers.” (DC, 223)

Deception vs. Truth

- “freedom does not come from swatting flies, it comes from taking out the garbage” (DC, 243)
- “there are many ways in which Satan, ‘the god of this world,’ seeks to deceive us. Just as he did with Eve, the devil tries to convince us to rely on ourselves and to try to get our needs met through the world around us, rather than trusting in the provision of our Father in heaven.” (BB, 21)

Bitterness

- “usually somebody they need to forgive and something they need to confess and renounce” (DC, 169)
- “We forgive in order to heal. . . . Forgiveness is a hard choice that includes (1) allowing God to surface the name of every offending person with their painful memories, (2) agreeing to live with the consequences of the other person’s sin without seeking revenge, and (3) letting God deal with the offending person in His way and His time.” (DC, 266)
- “Bitterness is to the soul as cancer is to the body.” (DC, 268)

Pride

- “Suicide is the final expression of control over one’s own life. The deception is the belief that death is the solution, the escape or the end of everything.” (DC, 323)

Habitual Sin

- “People do not have sex problems or drug problems or family problems; they have life problems that affect their relationship with God.” (DC, 149)
- “I was free to choose. I learned that I could say yes to sin or no to sin, but I quickly discovered that I didn’t feel dead to sin. Many times I felt very alive to it; but the truth is based on what God says, regardless of my feelings.” (FFA, 143) – Mike Quarles
- “We experience freedom when we choose to believe God, then act on the basis of the truth regardless of our feelings” (FFA, 144) – Mike Quarles

Ancestral Sins

- “We are not guilty of our parents’ sins; but because they sinned, we will have to live with the consequences of their sins and will likely live the way we were taught by them unless we repent.” (DC, 145)
- “We are not guilty because of our parents’ sins. Yet because they sinned, we are vulnerable to what they have taught and modeled for us.” (DC, 332)

Levels and Tactics in Spiritual Warfare

“Whether the demonic part is 0 percent, 5 percent, 10 percent or 50 percent does not make any difference...the critical part is submitting to God. Resisting the devil is simple if there are no unresolved issues between us and our heavenly Father.” Neil Anderson, (*Discipleship Counseling*, 148)

Therapeutic Level Warfare

- Spiritual healing, faith healing, or physical healing ministries are types of therapeutic level spiritual warfare.
- This approach is to alleviate physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual harm done by demons.
- This category of spiritual warfare does not engage in evangelistic ministry and avoids the topic of salvation.
- Without salvation, no amount of therapy will solve one’s spiritual needs.
- With salvation, there must be a point of release that trusts God’s provision or withholding of comfort and relief.
- helping people to “have their lives in order”
- No theology of suffering - avoidance of suffering
- When Paul asks God for deliverance three times from “a messenger of Satan” (2 Cor 12:7-10) sent to harass him and keep him humble, God responds that “my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9). Paul’s response is not in persisting in seeking therapeutic relief from the demonic, but to “for the sake of Christ” to be “content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities” (2 Cor 12:10) by remembering in self-weakness flows divine-strength.
- Therapeutic-type warfare must avoid the delusion of trying to do reparative surgery on a dead soul.

Occult Level Warfare

- Occult warfare describes a variety of activities and people directly connected with active worshiping of Satan and his demons.
- Such a differentiation between Satan- worshipers and “regular” unbelievers is unhelpful and unbiblical.
- The spiritual condition of members of the occult is no different from the spiritual condition of kind, nominal Christians.
- Paul describes humanity as all having been “dead in the trespasses and sins . . . following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air” (Eph 2:1-2).
- some warfare proponents endorse a view of engaging different levels or types of demons.
- Charles Kraft goes so far as to describe at least eight different types of evil spirits: family, occult, ordinary, territorial/institutional/religion, vice, household/geographical/cultural items, and ancestral. (Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, 59-60)

- Kraft and others thus deduce that since there are different types of demons, there must be different methods of warfare for each type.
- Although demonic forces may manifest themselves differently in occult and non-occult persons, biblical spiritual warfare methods remain unchanged.
- God’s Word shows that there is only one suit of armor, the armor of God, that must be put on daily and saturated with constant prayer (Eph 6:10-20)
- All non-believers are in a condition of spiritual deadness, following Satan as his children in an active state of rebellion against God, but are never beyond the saving grace and power of Christ.

Strategic Level Warfare

- Strategic level spiritual warfare is an approach that confronts demonic spirits that are geographically assigned and of a higher power and responsibility among Satan’s workers.
- if you can identify and map these demons you will gain a knowledge that helps you to free a particular geographical area from demonic oppression.
- This battle is viewed as happening in the air, but one that still affects believers on the ground.
- Emphasis is on repentance from the corporate sin in a particular nation or culture.
- Territorial spirits are the main focus of strategic level spiritual warfare. This concept comes from the references to the Princes of Persia and Greece in Daniel 10:13, 20, 21; 12:1-2.
- “Satan does indeed assign a demon or a corps of demons to every geo-political unit in the world and that they are among the principalities and powers against whom we wrestle.” (C. Peter Wagner)

Territorial Spirits: Insights on Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare from Nineteen Christian Leaders (Chichester, England: Sovereign World, 1991), 52)

- They consider their interaction with territorial spirits to be “major league warfare” in contrast to personal deliverance ministries and emphasize the need for expertise in this field, or “Satan will eat you for breakfast.” (Wagner and Pennoyer, Wrestling with Dark Angels, 86-87).
- Strategic Level Warfare (Territorial Spirits) - “Gaining Perspective on Territorial Spirits” Response by A. Scott Moreau (and long quote of Clinton Arnold)
<https://www.lausanne.org/content/territorial-spirits>
 - “The first suggestion for refinement in this area is that we must be more cautious in the use of exaggerated claims and anecdotes as the means by which SLSW is established.”
 - “A second suggestion is that advocates of SLSW emphasize spiritual diagnosis over spiritual mapping, and be more cautious in their pronouncements. We must enable Christians to develop a world view that acknowledges the powers without capitulating to them or being captivated by an unhealthy interest in them.”
 - “Finally, our goal must be to integrate the spiritual, the personal, the cultural, and the social and to stop placing all the blame on the spirits and start

recognizing the human side of choice to rebel against God's established order."

- (long quote of Clinton Arnold shared by Scott Moreau)

"I close with an excellent eight-point summary given by Clinton Arnold which I would consider an appropriate starting point for a Lausanne statement on engaging territorial spirits in spiritual warfare:

1. There is a hierarchy among the demons and angels in the evil spiritual domain. Some evil angels have assignments over empires, people groups, countries, regions, territories, or cities.
 2. There is struggle and warfare between the angels of God and the angels of Satan in the supernatural realm that has an impact on the unfolding of events on earth.
 3. Through biblical revelation, God has heightened our awareness of the angelic realm. The knowledge he has given us is for the purpose of prompting our dependence on him through prayer.
 4. Although God has given us the responsibility of exercising our authority in Christ over unclean spirits that afflict individuals, there is no biblical evidence that God has given us responsibility to bind, expel, or thwart the territorial rulers.
 5. Although we do not have the authority to directly engage territorial spirits, we certainly have the right to appeal to God to hinder and obstruct the grip of a demonic ruler over an area so that the gospel can be proclaimed and the darkness may be lifted from the eyes of the unbelieving.
 6. "Spiritual mapping," or, as I would prefer to call it, creating a "spiritual profile" of people in a city or country, is a useful way to help the people of God pray more specifically. It is also beneficial for informing the teaching and discipling of new believers.
 7. "Identificational repentance" is an appropriate way of leading the people of God in dealing with issues of corporate sin. It does not, however, enable Christians to "remit" the sins of the nonbelieving population of a city, remove the curse of God's judgment on them, or result in the weakening of the grip of the territorial spirits over the unbelieving population.
 8. Christians do not need to feel a responsibility or a call to engage in a direct confrontation with the principalities and powers over a city, region, or a country. We appeal directly to God, who will direct his angels to fight the battles against the high-ranking powers."
- Wayne Grudem: "in no instance does anyone in the New Testament (1) summon a 'territorial spirit' upon entering an area to preach the gospel . . . or (2) demand information from demons about a local demonic hierarchy, (3) say that we should believe or teach information derived from demons, or (4) teach by word or example that certain "demonic strongholds" over a city have to be broken before the gospel can be proclaimed with effectiveness." (Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 421)
 - Strategic level spiritual warfare is merely derived from speculation and reinforced by anecdotal evidence. A believer's effectiveness in gospel sharing is solely dependent on Christ's power.

Ground Level Warfare

- Charles Kraft “takes place in human contexts, in contrast with warfare that takes place largely in the air.” (Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, 200)
- draws the most attention through the attention of media and popular culture in the form of possession or demonization encounters

Exorcism and Deliverance

- It is clear from Scripture and early church history that demon possession occurred in a variety of ways.
- Some people were delivered of these demons on their own faith, others on the faith of others (Mark 9:23- 24), and sometimes without any expressed desire to be rid of the demon. (Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 473-74)
- Millard Erickson points out “there is no reason to believe that demon possessions are restricted to the past.”

Exorcists are widely criticized for their:

- Pride
- Monetary Motives
- Experientially Driven
- Dialoguing
- Human centered approaches
 - Jesus and his apostles “cast out demons without pronouncing an elaborate formula” and sometimes did it without even being physically present (Mark 7:24-30). (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 474)
 - MacArthur cautions that the epistles never prescribe or “instruct believers to cast out demons” and that whenever they did, “the demon-possessed people were unbelievers.” (MacArthur, *Standing Strong*, 25-26)
 - Dangers of a Method Driven Approach:
 - failure (Mark 9:14-18)
 - physical harm (Acts 19:11-20)
 - point people to the practitioner’s power and ability rather than to the power of God (1 Cor 2:1-5)

WARNING!!!!

- “Satan, the great deceiver, may be encouraging interest in demon possession in hopes that Christians will become careless about other more subtle forms of influence by the powers of evil.” (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 474)

REMINDER!!!

- The ultimate concern of an evangelist or missionary towards a hearer is not the presence of demons but rather the absence of Christ.
- Salvation, not exorcism, is the goal, understanding that if one accepts Christ, they become “the temple of the living God” with which Satan has no portion (2 Cor 6:14-16).

Ancestor Spirits and Ghosts

- The worship of ancestor spirits and interest in paranormal phenomenon are different but have a common fear and unhealthy desire to ascertain the future.
- In one example demonstrating the widespread influence of ancestor worship, over 90 percent of the Chinese in Taiwan “do not want to become Christians because they must give up ancestor practices.” (Hiebert, *Case Studies in Missions*, 24).
- Relief of Fears - rituals, sacrifices, idols, superstitious practices, and the consultation of a variety of practitioners (witch doctors, mediums, sorcerers, necromancers, etc.).
- Prideful Pursuits - a “desire for knowledge,” “lust for power,” “need for comfort,” “protection,” or “spiritual satisfaction” to their unhealthy curiosities. (Douglas and Graham, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 895)
- Ancestor worship practitioners see ancestors as “important mediators between humans and spirits” who defend and provide wisdom to their relatives. (Hiebert, *Case Studies in Missions*, 24)
- Christ is the only mediator, lasting comfort, true hope, and power available to people who struggle with ancestor spirits or paranormal activity.
- Scripture wholly condemns the practice of consulting the dead (Deut 18:11), divination (Lev 19:26), sorcery (Deut 18:10), mediums (Lev 19:31), seeking ghosts (Ezek 13:20), witchcraft (Gal 5:20), astrology (Isa 47:13-14, Deut 4:19), spell casting (Deut 18:11), and interpreting omens (Deut 18:11).

Binding and Loosing

- Spiritual warfare advocates often use the term “binding the strongman” with reference to Matthew 12:29.
- assume that the “strong man refers to evil spirits” and that “it would seem reasonable that the principle could be applied to a nation or a city or a people group as well as a house.” (Wagner and Pennoyer, *Wrestling with Dark Angels*, 78)
- “Jesus had entered the strong man’s ‘house’ (the world of unbelievers who are under the bondage of Satan), and he was plundering his house, that is, freeing people from Satanic bondage and bringing them into the joy of the kingdom of God.” (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 418)
- “As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.” (Zechariah 9:11 ESV)

Rebuking

- When one senses a demonic presence, or experiences a demonic attack, many Christians utilize a process of rebuking.
- Rebuking usually involves the verbal confrontation of Satan and his demons.
- Christ rebukes both Satan (Matt 4:10, 16:23)
- Christ rebukes demons (Matt 17:18; Mark 1:25)
- Paul’s condemnation and cursing of Elymas the magician (Acts 13:8-11)
- Paul’s exorcism of the spirit in the soothsaying girl of Philippi (Acts 16:16-18)
- Zechariah 3:1-7 also describes God directly rebuking Satan by saying, “The Lord rebuke you, O

Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?"

- Jude 1:9 when the archangel Michael spoke to Satan saying, "The Lord rebuke you!"
- Although there are some biblical examples for a verbal rebuke of the demonic, these examples demonstrate that it occurs in limited instances.
 - Biblical rebukes are not formulaic, are brief, and are solely focused on the power and name of Christ.
 - should be specific to the situation
 - directly to the manifesting demon or Satan
 - not done "with a spirit of arrogance" (Franklin and Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare*, 153-54)

CAUTION!!!

- false teachers are condemned for their ignorant, hasty, pride-filled rebukes towards the demonic (2 Pet 2:10-13; Jude 1:8-11)
- If a believer chooses to speak aloud in a situation of spiritual warfare, he should not primarily address the enemy but rather focus his prayers and concerns towards God for His power and work in the saving and protection of souls.

Naming

- Naming is a tactic believed to gain power or authority over demons by discovering their names.
- Advocates postulate that since Christ found the name of the demonized Gadarene to be 'Legion' (Mark 5:9,15), that one should likewise make the same practice with both individual and territorial spirits. (Wagner and Pennoyer, *Wrestling with Dark Angels*, 84)
- "Legion" may be more descriptive of the plurality and multiplicity of the demons rather than a demon's specific name.
- Even if that was one particular demon's name, Christ's awareness of its name gave him no additional power or ability to exorcise it, for He already possessed in His own nature and name, the sufficient power for exorcism as the Creator of all angelic beings (Isa 45:22-23; Rom 14:11).
- **BOTTOM LINE:** Identifying names of demons is not suggested, practiced, or recommended anywhere else in Scripture so it is unwise to make much of this method.

Repentance Issues

- Some warfare practitioners make special mention of the importance of believers confessing and repenting of every known sin in fear that they may have given Satan a special gateway into their lives.
- They utilize long lists of possible sins and prayers of repentance and renouncement of Satan's lies. (Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, 199-252)
- They point to Acts 19:18 where believers came out after coming to faith, "confessing and divulging their practices."
- Unbelievers should realize that repentance is necessary for salvation (Acts 2:38, 3:19, 20:21)
- Once one is in Christ, "there is therefore now no condemnation" (Rom 8:1).

DANGER!!!

- repentance becoming a ritual or formula and not sincerely from the heart
- There should not be an unhealthy fear of one's own limited ability to remember past sins, as if salvation is dependent on verbal confession of each and every past sin.

Vulnerability

- Some argue that vulnerability can occur through "contact with physical objects," "the curses of others," "genealogical transmission," or due to "geographic location." (Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, 14-18; Rommen, *Spiritual Power and Missions*, 19)
- This view states that one should not be "outwitted by Satan" since one can anticipate and be aware of his "designs" (2 Cor 2:11). (Wagner and Pennoyer, *Wrestling with Dark Angels*, 76)
- In this passage Paul is not suggesting a cat and mouse game with Satan but rather, as seen in the context, is explaining that Satan seeks to destroy unity in the church through a lack of forgiveness (2 Cor 2:5-10).
- Many are convinced that "demons can and do attach themselves to objects, to houses, or other buildings, to animals and to people." (Wagner and Pennoyer, *Wrestling with Dark Angels*, 76)
- 1 Corinthians 10:18-20 is often referenced as support of this view in light of food being sacrificed to idols.
- In consideration of 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, however, it is seen that the conscience, not the food, is the issue as it might cause concern in leading others astray.
- These passages do caution against provoking God to jealousy through carelessness in casually taking part in activities dedicated to demons.
- A final vulnerability reference is given in Acts 19:19 where new believers burned their magic books.
- This action was not for fear of demonic power but rather served as a public act of repentance (renunciation and confession) of their changed lives.
- These scriptural examples are not about vulnerability to items or locations, but are about the changed heart Christ desires to see in believers.

- It is important to note that the Holy Spirit's power is described as flowing in faith through objects such as Jesus' cloak (Luke 8:44), handkerchiefs/aprons (Acts 19:12), and even shadows (Acts 5:15).

Genealogical Connections

- Some claim that Satan has claims on people through multiple generations due to the sins of their ancestors.
- Charles Kraft states that he uses "the power of Christ to break generational curses, vows, dedications and rights given to the enemy through sin by the person's ancestors." (Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, 216)
- Other advocates of generational sin point to passages such as Exodus 20:5, 34:7; Numbers 14:18; and Deuteronomy 5:9.
- This concept of demons passing through generations is one which "occasionally appears in animistic religions," but that is not taught by Scripture. (Rommen, *Spiritual Power and Missions*, 67)
- Neil Anderson and Elliot Miller
 - Miller confronts Anderson's belief in generational sins and familiar spirits.
 - Miller ascertains that much of Anderson's doctrine on this topic is experientially validated, for he holds that Exodus 20:4-5 is not referencing evil spirits, but circumstantial punishments onto the next generation. In a similar way Miller highlights how Jeremiah 32:19 and Ezekiel 18 communicate the continuation of punishment if parental sin is not repented of by children.
 - He argues that "by confusing the punishment for sin with the sin itself, Anderson makes God the transmitter of sin from one generation to the next." (Miller, "The Bondage Maker (Part 3)," 8.)
- the cross of Christ broke all curses so that the "old has passed away" and believers are free from the condemnation of their past (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 8:1)
- Corporate Confession
- Generational Consequences VS. Curses

Believer as Proclaimer

- Believers must be concerned with spiritual warfare in their own lives in order to be used effectively in evangelistic ministry and disciple making.
- Christians are reminded in Scripture of their need to "stand firm" (Eph 6:13) and "resist" (Jas 4:7) the devil.
- Satan's testing of Job teaches Job to have an "increased awareness of God's greatness and his own sinfulness" and of the "the necessity of submitting to God's sovereign purposes." (MacArthur, *Standing Strong*, 31)
- MacArthur points out Satan's sifting of Peter being instructive for in Peter's realization that "he could not stand on his own." (MacArthur, *Standing Strong*, 34)

- Biblical methods in spiritual warfare are seen in putting on the full armor of God daily and petitioning the Lord in prayer (Eph 6:10-20) so that he might provide the workers for the harvest (Luke 10:2).
- Satan desires to disrupt and hinder the Christian witness. The devil opposed Paul as he sought to visit the church of Thessalonica.
- “the evangelist and the work of evangelism is opposed on every hand by tremendous spiritual forces.” Billy Graham, *Why the Berlin Congress?*
- The harassment of Christian witness is also seen in Paul’s description of his thorn in the flesh (2 Cor 12:7), a “messenger of Satan.”
- Whether this was an actual demon or some sort of physical or mental suffering is not significant.
- It is important to notice that in his suffering “Paul didn’t attempt to bind, rebuke, or cast out this satanic messenger. He simply prayed to the Lord for its removal. Certainly God was able to do as Paul prayed, but He chose not to.” (MacArthur, *Standing Strong*, 33)
- Paul’s trust in God’s sovereignty is essential to understanding a biblical view of spiritual warfare.
- Satan also wants to hinder Gospel work by giving practitioners “a false sense of victory in spiritual warfare.” (Wagner and Pennoyer, *Wrestling with Dark Angels*, 86)
- Lucifer wants believers to follow a ritualistic model (works based) for spiritual warfare, rather than an approach that is defined by Scripture and truth (faith).
Spiritual Warfare and the Continuation of Gifts?
- Need to know theologically where you stand:
 - What are these gifts? These roles?
 - Do they continue? If so, how?
 - How can you recognize the true use of these gifts versus the false use of these gifts? • If they continue what gifts might you have?
 - How do they apply to spiritual warfare?
 - How do they work together for the body of Christ?
- “If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, [2] and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’ [3] you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. [4] You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. [5] But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst” (Deuteronomy 13:1-5 ESV)

- “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. [2] You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. [3] Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit. ...” (1 Corinthians 12:1-3 ESV)
- “...[4] Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; [5] and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; [6] and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. [7] To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. [8] For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, [9] to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, [10] to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. [11] All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. ...” (1 Corinthians 12:4-11 ESV)
- “...[12] For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. [13] For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. [14] For the body does not consist of one member but of many. [15] If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. [16] And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. [17] If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? [18] But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. [19] If all were a single member, where would the body be? [20] As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. ...” (1 Corinthians 12:12-20 ESV)
- “...[21] The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” [22] On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, [23] and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, [24] which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, [25] that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. [26] If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. ...” (1 Corinthians 12:21-26 ESV)
- “...[27] Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. [28] And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. [29] Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? [30] Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? [31] But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.” (1 Corinthians 12:27-31 ESV)

What Does the Bible Say About Enemies?

In life we face many enemies. We must be aware of the sources, strategies, and solutions to our suffering so that we may live in victory and freedom in Christ.

Ephesians 6:12 “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (ESV)

Here are 10 important truths to know about your enemies:

1. They Exist in your Sinful Flesh.

- Romans 7:5 “For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.”
- Romans 8:13 “For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

2. They Exist in this Fallen World and Fallen Humanity.

- James 4:4 “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

3. They Exist in Fallen Angels: Satan and his Demons.

- Revelation 12:9 “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

4. They Are Powerful.

- Matthew 24:24 “For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.”
- “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2)

5. They Are Persistent.

- Genesis 39:10 “she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.”
- Judges 16:16 “she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death.”

6. They Are Persuasive.

- Genesis 3:1,4 “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" ..."You will not surely die,' the serpent said to the woman.”

7. They Are Defeated.

- 1 Corinthians 15:26 “The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”
- 1 Corinthians 15:57 “thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- Colossians 2:15 “God disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.”
- 1 John 3:8 “The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil.”
- Hebrews 2:14 “Christ took on human nature that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil.”

8. They Are Limited in Power.

- Job 1:12 “And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.”

9. They Are Limited in Time.

- John 12:31 “the ruler of this world be cast out”

10. They Are Enslaved. Blinded. Unrighteous. Captive. Dead. Ignorant. Lost.

- Galatians 4:3 “enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.”
- 2 Timothy 2:26 “they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”

Your Enemies' Strategies & Tactics: How To Avoid Being Outwitted by Satan

2 Corinthians 2:11 “so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.” (ESV)

1. Deception with Lies and Accusations.

- Revelation 12:9–10 “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. ... the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.”
- John 8:44 “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10 “with all wicked deception for those who are perishing”

2. Desires of the World, Flesh, and Pride of Life.

- Ephesians 2:2 “in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience”
- Matthew 4:3 “the tempter came and said”
- 1 John 2:16 “all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.”
- James 4:1 “What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?”
- 1 Thessalonians 3:5 “somehow the tempter had tempted you”

3. Defeat by Intimidation.

- 1 Samuel 17:10 “the Philistine said, ‘I defy the ranks of Israel this day’”

4. Division.

- 1 Corinthians 1:10 “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united”

5. Distraction.

- 2 Corinthians 12:7 “a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited”
- 1 Thessalonians 2:18 “we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us.”

6. Destruction. Sickness.

- John 8:44 “the devil...was a murderer from the beginning”
- 1 Peter 5:8 “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”
- Luke 13:16 “this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years”
- Acts 10:38 “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.”

7. Depression and Apathy.

- Job 2:9 “Then his wife said to him, ‘Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.’”

8. Disguise.

- 2 Corinthians 11:13–15 “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. [14] And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. [15] So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.”
- Matthew 7:15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”

9. False Worship

- Consulting the dead (Deut 18:11), divination (Lev 19:26), sorcery (Deut 18:10), mediums (Lev 19:31), seeking ghosts (Ezek 13:20), witchcraft (Gal 5:20), astrology (Isa 47:13-14, Deut 4:19), spell casting (Deut 18:11), and interpreting omens (Deut 18:11)
- 2 Thessalonians 2:9–10 “The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders”
- 2 Corinthians 11:3 “But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

10. Gospel- Opposed

- 2 Corinthians 4:4 “the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”
- Mark 4:15 “And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.”

Solutions to Your Enemies' Attacks: 33 Steps Forward

1. Expect their Presence and Attacks.

- John 15:18-20 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. [19] If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. [20] Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” (ESV)

2. Prepare for Confrontation and Questions.

- 1 Peter 3:15 “always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect”
- 2 Timothy 2:24–25 “And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth”

3. Prayer.

- Ephesians 6:18 “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints”
- 2 Corinthians 12:8–10 “Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”
- Matthew 6:13 “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”

4. Understand God and His Good Purposes.

- 1 Kings 3:11 “God said to him, ‘Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right’”
- Romans 8:28 “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”
- Genesis 50:20 “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”

5. Seek Wisdom Concerning their Strategies.

- 2 Corinthians 2:11 “so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.”
- James 3:13–18 “Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. [14] But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. [15] This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. [16] For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. [17] But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. [18] And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

6. Love in Action.

- Philippians 2:3–4 “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”
- Luke 6:27–31 “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.”
- 1 John 3:18 “let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth”
- Romans 12:20–21 “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

7. Suffer with Endurance.

- Matthew 5:38–42 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ [39] But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. [40] And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. [41] And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. [42] Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.”
- 1 Corinthians 4:11–13 “To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.”
- 2 Timothy 2:3 “Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”

8. Truth-Filled.

- Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
- Romans 10:17 “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

9. Truth-Speaking.

- Ephesians 6:17 “and take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”
- Ephesians 4:15 “speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way...into Christ”

10. Gospel- Sharing.

- Zechariah 9:11 “As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.”

11. Silent Patience When Threatened, Slandered, & Abused.

- 1 Peter 2:21–23 “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.”

12. Bold Confrontation against Threats, Words, Lies, and Actions.

- 2 Corinthians 10:5 “We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ”

13. Slow to Speak. Slow to Get Angry. Quick to Listen.

- James 1:19–20 “Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”
- 2 Timothy 2:24–25 “The Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness”

14. Humility. Meekness. Contentment.

- 2 Corinthians 12:9–10 “he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

15. Count Your Suffering to be Joy. There is Purpose in your Pain.

- Matthew 5:10-11 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ‘Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.’”

16. Sometimes We Flee.

- 1 Timothy 6:11 “ But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.”
- 2 Timothy 2:22 “So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”
- 1 Corinthians 6:18 “Flee from sexual immorality.”
- Acts 9:25 “his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall”

17. Sometimes We Stand Firm. Sometimes we fight - physically, militarily, verbally, spiritually.

- Hebrews 10:39 “But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.”
- Ephesians 6:13 “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”
- Proverbs 24:17 “Do not gloat when your enemy falls...do not let your heart rejoice”
- 1 Samuel 17:48–51 “When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. [49] And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.
[50] So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David.
[51] Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.”
- “A Christian’s Perspective on Killing” - www.spiritualwarfare.blog/killing

18. Set an Example.

- 2 Timothy 3:10-13 “ You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, [11] my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. [12] Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, [13] while evil

people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

- Philippians 3:17–20 “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. [18] For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. [19] Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. [20] But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (ESV)

19. Seek and Trust the Lord.

- 2 Timothy 3:14-17 “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

20. Follow Jesus.

- 2 Corinthians 4:7-11 “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. [8] We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; [9] persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; [10] always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. [11] For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.”
- Proverbs 16:7 “When a man's ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

21. Rejoice.

- Hebrews 10:32–34 “But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, [33] sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. [34] For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.”

22. Forgive and Be Merciful

- Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”
- Luke 6:36 “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”
- Proverbs 24:17–18 “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he

stumbles, lest the LORD see it and be displeased, and turn away his anger from him.”

23. Pursue Peace and Trust the Lord for Justice and Vengeance.

- Romans 12:17-19 "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."
- Romans 12:19–21 “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ [20] To the contrary, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ [21] Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

24. Don’t Join Them in their Evil.

- 1 Peter 2:23 “When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.”
- Proverbs 1:10 “My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.”

25. Seek Your Strength and Protection in God.

- Ephesians 6:11 “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”
- James 4:7 “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

26. Don’t Worry.

- Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life"
- Luke 12:25-26 “And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?”

27. Don’t Envy.

- Proverbs 23:17 “Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the LORD all the day.”
- Proverbs 3:31–33 “Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways, [32] for the devious person is an abomination to the LORD, but the upright are in his confidence. [33] The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous.”

28. Don’t Fear.

- Joshua 1:9 “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”
- Philippians 1:28 “and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.”

29. Listen and Obey.

- Joshua 1:7–8 “Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. [8] This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”
- 2 Corinthians 10:5 “Take every thought captive to obey Christ”

28. Grow.

- Philippians 1:6 “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”
- Romans 5:3–5 “Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”
- James 1:2–4 “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, [3] for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. [4] And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

30. Reorient Your Mind.

- Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
- Philippians 3:13–14 “Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

31. Pursue Holiness

- Ephesians 4:27 “and give no opportunity to the devil.”

- 1 Peter 1:14–16 “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, [15] but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, [16] since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”
- 1 Peter 3:16–17 “having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. [17] For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.”

32. Stay Confident in God’s Eternal Justice and Judgment

- Revelation 20:10 “the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”
- Revelation 12:11: “They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.”

33. Always Be Ready

- 1 Peter 5:8–10 “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. [9] Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. [10] And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”
- 1 Timothy 1:18–19 “This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith”

Your Enemy Wants You...

Did you know? Have you forgotten? You have an enemy in Satan and he is persistently plotting his attacks against you. Don't let the Devil outsmart you. Here are six of Satan's strategies against you!

2 Corinthians 2:11 "so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs."

1. God-less - Your adversary, the Devil, wants you to be self-reliant. He wants you to focus on yourself; to trust in yourself, love yourself, improve yourself, and satisfy yourself. Satan desires for you to do life, and eternity, apart from a loving submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Only Jesus can set you free from your captivity to Satan. *Sincerely draw near to Jesus & submit to His authority!*

James 4:7 "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (ESV)

2. Bible-less - Your tempter wants to deceive you. His subtle lies are designed to draw you away from the unchanging truths of Scripture. The Devil uses the culture of the world to conform you into his fallen image rather than pursuing the things of God. *Read, listen to, or watch the Bible!*

Matthew 16:22–23 Jesus "turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.'"

3. Prayer-less - Your enemy is fine with you talking to yourself in your head. Your accuser delights in you believing in a fake version of god: a god of your own imagination. The last thing your deceiver wants you to do is to respond to the biblical voice of God in humble prayer. *Pray the Bible daily!*

John 17:15 "I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one."

4. Church-less - Outside the church is described as Satan's realm (1 Corinthians 5:5), a place that brings real harm and suffering. Satan will feed you every excuse to avoid church on Sunday. He'd rather you watch church on-line than be in genuine face-to-face gathered Christian fellowship. *Be in a biblical church every week!*

2 Corinthians 11:3 "But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ."

5. Love-less - Satan spreads hatred of God and hatred among humanity. He will make every effort to divide you from God and from one another. The Devil feeds prideful

arrogance and division in this world. *Choose loving forgiveness, patience, unity, kindness, gentleness, meekness, and humility.*

Ephesians 4:26–28 “do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.”

6. Knowledge-less. Satan wants you to ignore his present, ongoing attacks against you. Satan wants you to forget about his name, strategies, and work against you. Remember his names. Resist his strategies. *Daily put on the whole armor of God and rest in Jesus' strength!*

The Accuser. Your Adversary. Angel of the Abyss/Pit (Abaddon, Apollyon). The Antichrist. Beelzebul (The Prince/Ruler of Demons, Lord of Flies, Lord of Dung). Belial. Day Star (In Latin, Lucifer, son of Dawn). The Deceiver. The Devil. The Dragon. The Enemy. The Evil One. The Father of Lies. King of Tyre (Anointed Guardian Cherub). A Murderer from the Beginning. Prince of Power of the Air. A Roaring Lion. The Ruler/god of this World/Age. Satan. The Serpent. Slanderer. The Tempter. The Thief. The Wolf.

Ephesians 6:11 “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”

What Do You Do When You Are Surrounded by Evil?

Have you ever found yourself surrounded by evil, wickedness, darkness, or enemies? Attacked by a military force, coworkers, family, friends, or the demonic?

God has provided us eternal victory from our enemies through His Son, Jesus Christ. He is our hope and our life. Our physical bodies will one day die, yet if we love, trust, and follow Jesus, our spirits are alive forever.

- John 11:25–26 “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?’” (ESV)

Jesus warns us that as He has been hated and attacked in this world, we can likewise expect similar trials. Through His indwelling Spirit in believers, He provides help, peace, and powerful encouragement.

- John 15:18–20 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.”
- John 16:33 “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

God has also spoken to us directly and shown us in His Son Jesus an example of faithful endurance for our times of need. Watch and follow Jesus, and He will encourage and guide you through your suffering. May His love overflow from you into the lives of others, even when you find yourself surrounded by evil.

- Romans 8:35–39 “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- Matthew 16:24 “Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’” (ESV)
- John 13:15 “For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.”
- Colossians 3:13 “as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

- 1 John 2:6 “whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”
- Ephesians 5:1–2 “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”
- 1 Corinthians 11:1 “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”

1 Peter 2:20–21 “For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.”

Here are 25 ways Jesus models for us on how to respond to and endure in the midst of an evil world:

1. Surrounded by the World - While Rejected by His Creation, He Chooses to Shine Brightly for the Adoption of His Children

- John 1:9–12 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (ESV)
- John 3:19–21 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

2. Surrounded In Bethlehem - Escapes as a Refugee to Egypt

- Matthew 2:13–15 “Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.’ And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, ‘Out of Egypt I called my son.’” (ESV)

3. At His Baptism - Surrounded & Encouraged - The Son Is Surrounded by His Father and the Holy Spirit

- Matthew 3:16–17 “And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’”

4. When Receiving the News of John the Baptist's Death - He Withdraws for Time Alone with His Father

- Matthew 14:13 “Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself.”
- Matthew 14:23 “And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone”

5. At His Transfiguration - Surrounded & Supernaturally Glorified

- Matthew 17:5 “He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.””

6. In the Desert - Tempted by Satan's Deceitful Twisting of Scriptures, Yet Believes and Speaks the Truth

- Matthew 4:3 “And the tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.’”

7. In the Desert - Surrounded by Ministering Angels in a Time of Weakness and Need

- Matthew 4:11 “Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.”

8. Surrounded by Great Crowds with all Sorts of Suffering - Responds with Compassionate Miracles and Teaching

- Matthew 4:23 “And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.”
- Matthew 9:35–36 “And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”
- Matthew 14:21 “And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.”
- Matthew 15:31 “so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.”
- Matthew 15:38 “Those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.”

9. Surrounded by Great Storm - Demonstrates Great Faith to Provide a Great Calm

- Matthew 8:26 “And he said to them, 'Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?' Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.”

10. Interrupted by Strong, Demon Possessed Men - Casts Out the Demons

- Matthew 8:32 “And he said to them, ‘Go.’ So they came out and went into the pigs, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters.”

11. Surrounded by Arrogant Sinners - Witnesses to them and Forgives the Repentant

- Matthew 9:12 “But when he heard it, he said, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.’”

12. Surrounded by Apostles - Loves Them In Spite of Knowing They Would Abandon, Deny, and Betray Him

- John 6:66–71 “After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you want to go away as well?’ Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.’ Jesus answered them, ‘Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.’ He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.”
- Matthew 26:47 “While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people.”
- Matthew 26:56 “But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled.”
- Matthew 26:69–70 “Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, ‘You also were with Jesus the Galilean.’ But he denied it before them all, saying, ‘I do not know what you mean.’”

13. Surrounded by Opposition Trying to Destroy Him - He Never Cowers in Fear

- Matthew 10:16–19 “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour.”
- Matthew 12:14 “But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.”

14. Surrounded by Opposition Trying to Destroy Him - Has the Wisdom As When to Escape and Avoid His Enemies for the Continuation of His Ministry

- Matthew 12:14–15 “But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him. Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all”
- Luke 4:29–30 “And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, he went away.”
- John 10:39 “Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands.”
- John 7:1 “After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him.”

15. Surrounded by Enemies Trying to Entrap Him - Keeps Speaking Boldly

- Luke 11:53-54 “the scribes and Pharisees began to press him hard and to provoke him to speak about many things, lying in wait for him to catch him in something he might say”
- Matthew 22:15 “Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words.”

16. Surrounded by False Accusations - Responds with Wisdom & Condemnation

- Matthew 12:24–25 “But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, ‘It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.’ Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand.”
- Matthew 12:31–32 “Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”

17. Surrounded by False Accusations - Responds with Silence

- Matthew 26:60–63 “many false witnesses came forward. ...the high priest stood up and said, ‘Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?’ But Jesus remained silent”
- Matthew 27:12–14 “But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him, ‘Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?’ But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.”

18. Surrounded by the Reality of His Impending Torture and Death - Stays Faithful Unto Death

- Matthew 20:17–19 “And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, ‘See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they

will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.”

- Matthew 27:22 "Pilate said to them, 'Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said, 'Let him be crucified!'"
- Matthew 27:26–31 "having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

19. Surrounded by Evil Religious Leaders - Verbally Rebukes the Pharisees, Scribes, & Sadducees

- "You brood of vipers!" - Matthew 12:34
- "An evil and adulterous generation" - Matthew 12:39,45; 16:4
- "You hypocrites!" - Matthew 15:7; 22:18; 23:15, 27
- "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God." Matthew 22:29
- "child of hell" - Matthew 23:15
- "blind guides," "blind men" - Matthew 23:16, 19
- "whitewashed tombs" - Matthew 23:27
- "Inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools!" - Luke 11:40
- You "neglect justice and the love of God" - Luke 11:42
- "You are like unmarked graves" - Luke 11:44

20. Surrounded by Corruption - Physically Attacks the Evil that Is Invading and Occupying His "House" (The Temple)

- John 2:15–17 "And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." (ESV)
- Matthew 21:12–13 And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."

21. Surrounded by Soldiers - Sacrificially Lays Down His Life for Others

- John 10:14–15 “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.”
- John 10:17–18 “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”
- John 15:13–14 “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.”
- 1 John 3:16 “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.”

22. Surrounded by Temporary Things - Speaks Eternal Things

- Matthew 24:35 “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”
- Matthew 27:11 “Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ Jesus said, ‘You have said so.’”

23. Surrounded by Sorrow and Trouble - Prays Desperately and Dependently

Matthew 26:38–39 “Then he said to them, ‘My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.’ And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.’”

24. Surrounded by Darkness and Death - Faithfully Continues Calling to His Father

- Matthew 27:45–46 “Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” (ESV)

25. Surrounded by Evil - Rejoices In & Remains Focused on His Eternal Purpose

- Matthew 5:11–12 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”
- Matthew 5:39–42 “But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.”
- Matthew 5:44 “But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”

10 Scriptures to Pray in Time of War

How should we respond in a time of war? What can we do when we feel so helpless? Where can we take our emotions of brokenness over all of the death and destruction?

In times of war we must be men and women of fervent fasting and prayer on behalf of those who are surrounded and suffering. Here are ten Scriptures to pray in this season of war:

1. PRAY FOR A DEMONSTRATION OF TRUE LOVE TOWARDS ENEMIES

Matthew 5:44 “But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”

2. PRAY FOR REPENTANCE FROM WICKEDNESS

2 Chronicles 7:14 “if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

3. PRAY FOR THE LORD’S SALVATION OF THE LOST

Romans 10:1 “Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.”

4. PRAY HUMBLY AND DEPENDENTLY FOR GOD’S PROTECTION OVER THOSE IN DANGER

Ezra 8:21–23 “Then I proclaimed a fast there ... that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. ... So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty”

5. PRAY FOR THE ENDURANCE AND WITNESS OF GOD’S PEOPLE IN GOD’S POWER

2 Corinthians 4:8–10 “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.”

6. PRAY FOR CHRISTIAN COURAGE, CONFIDENCE AND STRENGTH

Isaiah 41:9–10 “I have chosen you and not cast you off; fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

7. PRAY FOR THE HONORING OF CHRIST IN LIFE & IN DEATH

Philippians 1:20–21 “that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

8. PRAY FOR TRUST IN JESUS' FUTURE JUSTICE, WRATH, AND VENGEANCE

Revelation 20:10 “the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

9. PRAY FOR FAITHFULNESS UNTO DEATH

Revelation 2:10 “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

10. PRAY FOR AN EAGER HOPE IN JESUS' FUTURE RETURN

Luke 21:27–28 “And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

20 Great Books on Spiritual Warfare

Here are some helpful books to consider if you are interested in reading more on the topic of spiritual warfare:

1. Anderson, Neil T. *The Bondage Breaker*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2000.
2. Anderson, Neil T. *Victory Over the Darkness: Realizing the Power of Your Identity in Christ*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 2000.
3. Arnold, Clinton E. *Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001.
4. Arnold, Clinton E. *Powers of Darkness: Principalities and Powers in Paul's Letters*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1989.
5. Arnold, Clinton. *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997.
6. Beilby, James K. and Paul Rhodes Eddy, eds. *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.
7. Brooks, Thomas. *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*. Lexington, KY: Feather Trail, 2010.
8. Boyd, Gregory A. *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1997.
9. Gurnall, William. *The Christian in Complete Armour: Daily Readings in Spiritual Warfare*. Chicago: Moody, 1999.
10. Keller, Timothy. *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*. New York: Penguin, 2014.
11. Lawless, Chuck. *Disciplined Warriors*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002.
12. Lightner, Robert. *Angels, Satan, and Demons*. Nashville: Word, 1998.
13. Longman, Tremper, and Daniel G. Reid. *God Is a Warrior*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.
14. MacArthur, John F. *Standing Strong: How to Resist the Enemy of Your Soul*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2012.
15. Moreau, A. Scott. *Essentials of Spiritual Warfare: Equipped to Win the Battle*. Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1997.
16. Nevius, John Livingston. *Demon Possession and Allied Themes: Being an Inductive Study of Phenomena of Our Own Times*. London: Forgotten Books, 2012.
17. Page, Sydney H. T. *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.

18. Rankin, Jerry, and Ed Stetzer. *Spiritual Warfare and Missions*. Nashville: B&H, 2010.
19. Rommen, Edward, ed. *Spiritual Power and Missions*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 1995.
20. Van Rheezen, Gailyn. *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 1991.

An out-of-print book but the articles are available online at <http://www.lausanne.org> is Moreau, A. Scott, Tokunboh Adeyemo, et al, eds. *Deliver Us from Evil*. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 2002.

Are Pokémons Demons?

Pokémon is huge fad that is reemerging with the insanely popular Pokémon Go mobile app/game. No doubt, the technology and gaming are AMAZING. In writing this, I am not discounting the many practical positive things that are coming out of this gaming revolution... but I am also not engaging the many practical safety concerns that are emerging.

My focus is on the spiritual concerns of Pokémon...which many Western/American Christians are not aware of...

This chapter is not meant to create debate or argument. The spirit of this chapter is not paranoid, arrogant, self-righteous (I've played the old school version), or condescending. My hope in writing this is to inform Christians of some of the backgrounds to games, movies, TV shows, etc. like Pokémon so that they think more biblically about the decisions they make.

Ultimately, I understand that Pokémon is just designed as a game or form of entertainment. But it is not merely neutral territory, there is a demonic connection.

So here are some of my personal, basic Christian concerns with Pokémon:

Pokémon derives from and promotes an animistic worldview.

- A worldview is the lens through which you look at and interpret the world.
- Animism (spiritism/tribalism) is foreign to many Westerners/Americans but dominates the majority worldview.
- Animism is “the belief that personal spiritual beings and impersonal spiritual forces have power over human affairs, and consequently, that human beings must discover what beings and forces are influencing them in order to determine future action and, frequently, to manipulate their power” (Gailyn Van Rheenen, *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts*, 20).
- If you study more about animism/tribalism/spiritism you will see the connections more and more clearly with the game of Pokémon.
 - Animism focuses on BEINGS (gods, ancestors, ghosts, angels, nature spirits, spirit guides) and FORCES (magic, astrology, witchcraft, the evil eye, etc.) that influence the seen world.
 - Animism believes the seen world is clearly and definitively related to the unseen world, so animists are often constantly in fear of the powers behind events.
 - Power is the essence of animism, especially power to bring about evil.

- Discovering, determining, and warding off the powers is critical in the animistic worldview.

Pokémon advocates for practices identical to those used by sorcerers, necromancers, mediums, psychics, spirit/ghost hunters, and shamans.

These practices are clearly prohibited across the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, and across church history. These practices are interwoven into the game as the main feature, focus, and goal.

1. Controlling and capturing Pokémon to do your will.
2. Summoning and attracting Pokémon using incense items and lure modules.
3. Actively searching for Pokémon with time, energy, resources, and money (pokécoins).
4. Seeking and using factions and battles between Pokémon.
5. Using potions or revives to heal and restore Pokémons to life.
6. Types and Categories of Pokémons (fire, electric, ghost, poison, psychic) with correlating supernatural powers.

- Just try substituting the concept of "demon" or "spirit" or "ghost" in the place of Pokémon in the above descriptions and you will see the obvious connections with animism.

"BUT THIS IS ONLY A GAME!" you may be thinking or shouting at your screen... "Don't be a killjoy!"... "These are just cartoons!"...

Well here are my thoughts.

1. Spiritual Warfare is real. Pokémon depicts a false, but widely believed and popularized version of the spirit world. Playing and investing in such games just deepens and broadens the worldview of animism, and also makes it seem like a more fictional or fun world to some. It is important to have an understanding of the spirit world, but we should seek and teach a spiritual worldview that is consistent with the biblical reality. There is a real unseen battle going on between the followers of God (Christians and angels) and the followers of Satan (demons/fallen-angels and non-Christians) (Ephesians 6:10-20).

"Study Satan's tricks, and acquaint yourself with his tactics." William Gurnall

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." (Galatians 5:1 ESV)

2. Satan disguises himself and is very clever in his approaches. Approaches such as games, movies, and TV shows eventually cause us to subconsciously or subconsciously either misunderstand the true nature of the demonic. Sometimes entertainment media causes us to be overly-dismissive or overly-interested toward the demonic. Targeting kids and teens is a pretty smart approach for the enemy as well.

“And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his Servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.” (2 Corinthians 11:14-15 ESV) “so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.” (2 Corinthians 2:11 ESV)

3. Church History and secular history both took the demonic seriously. The demonic is directly connected to Greek and Roman god worship in early church history. The supernatural world has real monsters and they are called demons. Demons are not cute, friendly, or helpful. The goal and work of demons is to destroy and oppose God, His work, and His people. If people truly understood the spiritual battle going on around us, they would not take it so casually.

“Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.” (1 Corinthians 14:20 ESV)

Here are just a few examples from early church history:

- Justin Martyr (AD 110-165) in *The First Apology* explains “since of old these evil demons, effecting apparitions of themselves, both defiled women and corrupted boys, and showed such fearful sights to men, that those who did not use their reason in judging of the actions that were done, were struck with terror; and being carried away by fear, and not knowing that these were demons, they called them gods, and gave to each the name which each of the demons chose for himself.” This description and others how some of the false religions, specifically in the temples of Greek gods, are but demonic imitations of biblical worship. Martyr also points biblically in *The Dialogue with Trypho* to the Magi in Egypt and the false prophets in Elijah’s days but then connects such false worship to Greek gods such as Bacchus son of Jupiter, Semele, Hercules, Jove of Alcmena, and Æsculapius.
- Irenæus (AD 120-202) “Thus, then, the mystic priests belonging to this sect both lead profligate lives and practise magical arts, each one to the extent of his ability. They use exorcisms and incantations. Love-potions, too, and charms, as well as those beings who are called ‘Paredri’ (familiar) and ‘Oniropompi’ (dream-senders), and whatever other curious arts can be had recourse to, are eagerly pressed into their service. They also have an image of Simon fashioned after the likeness of Jupiter, and another of Helena in the shape of Minerva; and these they worship. In fine, they have a name derived from Simon, the author of these most impious.” (Irenæus, *Irenæus Against Heresies* (ANF 1:348))
- Minucius Felix (c.AD 210) “... Saturn himself, and Serapis, and Jupiter, and whatever demons you worship, overcome by pain, speak out what they are; and assuredly they do not lie to their own discredit, especially when any of you are standing by. Since they themselves are the witnesses that they are demons”
- Origen (AD 185-254) “Hence we are determined to avoid the worship of demons even as we would avoid death; and we hold that the worship, which is supposed

among the Greeks to be rendered to gods at the altars, and images, and temples, is in reality offered to demons" (Origen, Contra Celsus (ANF 4:640))

"What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 1:9 ESV)

4. Our supernatural battle is only won through the power and sacrifice of Christ. Our own abilities, talents, time, and experience will not help us defeat the demonic.

"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." (Hebrews 2:14-15 ESV)

"For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 ESV)

"Enemy-occupied territory - that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign in sabotage." C.S. Lewis

5. We will answer to God in how we use the time, energy, and resources He has entrusted us with. Pokémon Go requires a lot of time and energy. Wouldn't this time and energy be better invested in chasing after Jesus through the Bible, prayer, evangelism, missions, and church instead of chasing Pokémon?

"So then each of us will give an account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12 ESV)

"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Ephesians 5:15-17 ESV)

6. Christians should ultimately ask themselves... does this game of Pokémon glorify God or Satan? Does this please God or provoke Him to jealousy?

"What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? [20] No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. [21] You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. [22] Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?"

[23] "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up." (1 Corinthians 10:19-23 ESV)

"Your perspective should be very different from the unregenerate." William Gurnall

If you have never read *Spirit of the Rainforest: A Yanomamo Shaman's Story* by Mark Ritchie or watched *The Enemy God*, it is extremely helpful to see and understand the animistic worldview. Here is a short interview with Bautista, a former witchdoctor who became a Christian.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=FZNg217vBSg>)

This same man, Bautista, a former Yanomamo shaman was asked specifically about Pokémon by looking at their pictures. Read his response here: "Is Pokemon Safe for Christian Kids" THIS IS A VERY HELPFUL BLOG POST...I'd encourage you to read this before you make a final decision on what you think about Pokémon.

<https://faithfulmoms.org/is-pokemon-safe-children-christian-perspective/>

"Tell the people from your churches, that if there are things that make them feel uncomfortable, it is probably not good. God's Spirit will speak to them about what is right and wrong." Bautista

NOTE: Since initially writing this, I had two church members who were just on a mission trip to Oaxaca, Mexico. They explained to me (having not read this post or the above links to Bautista) an event that happened on their trip... another American in their group was playing Pokémon Go when a former Mexican witchdoctor noticed a picture of Pikachu on the American's phone. The former witchdoctor, having never seen it or heard of Pokémon before, asserted that the image of Pikachu he saw was a demon he had seen and experienced before and questioned this Christian individual as to why they were playing such a game.

Again the purpose in writing this is not to berate, put down, or insult. Unfortunately, I have played many of these sorts of games myself in the past and watched some of these genres of entertainment. **The purpose of this post is to encourage Christians, and especially Christian parents, to think biblically about the content that is before their eyes and ears and in their hands.**

"**Are Pokémons demons?**" may be the question that brought you to this chapter. I think the better question that a Christian should be asking is, "**Does Pokémon honor God?**" and unfortunately, I think the clear answer is "No."

"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV)

What Does the Bible Say About the Paranormal?

Have you ever seen a ghost? A recent survey says 60% of people believe they have...and 40% believe their pets have seen/sensed a ghost. Theories abound on things haunted, but the Bible actually offers a lot of truth concerning the paranormal. Oftentimes people are hesitant to share their experiences, but the season of October brings a lot of questions as people dive into paranormal entertainment & experiences.

Some Paranormal Is Fake or Fraud. Lots of people are out to make a quick buck. In many realms of paranormal and supernatural practices there are fraudsters who fake their experiences for profit. In a similar way, false teachers are described in the Bible. One of the characteristics of a false teacher is a presumption of knowledge and an arrogant attitude towards the paranormal and demonic (Jude 1:3-16 & 2 Peter 2) with the motivation of greed and fame.

2 Peter 2:10-11 “Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord.”

Some Paranormal Is Deception or Delusion. Sometimes we think we see things that weren't really there. Medicine, drugs, sleep-deprivation, weather conditions, mental conditions, and many other factors can alter our perception of reality. So as we assess the reality of the paranormal and supernatural we must be honest and realize that not all claims occurred in reality, even when the observers were sincerely convinced they did. King Nebuchadnezzar is a good example (Daniel 4) of how God allowed a mental illness that altered his perception of reality for a significant period of time.

Some Paranormal Is Real. The supernatural world does exist. God clearly evidences His own existence through the Creation (Romans 1:19-20). God uses angels to do His bidding among mankind across the Scriptures but Satan continues to work and use his demons across earth as well. When we experience real supernatural activity, we need to consider whether the source is Satan or God.

All Real Paranormal Is Demonic. When God uses an angel, there is no deception, the message and messenger correspond to the revealed truth of the Bible. God is clear that once humans die, their souls go to Heaven or Hell and are not permitted to roam the earth (Luke 16:19-31), they are in Heaven and Hell for eternity.

Which means...if you've really seen a ghost...that didn't communicate & verify itself to be an angel of God...you saw a demon. Don't be surprised or shocked by this, demons can disguise themselves in a variety of ways. Their intent? To deceive or distract you from following the truth of God. To get you more excited or afraid of your ghostly encounter than in having excitement or fear in an encounter with the One, True God. To get you

talking to an apparent dead relative and trusting their voice more than you trust the Word of God.

2 Corinthians 11:14–15 “And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.”

Paranormal Fascination Endangers Your Soul. God repeatedly commands humanity to avoid paranormal practices; those who search after ghosts (Ezekiel 13:17-23), talk to the dead (necromancy), seeks out spiritual advice apart from God (mediums, diviners, spiritists, etc.), use of charms, omens or witchcraft (Leviticus 19-20, Deuteronomy 18)...and so much more.

So...before you watch that next paranormal TV show or movie...before you go to a haunted house or dress up like a supernatural being...before you consult a horoscope, get your palm read, participate in a seance, tarot cards, or seek a supernatural experience or supernatural knowledge outside of the One, True God and His Word, the Bible...ask yourself this simple question: *does this please God, or does this please Satan?*

Hear the warning that God issued to the Corinthians as they participated in demonically inspired activities.

1 Corinthians 10:21–22 “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?”

May we pray for wisdom as the enemy increases his attacks in a very real way.

Evangelism and Missions

What Bible Verses Are Good to Memorize for Evangelism?

GOD'S GLORY

- The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Psalms 19:1
- You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. Leviticus 19:2
- Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created. Revelation 4:11
- And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Mark 12:30

MAN'S SIN

- Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Psalm 51:5
- your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. Isaiah 59:2
- None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. Romans 3:10-12
- For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23
- Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. Romans 3:19
- everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Matthew 5:28
- Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 1 John 3:15
- For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. James 2:10
- For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23
- And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment Hebrews 9:27

CHRIST'S ATONEMENT

- For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16
- Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. John 3:36
- In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:10
- but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

- But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. Isaiah 53:5
- For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21

CONVERSION

- Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. John 3:3
- But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. John 1:12
- if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9
- everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Romans 10:13
- Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28
- I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6
- And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12
- No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. 1 John 2:23
- No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Luke 13:3
- If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9
- Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. Revelation 3:20
- For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

ETERNAL LIFE

- The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. John 10:10
- All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. John 6:37
- Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. 1 John 5:12-13
- The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Romans 8:16
- Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Corinthians 5:17

What Does the Bible Say About Missions?

What is “missions”?

The word “missions” derives from a Latin word *missio* which means “sending.” In Greek (what the New Testament was mostly first written in) it is close to the word *apostelló*, from which we get the word apostles or “sent ones.” The role of a missionary is closest to that of an ambassador, someone who is actively representing their own citizenship/nation/government/king in a foreign land.

Ephesians 6:19–20 “[pray] also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, [20] for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.” (ESV)

Philippians 3:20–21 “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, [21] who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”

Here is a short definition of missions:

MISSIONS is the obedient Gospel **work** of bearing witness of Jesus and teaching His disciples through the **Word**.

- **WORK** - What efforts are you making to share Jesus?
- **WORD** - How are getting yourself & others into the Word?

Luke 10:2 “And he said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’”

Who is a “missionary”? In one sense, every Christian is a missionary because they are sent by God to tell and teach others about His greatness and goodness! In another sense there are a variety of missionary callings that are set apart for different durations, distances, difficulties, and types of work.

Here is a short definition of missionary:

A **MISSIONARY** is SENT by Jesus to **go** out to share the Gospel and **grow** disciples.

- **GO** - Where are you going to share the Gospel?
- **GROW** - Who are you teaching about Jesus?

1 Peter 2:11–12 “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. [12] Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.”

How is every member of the Body of Christ called to be a missionary?

1. We Are Commanded to Go & Grow Disciples

Matthew 28:19–20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

2. We Are Empowered to Go & Witness to the Lost

Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

3. We Encounter God & Go for God

Isaiah 6:8 “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here I am! Send me.’”

“There is a sense that every single follower of Christ is sent.” David Platt

Although, in a sense, every Christian is a missionary, the word “missionary” seems to have been first applied (~1500s A.D.) towards individuals who went out of their home culture to take resident in foreign cultures where the Gospel had not been heard or taught. Their work was primarily to preach the Gospel and plant churches to the “ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“There are some Christians sent out with a particular purpose.” David Platt

What are the different sorts of missions work and missionaries?

Missionaries come in all types, here are some helpful categories to distinguish and describe them:

1. Duration - *How long are they in their missions context?*

They may be described subjectively as short-term, medium-term, or long-term missionaries. Their work might be considered part-time or full-time. They could be fully residential in their setting or more apostolic/pioneer/temporary until a healthy church is establish.

A helpful analogy might be found in the modern-day nation of Israel where every citizen is expected to serve in the military and be trained and ready for war. Every Christian is considered a soldier of Christ in the midst of an ongoing spiritual war. Every Christian serves Jesus in different ways that vary similarly to how a National Guard or Reservist soldier serves differently than an Active Duty soldier who serves differently than a mobilized/deployed soldier. All are soldiers but serve differently with their time.

- 2 Timothy 2:3 “Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”

2. Distance - *What boundaries do they cross to communicate the Gospel?*

Missionary work involves crossing boundaries to share the Good News of Jesus. This might mean traveling across geographical boundaries or could mean reaching a population in your area with a different language (linguistic boundaries). It might mean serving among a different culture (cross-cultural) or even connecting with people online (digital missions) to share God's truth and love.

- "What about digital missions?" www.spiritualwarfare.blog/digital-missions

We live in an era of human history often referred to as "globalized" where there has been a physical, global spread of nationalities/cultures as well as a digitized interconnectedness that makes trans-cultural relationships and communication possible without significant physical distance of travel. Despite globalization there is a need, similar to military special forces units, to have specific training, focus, and efforts towards particular people groups to ensure effective communication of the Gospel.

- 2 Timothy 2:15 "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."
- 1 Chronicles 12:32 "Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do"

3. Difficulty - *How dangerous or difficult is the work?*

Communication of Biblical truth and demonstration of Christian love can be particularly challenging, difficult, and dangerous in particular cultures. Some "soils" of humanity are particularly hardened requiring more extensive missions labor and increased risk. This means that some missions lifestyles and assignments involve greater sacrifice with increased challenges. Similarly, all soldiers in real military service, serving to accomplish their mission, some military assignments involve greater challenges, sacrifices, and dangers.

- Matthew 5:10-11 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [11] 'Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.'"
- "What Does the Bible Say About Risk?" www.trustworthyword.com/risk

4. Different Work - *What varying means are used to accomplish the missions work?*

While missions is nothing less than declaring the Gospel, there are many roles and functions needed in a team effort to accomplish the Christian missionary goals. God's Spirit gifts the body of Christ with a variety of skills, passions, and abilities to pursue the purpose of declaring the Gospel truth and training up the local church body.

- 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; [5] and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; [6] and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone."
- 1 Corinthians 12:27 "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."

Although many think of missionaries as only being those who move far away to share the Gospel, Scripture clearly shows every Christian to be called to and sent out as a proclaimer of the love and truth, teaching them to hear, love, and obey God through His Word. Every Christian may pursue their missions task in a variety of ways (duration, distance, difficulty, different work), but no Christian should ignore the commands of

Christ to go out and grow disciples. May we each be sensitive and obedient to God's particular, specific calling on our lives and faithful to the ministry/mission to which we are equipped and gifted.

“In my estimation, no man has a right to call himself a New Testament Christian who is not interested in the Great Commission.” Adrian P. Rogers

“Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter.” Charles H. Spurgeon

Helpful Scriptures on Missions

- Isaiah 6:8 “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here I am! Send me.’”
- 1 Chronicles 12:32 “Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do”
- Matthew 5:10-11 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [11] ‘Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.’”
- Matthew 28:19–20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
- Mark 1:17–18 “And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’ [18] And immediately they left their nets and followed him.”
- Luke 10:2 “And he said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’”
- John 21:15–17 “When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ [16] He said to him a second time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ [17] He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ and he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’”
- Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
- Acts 5:42 “And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.”
- Acts 18:4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.”
- Acts 26:27–29 “King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.’ [28] And Agrippa said to Paul, ‘In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?’ [29] And Paul said, ‘Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.’”
- Romans 10:14–15 “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? [15] And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”
- Romans 12:4–8 “For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ...[6] Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them ...”

- Romans 15:18–21 “For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed, [19] by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God—so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ; [20] and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else’s foundation, [21] but as it is written, “Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand.”
- Philippians 3:20–21 “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, [21] who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”
- 1 Corinthians 9:19–23 “For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. [20] To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. [21] To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. [22] To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. [23] I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.”
- 1 Corinthians 12:4–6 “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; [5] and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; [6] and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.”
- 1 Corinthians 12:27 “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:11 “Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.”
- Ephesians 6:19–20 “[pray] also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, [20] for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.”
- 1 Thessalonians 2:17–18 “But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, [18] because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us.”
- 2 Timothy 2:3 “Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”
- 2 Timothy 2:15 “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”
- 1 Peter 2:11–12 “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. [12] Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.”

“Sent”

- Jeremiah 35:15 “I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, sending them persistently, saying, “Turn now every one of you from his evil way, and amend your deeds, and do not go after other gods to serve them, and then you shall dwell in the

land that I gave to you and your fathers.’ But you did not incline your ear or listen to me.”

- Matthew 10:16–18 “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. [17] Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, [18] and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.”
- Luke 10:2 “And he said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’”
- Luke 24:48–49 “You are witnesses of these things. [49] And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”
- John 6:28–29 “Then they said to him, ‘What must we do, to be doing the works of God?’ [29] Jesus answered them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.’”
- John 20:21–22 “Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.’ [22] And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”
- Acts 26:17 - “delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you”

“Set apart”

- Psalm 4:3 “But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.”
- Acts 6:3–6 “Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. [4] But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” [5] And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. [6] These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.”
- Acts 13:2–3 “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ [3] Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.”
- Acts 26:16–18 “‘But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, [17] delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you [18] to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’”
- Romans 1:1 “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God”
- 2 Timothy 2:21 “Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.”

“Ministry/Work”

- John 9:4 “We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.”
- Acts 20:22–24 “And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, [23] except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. [24] But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”
- Acts 21:19–20 “After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. [20] And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed.”
- 1 Corinthians 15:58 “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”
- 2 Corinthians 1:24 “Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.”
- 2 Corinthians 3:18–4:1 “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. [4:1] Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:17–21 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. [18] All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. [20] Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. [21] For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”
- 2 Corinthians 9:1, 12 “Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints ... For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.”
- 2 Corinthians 10:15–18 “We do not boast beyond limit in the labors of others. But our hope is that as your faith increases, our area of influence among you may be greatly enlarged, [16] so that we may preach the gospel in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in another’s area of influence. [17] ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’ [18] For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.”
- Galatians 2:6–9 “And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me. [7] On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised [8] (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), [9] and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was

- given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.”
- Ephesians 4:11–16 “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, [12] to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, [13] until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, [14] so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. [15] Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, [16] from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”
 - Colossians 3:23–24 “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, [24] knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”
 - Colossians 4:17 “say to Archippus, ‘See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.’”
 - 2 Thessalonians 1:11–12 “To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, [12] so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - 1 Thessalonians 1:2–8 “We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, [3] remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. [4] For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, [5] because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. [6] And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, [7] so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. [8] For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.”
 - 1 Timothy 5:9–10 “Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, [10] and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.”
 - 2 Timothy 3:16–17 “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”
 - 2 Timothy 4:5 “As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”
 - Hebrews 8:6 “But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.”

Missions is INSEPARABLE from the churches.
Missions is THROUGH the churches.
Missions is the WORK of the churches.
Missionaries are the PEOPLE of the churches.

“What Does the Bible Say About Church Membership?”

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-church-membership

“What Does the Bible Say About Online Church?”

www.trustworthyword.com/online-church

“Missions Statistics” - www.spiritualwarfare.blog/missions-statistics

Evangelism & Missions Quotes

"I care not where I go, or how I live, or what I endure so that I may save souls. When I sleep I dream of them; when I awake they are first in my thoughts...no amount of scholastic attainment, of able and profound exposition of brilliant and stirring eloquence can atone for the absence of a deep impassioned sympathetic love for human souls." David Brainerd

"We shall have all eternity in which to celebrate our victories, but we have only one swift hour before the sunset in which to win them." Robert Moffat

"Evangelism is not a professional job for a few trained men, but is instead the unrelenting responsibility of every person who belongs to the company of Jesus." Elton Trueblood

"You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go not only to those that need you, but to those that need you most...It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance." John Wesley

"It was a common saying among the Puritans, 'Brown bread and the Gospel is good fare.'" Matthew Henry

"The Gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness." John Wesley

"'Not called!' did you say? 'Not heard the call,' I think you should say. Put your ear down to the Bible, and hear him bid you go and pull sinners out of the fire of sin. Put your ear down to the burdened, agonized heart of humanity, and listen to its pitiful wail for help. Go stand by the gates of hell, and hear the damned entreat you to go to their father's house and bid their brothers and sisters, and servants and masters not to come there. And then look Christ in the face, whose mercy you have professed to obey, and tell him whether you will join heart and soul and body and circumstances in the march to publish his mercy to the world." William Booth

"Perhaps if there were more of that intense distress for souls that leads to tears, we should more frequently see the results we desire. Sometimes it may be that while we are complaining of the hardness of the hearts of those we are seeking to benefit, the hardness of our own hearts and our feeble apprehension of the solemn reality of eternal things may be the true cause of our want of success." Hudson Taylor

"I'd rather have people hate me with the knowledge that I tried to save them." Keith Green

"Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell." C.T. Studd

"The world is my parish." John Wesley

"The history of missions is the history of answered prayer. From Pentecost to the Haystack meeting in New England and from the days when Robert Morrison landed in China to the martyrdom of John and Betty Stam, prayer has been the source of power and the secret of spiritual triumph." Samuel M. Zwemer

"No sort of defense is needed for preaching outdoors, but it would take a very strong argument to prove that a man who has never preached beyond the walls of his meetinghouse has done his duty. A defense is required for services within buildings rather than for worship outside of them." William Booth

"Preach abroad. It is the cooping yourselves up in rooms that has dampened the work of God, which never was and never will be carried out to any purpose without going into the highways and hedges and compelling men and women to come in." Jonathan Edwards

"I believe I never was more acceptable to my Master than when I was standing to teach those hearers in the open fields. I now preach to ten times more people than I would if I had been confined to the churches." George Whitefield

"I am well assured that I did far more good to my Lincolnshire parishioners by preaching three days on my father's tomb than I did by preaching three years in his pulpit." John Wesley

"Lord, make me a crisis man. Let me not be a mile-post on a single road, but make me a fork that men must turn one way or another in facing Christ in me." Jim Elliot

"It is always a mark of short-sightedness and weakness to be impatient of results." Samuel Smiles

"To teach in order to lead others to faith is the task of every preacher and of each believer." Thomas Aquinas

"Go for souls. Go for souls, and go for the worst." William Booth

"Christ beats His drum, but He does not press men; Christ is served with volunteers." John Donne

"Jesus Christ did not say, 'Go into the world and tell the world that it is quite right.'" C.S. Lewis

"There is no better evangelist in the world than the Holy Spirit." D.L. Moody

"I exhort you, press on in your course, and exhort all men that they may be saved."
Polycarp

"Could a mariner sit idle if he heard the drowning cry? Could a doctor sit in comfort and just let his patients die? Could a fireman sit idle, let men burn and give no hand? Can you sit at ease in Zion with the world around you damned?" Leonard Ravenhill

"I would sooner pluck one single brand from the burning than explain all mysteries."
Charles Spurgeon

"Any method of evangelism will work if God is in it." Leonard Ravenhill

"As soon as a man has found Christ, he begins to find others." Charles Spurgeon

"I will not believe that thou hast tasted of the honey of the gospel if thou can eat it all to thyself." Charles Spurgeon

"When Andrew went to find his brother, he little imagined how eminent Simon would become... You may be very deficient in talent yourself, and yet you may be the means of drawing to Christ one who shall become eminent in grace and service." Charles Spurgeon

"Ah! dear friend, you little know the possibilities which are in you." Charles Spurgeon

"If you truly feel the sweetness of the Cross of Christ, you will be constrained to confess Christ before men." Robert Murray McCheyne

"Let thy religion begin at home." Charles Spurgeon

"How little chance the Holy Ghost has nowadays. The churches and missionary societies have so bound Him in red tape that they practically ask Him to sit in a corner while they do the work themselves." C.T. Studd

"You must GO forward on your knees." Hudson Taylor

"You wonder why people choose fields away from the States when young people at home are drifting because no one wants to take time to listen to their problems. I'll tell you why I left. Because those stateside young people have every opportunity to study, hear, and understand the Word of God in their own language, and these Indians have no opportunity whatsoever. I have had to make a cross of two logs, and lie down on it, to show the Indians what it means to crucify a man. When there is that much ignorance over here and so much knowledge and opportunity over there, I have no question in my mind why God sent me here. Those whimpering stateside young people will wake up on the Day of Judgment condemned to worse fates than these demon-fearing Indians,

because, having a Bible, they were bored with it---while these never heard of such a thing as writing." Jim Elliot

"I have seen, at different times, the smoke of a thousand villages - villages whose people are without Christ, without God, and without hope in the world." Robert Moffat

"My teaching is not of doing nor of leaving undone, but of being. It is not new works done, but a new man to do them; not another life only, but another birth." Martin Luther

"And people who do not know the Lord ask why in the world we waste our lives as missionaries. They forget that they too are expending their lives... and when the bubble has burst they will have nothing of eternal significance to show for the years they have wasted." Nate Saint

"Had I cared for the comments of people, I should never have been a missionary." C.T. Studd

"The branch of the vine does not worry, and toil, and rush here to seek for sunshine, and there to find rain. No; it rests in union and communion with the vine; and at the right time, and in the right way, is the right fruit found on it. Let us so abide in the Lord Jesus." Hudson Taylor

"God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supplies." Hudson Taylor

"I have but one passion - it is He, it is He alone. The world is the field and the field is the world; and henceforth that country shall be my home where I can be most used in winning souls for Christ." Count Zinzendorf

"Keep us little and unknown, prized and loved by God alone." Charles Wesley

"Some people think God does not like to be troubled with our constant coming and asking. The way to trouble God is not to come at all." D.L. Moody

"The greatest missionary is the Bible in the mother tongue. It needs no furlough and is never considered a foreigner." William Townsend

"I feel now, that Arabia could easily be evangelized within the next thirty years if it were not for the wicked selfishness of Christians." Samuel M. Zwemer

"We need a baptism of clear seeing. We desperately need seers who can see through the mist--Christian leaders with prophetic vision. Unless they come soon it will be too late for this generation. And if they do come we will no doubt crucify a few of them in the name of our worldly orthodoxy." A.W. Tozer

"We are not built for ourselves, but for God. Not for service for God, but for God."
Oswald Chambers

"Today Christians spend more money on dog food than missions." Leonard Ravenhill

"It will not do to say that you have no special call to go to China. With these facts before you and with the command of the Lord Jesus to go and preach the gospel to every creature, you need rather to ascertain whether you have a special call to stay at home."
Hudson Taylor

"Oh, this is a reality, not a fable, that the Lord Jesus Christ is our friend. And we should not be satisfied till we are brought to this." George Mueller

"God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." John Piper

"If every Christian is already considered a missionary, then all can stay put where they are, and nobody needs to get up and go anywhere to preach the gospel. But if our only concern is to witness where we are, how will people in unevangelized areas ever hear the gospel? The present uneven distribution of Christians and opportunities to hear the gospel of Christ will continue on unchanged." Gordon Olson

"Answering a student's question, 'Will the heathen who have not heard the Gospel be saved?' thus, 'It is more a question with me whether we, who have the Gospel and fail to give it to those who have not, can be saved.'" Charles Spurgeon

"The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us; just as the roof of a sunhouse does not attract the sun because it is bright, but becomes bright because the sun shines on it." C.S. Lewis

"As long as I see anything to be done for God, life is worth having; but O how vain and unworthy it is to live for any lower end!" David Brainerd

"If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him." C.T. Studd

"All my friends are but one, but He is all sufficient." William Carey

"I will go down, if you will hold the ropes." [his missions philosophy] William Carey

"God had an only Son, and He was a missionary and a physician." David Livingstone

"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world". C.S. Lewis

"What you do in your house is worth as much as if you did it up in heaven for our Lord God. We should accustom ourselves to think of our position and work as sacred and

well-pleasing to God, not on account of the position and work, but on account of the word and faith from which the obedience and the work flow." Martin Luther

"There are three indispensable requirements for a missionary: 1. Patience 2. Patience 3. Patience." Hudson Taylor

"Go not to those who want you, but to those who want you most." John Wesley

"There is no work better than to please God; to pour water, to wash dishes, to be a cobbler, or an apostle, all are one; to wash dishes and to preach are all one, as touching the deed, to please God." William Tyndale

"The idea that the service to God should have only to do with a church altar, singing, reading, sacrifice, and the like is without doubt but the worst trick of the devil. How could the devil have led us more effectively astray than by the narrow conception that service to God takes place only in a church and by the works done therein...The whole world could abound with the services to the Lord, Gottesdienste - not only in churches but also in the home, kitchen, workshop, field." Martin Luther

"Find preachers of David Brainerd's spirit, and nothing can stand before them...Let us be followers of him, as he was of Christ, in absolute self-devotion, in total deadness to the world, and in fervent love to God and man." [his biography of David Brainerd, who died of tuberculosis at 29] Jonathan Edwards

"I would rather feel compassion than know the meaning of it." Thomas Aquinas

"Therefore, the Christian heart, since it has been thoroughly persuaded that all things happen by God's plan, and that nothing takes place by chance, will ever look to him as the principal causes of things, yet will give attention to the secondary causes in their proper place." John Calvin

"People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa... It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege." David Livingstone

"You can take nothing greater to the heathen world than the impress and the reflection of the love of God upon your character. That is the universal language." Henry Drummond

"God cannot be comprehended by us, except as far as he accommodates himself to our standard." John Calvin

"Was it not great blindness that God Almighty, who created us, has so often made known to us that he is our Father, and finally even gave his Son for us; and he himself stands there and calls us poor sinners, saying 'Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.' And we went and turned to the creature, and thought God to be so rough and cruel that we dare not come to him." Ulrich Zwingli

"I have come across black men and women who remembered the only white man they ever saw before----David Livingstone; and as you cross his footsteps in that dark continent, men's faces light up as they speak of the kind Doctor who passed there years ago. They could not understand him; but they felt the Love that beat in his heart." Henry Drummond

"I have found my destiny. I must take the gospel to the people of the East End." William Booth

"The first thing I ask is that people should not make use of my name, and should not call themselves Lutherans but Christians. What is Luther? The teaching is not mine. Nor was I crucified for anyone...How did I, poor stinking bag of maggots that I am, come to the point where people call the children of Christ by my evil name?" Martin Luther

"How we have prayed for a Revival - we did not care whether it was old-fashioned or not - what we asked for was that it should be such that would cleanse and revive His children and set them on fire to win others." Mary Booth

"Wherever the fear of God rules in the heart, it will appear both in works of charity and piety, and neither will excuse us from the other." Matthew Henry

"The right manner of growth is to grow less in one's own eyes." Thomas Watson

"Yes, it is a press, certainly, but a press from which shall flow in inexhaustible streams, the most abundant and most marvelous liquor that has ever flowed to relieve the thirst of men! Through it, God will spread His Word. A spring of truth shall flow from it: like a new star it shall scatter the darkness of ignorance, and cause a light heretofore unknown to shine amongst men." Johannes Gutenberg

"We may note in passing that He was never regarded as a mere moral teacher. He did not produce that effect on any of the people who actually met Him. He produced mainly three results---Hatred---Terror---Adoration. There was no trace of people expressing mild admiration." C.S. Lewis

"God does not have to come and tell me what I must do for Him, He brings me into a relationship with Himself where I hear His call and understand what He wants me to do, and I do it out of sheer love to Him... When people say they have had a call to foreign service, or to any particular sphere of work, they mean that their relationship to God has enabled them to realize what they can do for God." Oswald Chambers

"This Man (Jesus) suddenly remarks one day, 'No one need fast while I am here.' Who is this Man who remarks that His mere presence suspends all normal rules?" C.S. Lewis

"The preaching that this world needs most is the sermons in shoes that are walking with Jesus Christ." D.L. Moody

“Calamity clarifies and comfort confuses; persecution purifies and prosperity pollutes!”
Kevin Turner

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." Jim Elliot

"My dear Jesus, my Savior, is so deeply written in my heart, that I feel confident, that if my heart were to be cut open and chopped to pieces, the name of Jesus would be found written on every piece." St. Ignatius of Antioch

"I have held many things in my hands, and have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess." Martin Luther

"If you read history you will find out that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next." C.S. Lewis

"In Jesus and for Him, enemies and friends alike are to be loved." Thomas A` Kempis

"The seed once sown grows...of itself, from its own impulse and power of life.... The self-inherent power of growth of the kingdom of God." Rudolph Stier

"The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried." G.K. Chesterton

"The best of it is, God is with us." John Wesley

"I will place no value on anything I have or may possess except in relation to the kingdom of Christ." David Livingstone

"I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England." C.S. Lewis

"A Christian mother does not give birth to a Christian child; it is not natural birth, but a second, spiritual birth which makes a Christian." Tertullian of Carthage

"Salvation is God's way of making us real people." Augustine

"Since no man is excluded from calling upon God the gate of salvation is open to all. There is nothing else to hinder us from entering, but our own unbelief." John Calvin

"A world of nice people, content in their own niceness, looking no further, turned away from God, would be just as desperately in need of salvation as a miserable world---and might be even more difficult to save." C.S. Lewis

"Is it not wonderful news to believe that salvation lies outside ourselves?" Martin Luther

"Salvation comes through a cross and a crucified Christ." Andrew Murray

"Salvation is from our side a choice; from the divine side it is a seizing upon, an apprehending, a conquest by the Most High God. Our accepting and willing are reactions rather than actions." A.W. Tozer

"O God, save me by Thy righteousness, that is to say, in Thy Son, who alone among men was found without sin." Girolamo Savonarola

"I feel that I am not to be mended, but transformed." Seneca

"Wise leaders should have known that the human heart cannot exist in a vacuum. If Christians are forbidden to enjoy the wine of the Spirit they will turn to the wine of the flesh.... Christ died for our hearts and the Holy Spirit wants to come and satisfy them." A.W. Tozer

"A revival is nothing else than a new beginning of obedience to God." Charles Finney

"God's whole employment is to lift up the humble and cast down the proud" Author Unknown

"The greatest fault is to be conscious of none." Thomas Carlyle

"...If ever a monk could get to heaven through monastic discipline, I was that monk.... And yet my conscience would not give me certainty, but I always doubted and said, 'You didn't do that right. You weren't contrite enough. You left that out of your confession.' The more I tried to remedy an uncertain, weak, and troubled conscience with human traditions, the more I daily found it more uncertain, weaker, and more troubled." Martin Luther

Missions Reflections

As I write this, I have just returned from a mission trip to Ghana, West Africa. Have you ever had the joy of a missions trip? Or been able to travel to serve in an impoverished area? Every time I get the joy of serving the Lord on mission God teaches me and reminds me of so many life-transforming truths. Here are a few of the ways Jesus grew me in Ghana!

Jesus is amazing. One of the neatest blessings of a missions trip is to get away from the everyday distractions and to have the pure pleasure of walking closer with Jesus every day. More time in the Word. More fellowship with believers. More time to serve Him. More opportunities to share Him. More enjoyment of Jesus. May we be more intentional to prioritize our proximity to Jesus!

Psalm 145:6 “They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.”

Satan is real. Sometimes when we travel to unfamiliar places we experience things that can be quite different or even disturbing. We experienced things in Ghana we have read about in the Bible, but many of us had never seen such demonic attacks first hand. We witnessed several people who were extremely afflicted and oppressed by demons in scary ways. Although it was new to many of us, God had already prepared us in His Word on how to respond and see His powerful presence and to experience His overwhelming peace as we shared the Good News to those who were overcome by darkness.

1 John 4:4 “he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world”

The Gospel is powerful. Too often we forget what Jesus did on Calvary. We need regular reminders of the power of the Gospel to change lives forever. What great joy God gave us in the midst of His harvest to see souls saved and to witness souls encouraged and strengthened in their faith.

Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

America is rich. Travel to a third world country is a humbling reminder of our own riches and blessings. Food. Clothing. Shelter. Health. Even the poorest of poor in America has more of the needs of life than the middle class of most nations. We need to be more grateful to God. He has provided for us so abundantly for our daily needs. Every American should witness extreme third-world country poverty if they can. May we be more grateful, content, and generous with what God has entrusted to us.

Philippians 4:19 “And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Giving is a joy. Giving of yourself towards the needs of others is such a blessing. Whether it is time, prayer, skills, meeting needs, or speaking about Jesus we have so much to share. Whether in LaRue County, eastern Kentucky, the western U.S., or on another continent may we be faithful to give ourselves and our gospel love away to everyone around us.

Acts 20:35 “remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Missions are essential. Many respond to God’s mission command by saying “I’m not called.” Jesus’ Great Commission is not an option to be considered, but a joyful task to be obeyed. Many have missed out on an incredible experience with God working in them and through them on mission.

Have you missed out? If so, it’s not too late. Find a way to serve and share the amazing love of Jesus here, there, and everywhere! The challenges, costs, and commitment of missions are real, but the joy of going is so worth it! As long as there is breath in our lungs may we be faithful to declare the glory of our Lord!!

Matthew 28:19–20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

On Mission for Jesus

On occasion I've met people who question the need to go out on mission trips when there is plenty of "need" here at home. How would you respond to such a statement? Why should we be on mission, crossing geographical, linguistic, and cultural boundaries to talk about and show the love of Jesus?

Here are five reasons to go on mission trips for Jesus:

1. To enjoy Christ. I was recently reflecting with my wife about mission trips and she insightfully remarked that mission trips have a more exclusive focus of spending time with Jesus. On mission, many of the busyness, obligations, and distractions of life fade away as our focus turns towards prioritizing Jesus throughout the day, looking for opportunities to enjoy Him and be part of His work. Think of Jesus' disciples: three years of following, listening, witnessing, and enjoying Jesus. *On mission trips, we enjoy Christ.*

Acts 4:13 "And they recognized that they had been with Jesus."

2. To share Christ. The world has heard of KFC, Coca-Cola, as well as much about American politics, sports, and entertainment. But have they heard of our Jesus? "67% of all humans from AD 30 to the present day have never even heard the name of Jesus Christ...and around 30 million people this year will perish without hearing the message of salvation" (Baxter 2007, 12). Can you believe those numbers? Many all over the world have never heard the name of Jesus or have ever clearly understood the message of salvation. *On mission trips, we share Christ.*

Acts 4:12 "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

3. To obey Christ. Christians are empowered and in-dwelt by the Holy Spirit with the assigned task of bearing witness to the greatness of God. Hudson Taylor helpfully reminds us that "the Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed." *On mission trips, we obey Christ.*

Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

4. To bring hope. The world can be a dark and dreary place, devoid of joy and expectation. Christians have a hope that transcends earthly sorrow and suffering. May we be faithful to prepare, share, and dare to go out with the message of eternal hope! *On mission trips, we bring hope.*

1 Peter 3:15 “always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect”

5. To speak truth and to show love. Satan has deceived the world through lies and ignorance. Many have been misled and are spiritually blind. Billions seek pleasure in the things of this life rather than experiencing the overwhelming love of Jesus. Paul Little explains that “Witnessing is that deep-seated conviction that the greatest favor I can do for others is to introduce them to Jesus Christ.” *On mission trips, we speak truth and show love.*

Ephesians 4:25, 5:2 “let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor...and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us”

If we fail to reach out with the love, truth, and hope of Jesus we miss out on so much. May we be faithful to be on mission here, there, and everywhere with the days, gifts, and resources that the Lord has given us!

Missions Statistics

www.spiritualwarfare.blog/missions-statistics

- There are 7.05 billion people in the world. (Joshua Project)
- 2.3 billion are Christian (748 million are Evangelical Christian)
- 1.5 billion are Muslim. (Joshua Project)
- 971 million are Hindu. (Joshua Project)
- 703 million are Non-Religious. (Joshua Project)
- 626 million are Buddhist. (Joshua Project)
- 553 million are of Ethnic Religions including Chinese Religion. (Joshua Project)
- 33 million other/unknown. (Joshua Project)
- Of the 7.05 billion people in the world, 2.9 billion live among unreached people groups of the world and
- 1.6 billion are completely unevangelized. (Joshua Project; Barrett and Johnson 2001, 427)
- There are 6,510 languages in the world. (Joshua Project)
- 86% of all unreached people groups lie within the region called the 10/40 window, which is between
- 10 and 40 degrees north and from the west coast of Africa to the east coast of Asia. (Joshua Project)
- In AD 100 there were 360 people for every believer. Now there are 7.3 people for every believer. (Winter et al., 1)
- 90% of foreign missionaries work among already reached people groups. 10% work among unreached people groups. (Winter and Koch, 543)
- Despite Christ's command to evangelize, 67% of all humans from AD 30 to the present day have never even heard the name of Jesus Christ. (Baxter 2007, 12)
- 91% of all Christian outreach/evangelism does not target non-Christians, but targets other Christians. (Baxter 2007, 12)
- In the last 40 years, over 1 billion people have died who have never heard of Jesus, and around 30 million people this year will perish without hearing the message of salvation. (Baxter 2007, 12)
- 70,000+ people die everyday in the unreached world without Jesus. (Baxter 2007, 12)
- Of foreign mission funding: 87% goes for work among those already Christian. 12% for work among already evangelized, but Non-Christian. 1% for work among the unevangelized and unreached people. (Baxter 2007, 12)
- Christians make up 33% of the world's population, but receive 53% of the world's annual income and spend 98% of it on themselves. (Barrett and Johnson 2001, 656)
- Only .1% of all Christian giving is directed toward mission efforts in the 38 most unevangelized countries in the world. (Barrett and Johnson 2001, 656)
- 22 million internationals visit the US each year. Of these, some 630,000 are university students from 220 countries, 25% of which prohibit Christian missionaries. 80% of those students will return to their countries having never been invited to an American home. (The Traveling Team)

- American Christians spend 95% of offerings on home-based ministry, 4.5% on cross-cultural efforts in already reached people groups, and .5% to reach the unreached. (The Traveling Team)
- There are 430,000 missionaries from all branches of Christendom. Only between 2 and 3% of these missionaries work among unreached peoples. (The Traveling Team)
- There are 140,000 recorded protestant missionaries serving in the world, with 64,000 from the US. (The Traveling Team)
- Of the 140,000 Protestant missionaries, 74% work among nominal Christians, 8% among tribal peoples, 6% Muslims, 4% Non-religious/atheists, 3% among Buddhists, 2% Hindus, 1% Jews. (The Traveling Team)
- Christians' annual income is \$12.3 trillion. \$213 billion is given to Christian causes. \$11.4 billion is given to foreign missions, 87% of which goes to work being done among the already Christian, 12% goes to work among the evangelized non-Christians, 1% among the unevangelized. (The Traveling Team)
- Over 160,000 believers will be martyred this year. (The Traveling Team)
- The total cost of Christian outreach averages \$330,000 for each and every newly baptized person. (World Evangelization Research Center)
- 54% of evangelical Christians are non-whites. (World Evangelization Research Center)
- The country with the fastest Christian expansion ever is China, now at 10,000 new converts every day. (World Evangelization Research Center)
- It costs Christians 700 times more money to baptize converts in rich Christian countries, such as Switzerland, than in poor unevangelized countries, such as Nepal. (World Evangelization Research Center)
- US ministries send out over 144,000 short-term missionaries each year. (Weber and Welliver 2007, 13)
- US mission agencies have an annual budget of over \$5.2 billion. (Weber and Welliver 2007, 13)
- The average American Christian gives only 1 penny a day to global missions. (Yohannan, Revolution in World Missions, 142)
- 86 countries prohibit or restrict Western missionaries. (Yohannan, Come Let's Reach the World, 31)
- Christian organizations spend \$8 billion a year on conferences. (Yohannan, Come Let's Reach the World, 126)
- Indigenous missionaries do 90% of pioneer mission work, but only receive 10% of mission funding. Meanwhile foreign missionaries do 10% of pioneer mission work, but receive 90% of mission funding. (Finley 2004, 178 & 244)
- Two of the largest Gospel radio broadcasters, Far East Broadcasting Company and Gospel for Asia, both receive around 1,000,000 listener responses each year. (Far East Broadcasting Company, 15; Gospel for Asia)
- There have been 4.1 billion viewings of the Jesus Film, representing about 3 billion individuals. More than 99% of the world's population could view the film in a language they know. (Johnstone and Mandryk 2005, 7)

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“As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” (John 20:21)

5 Ways to Pray for Missions

Here are some ideas of how to pray for missions teams and missionaries.

1. Spiritual Health, Life Balance, & Provision “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:10-12 ESV)

- “What Does the Bible Say About Spiritual Health?”
www.trustworthyword.com/spiritual-health
- “What Does the Bible Say About Home Health?” www.trustworthyword.com/home-health
- “What Does the Bible Say About Financial Health?”
www.trustworthyword.com/financial-health

2. Unity and Focus “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18)

- “What Does the Bible Say About Relational Health?”
www.trustworthyword.com/relational-health
- “What Does the Bible Say About Workplace Health?”
www.trustworthyword.com/work-place-health

3. Spiritual Boldness & Clarity “and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.” (Ephesians 6:19-20)

- “What Does the Bible Say About Risk?” www.trustworthyword.com/risk
- “What Bible Verses Are Good to Memorize for Evangelism?”
www.trustworthyword.com/what-bible-verses-are-good-to-memorize-for-evangelism

4. Overcome Fear & Worry

- Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows. (Lk 12:7)
- And he said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. (Luke 12:22)

- “What Does the Bible Say About Worry?” www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-worry

5. Physical, Mental, & Emotional Health & Protection

- And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? (Lk 12:25)
- Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. (3 John 1:2)
- Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. (James 5:14)

- “What Does the Bible Say About Physical Health?”
www.trustworthyword.com/physical-health
- “What Does the Bible Say About Emotional Health?”
www.trustworthyword.com/emotional-health
- “What Does the Bible Say About Mental Health?”
www.trustworthyword.com/mental-health
- “What Does the Bible Say About Sexual Health?” www.trustworthyword.com/sexual-health

What Does the Bible Say About Risk?

As humans, we often fear the unknown and seek to protect or isolate ourselves from potential harm or loss. The Bible clearly demonstrates that the riskiest behavior is to isolate ourselves from God and distrust His commands. May we be a people who imitates the examples set before us of faithfulness in the midst of risk (Hebrews 11:32-40).

Fast and Pray - Jesus followed the Spirit's leading into the desert to be personally tempted and tried by Satan. Instead of fleeing, Jesus fasted and prayed, using Scripture to rebuke Satan's deception (Matthew 4:1-11).

Put on the Full Armor of God - Paul recognized that our battles and enemies are not primarily with humans or situations, but rather are best spiritually understood. He exhorts Christians to remember that we do not wrestle with flesh and blood, but with Satan and his demons. Accordingly, we need Jesus' reminder that our weapons are not of this world (Ephesians 6:10-20, 2 Corinthians 10:2-6).

Flee - At times God calls us to flee risky situations. Jesus preached so clearly in His hometown of Nazareth that they sought to throw Him off a cliff in order to kill him, yet Jesus passed through them and went away (Luke 4:16-30, John 10:39). Paul and the disciples of Jesus likewise had situations in which he was called to, prepared for, and initiated escape (2 Corinthians 11:32-33, Acts 5:17-42, Acts 9:23-25). When the risk is towards a situation of temptation, Christians are called to flee as a way of escape (1 Timothy 6:11, 2 Timothy 2:22, 1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:12-14)

Stand Firm - Jesus stood firm even when officials were present and ready to arrest Him, trusting in God's perfect plan and timing (John 7:32-52). Paul and Silas had the perfect, God-given opportunity in Philippi to escape prison safely, but God called them to remain (Acts 16:25-40).

Resist - At times the Christian is called to resist, whether it be a government or the devil who is seeking to inspire disobedience against God (Acts 4:1-31, James 4:7)

Speak - Christians are called to speak boldly and courageously even in the midst of dangerous and threatening circumstances (Acts 4:1-31; 18:9-11). We are warned by the example of Peter of the danger of denying Jesus in risky situations by our sinful silence or speech (Matthew 26:69-75).

Be Silent - Sometimes the Christian call is to remain calmly silent in the midst of verbal and physical threats (Matthew 27:11-14, John 19:1-11).

Embrace Risk - Both Jesus and Paul demonstrated a willingness to enter into risk for the sake of Gospel love, fully aware of the suffering and death they encountered in their

future (Luke 9:51-56, Matthew 26:47-56, Acts 21:10-36). Christians are reminded that risk is part of the cost of following Jesus faithfully (Luke 9:57-10:12).

What Does the Bible Say about Persecution?

We must not minimize or redefine persecution, understanding that persecution involves not merely verbal or social opposition, but opposition to the Gospel message that results in significant financial or physical harm or loss.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [11] “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.” (Matthew 5:10-11 ESV)

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ [44] But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, [45] so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. [46] For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? [47] And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? [48] You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:43-48 ESV)

“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. [19] If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. [20] Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” (John 15:18-20 ESV)

“To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, [12] and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; [13] when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.” (1 Corinthians 4:11-13 ESV)

“But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. [8] We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; [9] persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; [10] always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. [11] For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.” (2 Corinthians 4:7-11 ESV)

“You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, [11] my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. [12] Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, [13] while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to

worse, deceiving and being deceived. [14] But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:10-17 ESV)

How to Download, Use, and Share the Gideon Bible App

What is the Gideon Bible App? The Gideon Bible App (www.gideons.bible.is) offers mobile access to Scripture in a multitude of languages including text and dramatized Audio Bibles so you can read and listen to the Bible in your own language.

Why is a Bible App so important and essential? Mobile digital time (phones, tablets, watches, etc.) is significantly higher than those who use desktop/laptop computers for accessing the internet. 80% of all internet users own a smartphone. Mobile device users access digital media 89% of the time through apps, not through websites, using mobile apps for over an hour per day.

How can I download the Gideon Bible App? Go to iTunes or Google Play via your mobile device and search “Gideon Bible App.”

How can I change the language of the Bible? What languages are available? When you initially open the app, click on the “languages” or “country” tab in the top-center of the screen and select one of the 1,100+ available languages. You can also access this from the default page by clicking on “Bibles.”

How can I look up a specific Bible book, chapter, or verse? The easiest way is once you have selected your Bible translation, click on the top center bible book and chapter reference (i.e. “Genesis 1” is the default) and scroll to select the book and chapter. Once you are in the correct book and chapter, you can scroll to select the desired verse or passage. There is also a search bar in the left menu within which you can type the specific verse address.

How can I bookmark or highlight a specific Bible verse or passage? How can I share a specific Bible verse or passage? Press and hold on the desired verse to select the verse or passage you desire. Then select the left red bookmark, yellow highlighter, notebook, or sharing tool

How can I take notes in my Bible app? How can I sync my Bible bookmarks, highlights, and notes? In order to take notes in your Bible app you will need to sign up for an account and log in. Once you have an established account your data will be synced on any logged in platform you use.

How can I search for a particular passage, word or theme in the Bible? Hit the three horizontal line button in the upper left corner to pull open the left menu. In the upper left search bar (next to the magnifying glass) you can type in the passage, word or theme you desire to search.

How can I listen to the Bible? Under the Bible selection, hit the play button (sideways triangle) to play the current text. From the same toolbar you can download

(downward pointed arrow), advance or rewind (sideways pointed double triangle) the chapter.

How can I read or listen to the Bible offline? Select “Downloads” from the left side of your screen and select the particular Bible language and translation you want to download for offline use. You then will select to download the “Text” (Old Testament or New Testament in its entirety) or “Audio (selecting the specific book or chapters you want to download). You will need a free account to download the text for offline use. You can click “Edit” in the upper right-hand corner to delete any audio files that you have downloaded (to save memory).

What is the link on “Help in Time of Need” for? This is a topical index of Bible verses that you will find greatly helpful in discovering God’s truths for every time and season of life.

What is the link on “Help with Life Problems” for? This is a selection of common temptations and sins so that you can find God’s truths concerning His will in your life.

What is the link on “Decision” for? Select “Decision” for a biblical Gospel presentation, opportunity to respond, encouragement for church involvement, and biblical assurance for new believers.

What is the link on “Character” for? Select “Character” for a topical presentation of Bible verses concerning the character God seeks for believers to model in their lives as a Gospel witness.

How can I share the Gideon Bible App? Click the “Share the App” feature to select how you would like to share the app (text, email, WhatsApp, social media, AirDrop, etc.)

What is the link on “Settings” for? This area allows you to change the Bible translation you are using, the text size, theme, and font, account setup/login, and some informational links.

What is the link on “Donate” for? The Gideons provide this Bible app free of charge and have distributed over 2 billion Bibles through the generous donations of Christians all over the world.

Who is The Gideons International? The Gideons International (gideons.org) is a non-profit ministry that is dedicated to getting God's word to everyone, everywhere.

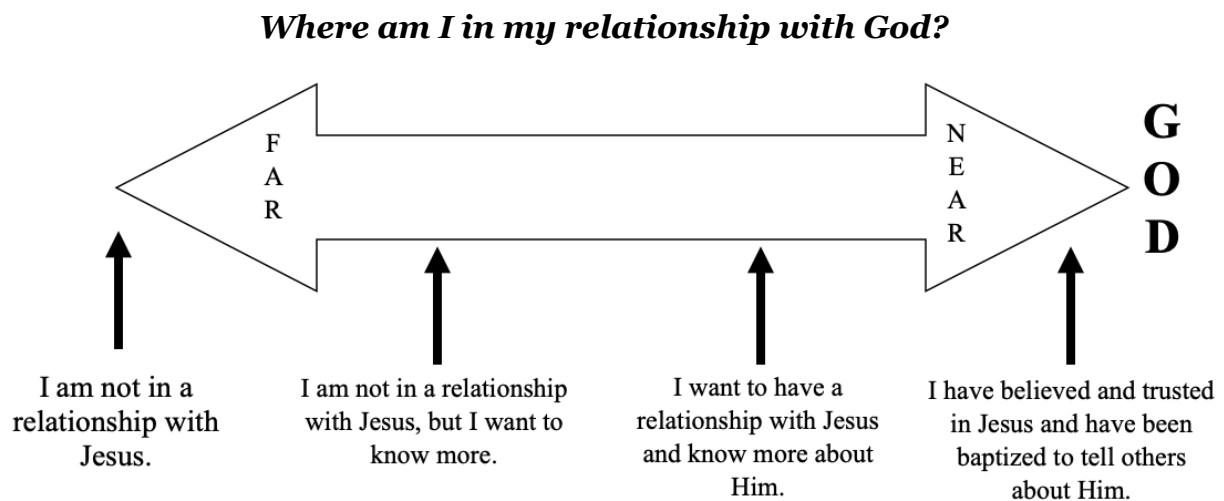
Who is Faith Comes by Hearing? Faith Comes By Hearing (www.faithcomesbyhearing.com) is the world leader in Bible recordings, seeking to provide free audio and text access to God’s Word in every language available.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. [5] You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. [6] And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. [7] You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you

lie down, and when you rise. [8] You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. [9] You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

Gospel Counseling Basics

1. Pray a lot leading up to this special opportunity. Pray as the Gospel is shared!
2. Encourage them about your time together: "I'm excited to talk with you!"
3. Bridge into the Gospel: "Do you have any spiritual beliefs?"
4. Ask good questions to get them to share where they are at in relation to God: you could draw this picture on a napkin or paper to help them describe their relationship with Jesus.



5. Review the ABCs of Salvation & ask corresponding, clarifying questions:

- Ask open-ended questions. Avoid giving the answers, but help them to understand. Use simple words. Don't assume they understand. Ask another counselor/leader for help if you get stuck. Keep praying (in your head) as you talk with the child.
- Pick a Scripture for them to read and for you to help them understand: Romans 3:23, 6:23, & 10:9-10 are great verses."

A—"Admit" to God that you are a sinner and that you need His forgiveness;

- Do you consider yourself to be a good person? Can I give you a quick test? (use some of the 10 commandments) Have you ever told a lie? Have you ever stolen something? Have you ever hated someone? When you stand before Jesus on judgment day, are you guilty or innocent?
- What is sin? Are you a sinner? What are some ways you have sinned? Who are your sins against (people and ultimately God)? How does that make you feel that you have sinned against God?

B—"Believe" in Jesus and that what He did on the cross was enough to provide for your forgiveness of sin;

- Who is Jesus? Why did he die? Do you believe Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave?

C—"Confess" Jesus as your Savior and Lord.

- What does it mean for Jesus to be your Lord? Do you want Him to be in charge of your life?
- 6. Ask if they have any questions about being a Christian.**
 - 7. Ask if they want to become a Christian today**
 - 8. Help pray with them to accept Christ by following the ABC outline.**
 - 9. Help encourage them to grow in Christ by:**
 - Reading their Bible, Praying, Being Involved in Church
 - 10. Pray for them before they go.** Write down important information on your conversation to share with your pastor, church, their church, and their parents.

Life Issues

What Does the Bible Say About Forgiveness?

www.trustworthyword.com/forgiveness

Consider these four questions...

- Is there someone you haven't forgiven?
- Have you forgiven everyone the way Jesus commands you to?
- Is there hate, bitterness, anger, or resentment in your heart?
- Do you realize the presence of unforgiveness may be a sign you are going to Hell?

Before you answer these tough questions, read below...

Understand the definition of these words

- **Forgive** - to stop feeling angry or resentful toward (someone) for an offense, flaw, or mistake;
- to cancel (a debt)
- **Hate** - to feel intense or passionate dislike
- **Bitterness** - anger and disappointment at being treated unfairly; resentment
- **Anger** - a strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility
- **Resentment** - bitter indignation at having been treated unfairly

What is forgiveness and why do I need it? How do I become forgiven by God? Forgiveness is the restoration of a relationship through the removal of obstacles and offense.

All people have loved themselves more than God and separated themselves from God through sin.

Jesus Christ is the only way for the obstacle and offense of sin to be removed. Here are two resources to consider to ensure that you get to enjoy Him forever in Heaven and are not forever separated from Him in Hell:

- **“How Can I Become a Christian”** : trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian
- **“How Can I Be Sure I'm A Christian”** : trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian
- Hebrews 10:17 “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”
- Psalm 103:8-14 “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; **as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.** As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame he remembers that we are dust.”

- Hebrews 8:12 “For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”

“Resentment is like taking poison and hoping the other person dies.” ~Unknown

Forgiveness Is In Imitation of Jesus and Is Evidence of Salvation

- Matthew 6:14 “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you”
- Ephesians 4:30-32 “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”
- 1 John 4:19-21 “We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”
- 1 John 5:2-3 “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome”

Lack of Forgiveness Is Sin and Is Evidence of Lostness

- 1 John 2:9 “Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.”
- Hebrews 12:15 “See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled”
- Matthew 5:22-24 “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”
- Matthew 6:15 “but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”
- Matthew 18:32-35 “Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

How can I know if I have truly forgiven someone?

- You see their spiritual problem before their other issues.
- You feel pity, not hate.
- You feel compassion, not anger.
- Your heart is broken, not bitter.
- You trust God’s revenge, not plotting your own.
- You bless them, instead of curse them.
- You pray for their salvation (if they are lost), not their destruction.
- You pray for God to convict, change and bless them (if they are saved).
- You refuse to bring up the hurt, instead of repeating and resisting the matter.

Colossians 3:12-17 “Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Un-forgiveness Affects Your Prayer Life

Mark 11:25 “And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

Hatred of Others Is A Manifestation of Hatred of Self

Ecclesiastes 2:17-18 “So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after wind. I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me”

Hatred of Self and Hatred of Others Is A Manifestation of a Hatred of God

- Titus 3:3 “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.”
- Ephesians 5:29-30 “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.”
- Psalm 81:15 “Those who hate the LORD would cringe toward him, and their fate would last forever.”
- “What does the Bible say about suicide?” www.trustworthyword.com/suicide

Forgiveness Does Not Necessitate Friendship

- 1 Corinthians 15:33 “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company ruins good morals.’”
- Galatians 6:1 “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”

Forgiveness Trusts Jesus’ Judgement, Justice, and Vengeance

- Romans 12:19 “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’”
- Proverbs 19:11 “Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.”
- Matthew 5:39 “But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

Forgiveness Shows Kindness to Your Enemy

- Romans 12:14 “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.”

- Romans 12:20-21 “To the contrary, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Forgiveness Intentionally Pursues Peace

- Romans 12:17-18 “Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”
- Romans 14:19 “So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”
- Matthew 5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

A Forgiving Spirit in the Offended Precedes the Offender’s Repentance

Luke 6:31 “And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.”

Forgiveness Does Not Remove Earthly Consequences for their Sin

Luke 6:35-36 “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. [36] Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”

Giving Forgiveness: Forgive As You Would Want Someone to Do To You: Quickly, Repeatedly, Genuinely

Matthew 18:21-22 “Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

Personal and Private - The Offended Has Responsibility

- Matthew 18:15-17 “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”
- Luke 17:3-4 “Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”
- God Wants to Restore Us To Himself & Others
- 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
- 1 John 2:10-11 “Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

Helpful Resources from www.gotquestions.org

- What is forgiveness?
- Got Forgiveness? How do I receive forgiveness from God?
- Does the Bible instruct us to forgive and forget?
- Do Christians have to keep asking for forgiveness for their sins?
- Will God continue to forgive you if you commit the same sin over and over again?
- How can I forgive those who sin against me?
- Is there any sin that God will not forgive?
- What does the Bible say about forgiving yourself?
- If I do not forgive others, does that mean my sins are not forgiven? What does Matthew 6:14-15 mean?
- What does the Bible say about self-hatred? What does the Bible say about hate?

“Live Peaceably with All, If Possible” by John Piper

www.desiringgod.org/messages/live-peaceably-with-all-if-possible

Choose Freedom. Choose Forgiveness.

Forgiveness is a choice you must make.

Your decision to forgive evidences your salvation & has serious consequences for your life.

Consider Tamar's Hurt. Consider Your Hurt - 2 Samuel 13:15 (ESV) "Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, 'Get up! Go!'"

Everyone Has Been Hurt: How about you...

- **Why were you hurt?** Intentionally and Unintentionally
- **By Whom were you hurt?** Family, Friends, Strangers, by Ourselves
- **When were you hurt?** Repeated or One-Time; Past, Present or Future
- **How Bad were you hurt?** Deep or Shallow, Significant or Silly
- **How were you hurt?** Words, Relationships, Actions, Inactions

Questions to consider...

- What wounds do you have?
- What will you do with your hurts?
- How will you live?
- Will you forgive?
- Will you heal?

Remove Bitterness: Some Truths & Warnings...

- 1. Time Does Not Heal Wounds**
- 2. Untreated Wounds Get Worse with Time**
- 3. Covering Up A Wound Is Dangerous**
 - **Wounds Need:**
Timely Intervention
Internal Healing
Intentional Treatment
- 4. "Hurt People Hurt People"**

Choose God's Forgiveness: Only God Truly Heals Wounds

- A Healthy Heart Heals Wounds: No matter the hurt...how great, deep, or often.

10 Truths About Forgiveness

Forgiveness....

1. Requires Confession

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2. Must Be Experienced In Faith

Acts 2:38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

3. Releases and Removes Infection

Colossians 3:13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

4. Heals Wounds

2 Chronicles 7:14 if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

5. Strengthens Our Lives

2 Corinthians 2:5-7 Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. [6] For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, [7] so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

6. Frees Our Living

Galatians 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

7. Reveals Salvation

Matthew 6:14-15 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, [15] but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

8. Reminds Us of Our Ultimate Enemy

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 “Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.”

9. Is Extended by True Believers

Matthew 26:28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

10. Enjoys & Shows the Gospel

Romans 4:7-8 Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.

What Does the Bible Say About Enemies?

www.trustworthyword.com/enemies

In life we face many enemies. We must be aware of the sources, strategies, and solutions to our suffering so that we may live in victory and freedom in Christ.

Sources: 10 Truths About Your Enemies

Ephesians 6:12 “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (ESV)

1. They Exist in your Sinful Flesh.

- Romans 7:5 “For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.”
- Romans 8:13 “For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

2. They Exist in this Fallen World and Fallen Humanity.

- James 4:4 “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

3. They Exist in Fallen Angels: Satan and his Demons.

- Revelation 12:9 “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

4. They Are Powerful.

- Matthew 24:24 “For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.”
- “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2)

5. They Are Persistent.

- Genesis 39:10 “she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.”
- Judges 16:16 “she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death.”

6. They Are Persuasive.

- Genesis 3:1,4 “1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’"...'"You will not surely die,' the serpent said to the woman.”

7. They Are Defeated.

- 1 Corinthians 15:26 “The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”
- 1 Corinthians 15:57 “thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- Colossians 2:15 “God disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.”
- 1 John 3:8 “The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil.”
- Hebrews 2:14 “Christ took on human nature that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil.”

8. They Are Limited in Power.

- Job 1:12 “And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.”

9. They Are Limited in Time.

- John 12:31 “the ruler of this world be cast out”

10. They Are Enslaved. Blinded. Unrighteous. Captive. Dead. Ignorant. Lost.

- Galatians 4:3 “enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.”
- 2 Timothy 2:26 “they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”

Strategies – 10 Tactics of Your Enemies

2 Corinthians 2:11 “so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.” (ESV)

1. Deception with Lies and Accusations.

- Revelation 12:9–10 “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. ... the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.”
- John 8:44 “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth,

because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

- 2 Thessalonians 2:10 “with all wicked deception for those who are perishing”

2. Desires of the World, Flesh, and Pride of Life.

- Ephesians 2:2 “in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience”
- Matthew 4:3 “the tempter came and said”
- 1 John 2:16 “all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.”
- James 4:1 “What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?”
- 1 Thessalonians 3:5 “somehow the tempter had tempted you”

3. Defeat by Intimidation.

- 1 Samuel 17:10 “the Philistine said, ‘I defy the ranks of Israel this day’”

4. Division.

- 1 Corinthians 1:10 “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united”

5. Distraction.

- 2 Corinthians 12:7 “a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited”
- 1 Thessalonians 2:18 “we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us.”

6. Destruction. Sickness.

- John 8:44 “the devil...was a murderer from the beginning”
- 1 Peter 5:8 “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”
- Luke 13:16 “this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years”
- Acts 10:38 “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.”

7. Depression and Apathy.

- Job 2:9 “Then his wife said to him, ‘Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.’”

8. Disguise.

- 2 Corinthians 11:13–15 "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. [14] And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. [15] So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds."
- Matthew 7:15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

9. False Worship

- Consulting the dead (Deut 18:11), divination (Lev 19:26), sorcery (Deut 18:10), mediums (Lev 19:31), seeking ghosts (Ezek 13:20), witchcraft (Gal 5:20), astrology (Isa 47:13-14, Deut 4:19), spell casting (Deut 18:11), and interpreting omens (Deut 18:11)
- 2 Thessalonians 2:9–10 "The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders"
- 2 Corinthians 11:3 "But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ."

10. Gospel- Opposed

- 2 Corinthians 4:4 "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."
- Mark 4:15 "And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them."

How to Respond to Your Enemies

www.trustworthyword.com/enemies

1. Expect their Presence and Attacks.

- John 15:18-20 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. [19] If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. [20] Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” (ESV)

2. Prepare for Confrontation and Questions.

- 1 Peter 3:15 “always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect”
- 2 Timothy 2:24–25 “And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth”

3. Prayer.

- Ephesians 6:18 “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints”
- 2 Corinthians 12:8–10 “Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”
- Matthew 6:13 “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”

4. Understand God and His Good Purposes.

- 1 Kings 3:11 “God said to him, ‘Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right’”
- Romans 8:28 “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”
- Genesis 50:20 “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”

5. Seek Wisdom Concerning their Strategies.

- 2 Corinthians 2:11 “so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.”

- James 3:13–18 “Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. [14] But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. [15] This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. [16] For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. [17] But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. [18] And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

6. Love in Action.

- Philippians 2:3–4 “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”
- Luke 6:27–31 “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.”
- 1 John 3:18 “let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth”
- Romans 12:20–21 “‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

7. Suffer with Endurance.

- Matthew 5:38–42 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ [39] But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. [40] And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. [41] And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. [42] Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.”
- 1 Corinthians 4:11–13 “To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.”
- 2 Timothy 2:3 “Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”

8. Truth-Filled.

- Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
- Romans 10:17 “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

9. Truth-Speaking.

- Ephesians 6:17 “and take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”
- Ephesians 4:15 “speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way...into Christ”

10. Gospel- Sharing.

- Zechariah 9:11 “As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.”

11. Silent Patience When Threatened, Slandered, & Abused.

- 1 Peter 2:21–23 “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.”

12. Bold Confrontation against Threats, Words, Lies, and Actions.

- 2 Corinthians 10:5 “We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ”

13. Slow to Speak. Slow to Get Angry. Quick to Listen.

- James 1:19–20 “Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”
- 2 Timothy 2:24–25 “The Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness”

14. Humility. Meekness. Contentment.

- 2 Corinthians 12:9–10 “he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

15. Count Your Suffering to be Joy. There is Purpose in your Pain.

- Matthew 5:10-11 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ‘Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.’”

16. Sometimes We Flee.

- 1 Timothy 6:11 “ But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.”

- 2 Timothy 2:22 “So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”
- 1 Corinthians 6:18 “Flee from sexual immorality.”
- Acts 9:25 “his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall”

17. Sometimes We Stand Firm.

- Hebrews 10:39 “But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.”
- Ephesians 6:13 “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”

18. Set an Example.

- 2 Timothy 3:10-13 “ You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, [11] my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. [12] Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, [13] while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”
- Philippians 3:17–20 “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. [18] For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. [19] Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. [20] But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (ESV)

19. Seek and Trust the Lord.

- 2 Timothy 3:14-17 “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

20. Follow Jesus.

- 2 Corinthians 4:7-11 “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. [8] We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; [9] persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; [10] always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. [11] For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.”
- Proverbs 16:7 “When a man's ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

21. Rejoice.

- Hebrews 10:32–34 “But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, [33] sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. [34] For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.”

22. Forgive and Be Merciful

- Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”
- Luke 6:36 “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”
- Proverbs 24:17–18 “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles, lest the LORD see it and be displeased, and turn away his anger from him.”

23. Pursue Peace and Trust the Lord for Justice and Vengeance.

- Romans 12:17-19 "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."
- Romans 12:19–21 “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ [20] To the contrary, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ [21] Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

24. Don’t Join Them in their Evil.

- 1 Peter 2:23 “When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.”
- Proverbs 1:10 “My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.”

25. Seek Your Strength and Protection in God.

- Ephesians 6:11 “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”
- James 4:7 “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

26. Don’t Worry.

- Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life"
- Luke 12:25-26 “And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?”

27. Don’t Envy.

- Proverbs 23:17 “Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the LORD all the day.”

- Proverbs 3:31–33 “Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways, [32] for the devious person is an abomination to the LORD, but the upright are in his confidence. [33] The LORD’s curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous.”

28. Don’t Fear.

- Joshua 1:9 “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”
- Philippians 1:28 “and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.”

29. Listen and Obey.

- Joshua 1:7–8 “Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. [8] This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”
- 2 Corinthians 10:5 “Take every thought captive to obey Christ”

30. Grow.

- Philippians 1:6 “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”
- Romans 5:3–5 “Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”
- James 1:2–4 “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, [3] for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. [4] And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

31. Reorient Your Mind.

- Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
- Philippians 3:13–14 “Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

32. Pursue Holiness

- Ephesians 4:27 “and give no opportunity to the devil.”

- 1 Peter 1:14–16 “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, [15] but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, [16] since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”
- 1 Peter 3:16–17 “having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. [17] For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.”

33. Stay Confident in God’s Eternal Justice and Judgment

- Revelation 20:10 “the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”
- Revelation 12:11: “They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.”

34. Always Be Ready

- 1 Peter 5:8–10 “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. [9] Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. [10] And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”

1 Timothy 1:18–19 “This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith”

What Does the Bible Say About the Death of Babies & Children?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-the-death-of-babies-children

When babies or children die, the pain of parents, family and friends is immense. Whether the situation is from an intentional act (abortion or crimes) or an unintentional act (miscarriage, illness, accidents), grief abounds. Tough questions arise. Answers are sought.

What happens to babies or children who die before they are mature enough to respond to the Gospel? John MacArthur helpfully and succinctly answers this question, "Instant Heaven."

Here are 5 Bible passages that are helpful to seeing these truths:

- **David's Response to the Death of His Baby** (punishment for his adultery with Bathsheba): David realizes he will be united in heaven with his child one day. "Then his servants said to him, 'What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive; but when the child died, you arose and ate food.' 22 He said, 'While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who knows whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' 23 But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.'" (2 Samuel 12:21-23, ESV)
- **Entry into the Promised Land is Granted to Young Children.** Why? Israel's sin of rebellion against God (for not entering into the promised land) was held only against those who were mature enough to discern between good and evil. "And as for your little ones, who you said would become a prey, and your children, who today have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in there. And to them I will give it, and they shall possess it." (Deuteronomy 1:39, ESV)
- **Job's Response to Suffering:** Job realized that to be stillborn was better than to be alive. Why? Job understood stillborn babies to be in heaven. "Why did I not die at birth, come out from the womb and expire? ...13 For then I would have lain down and been quiet; I would have slept; then I would have been at rest 16 Or why was I not as a hidden stillborn child, as infants who never see the light? ...17 there the weary are at rest." (Job 3:11-17, ESV)
- **King Solomon's comparison of living a prosperous, long-lived life with that a stillborn child.** Who is better off? A stillborn child who "finds rest." "If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life's good things, and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. 4 For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. 5 Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he." (Ecclesiastes 6:3-5, ESV)

- **When unbelieving parents sacrifice their children for their own selfish purposes, God refers to them as "innocents."** This implies God's grace in looking upon them as innocent. "Because the people have forsaken me and have profaned this place by making offerings in it to other gods whom neither they nor their fathers nor the kinds of Judah have known; and because they have filled this place with the blood of innocents." (Jeremiah 19:4, ESV).

Are babies and infants conceived in sin? Do they sin? Yes. Are they guilty before God and deserving of eternal death? Yes. (Original sin, inherited sin nature, total depravity) (1 Kings 8:46, Isaiah 48:8, Proverbs 20:9, Psalm 58:3; 143:2, Ecclesiastes 7:20, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 5:12, Ephesians 2:3) "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalm 51:5, ESV)

"It is true they sin, little ones sin. Little children disobey, they're selfish, they're angry, etc. But they are incapable of understanding the moral essence of that sin. They are incapable of understanding God. And they are incapable of understanding the gospel. They are incapable of exercising a true repentance toward God and a saving faith so that they are with excuse. Whereas the pagans in Romans 1 are without excuse because they are capable of knowing and understanding the revelation God has given them in creation and conscience and they are capable of faith. So unbelief for them is a willful choice." John MacArthur

Does God's grace cover those babies and children who die? Yes. The weight of Scripture points to them being safe in God's grace.

"All children who die before they reach the condition of accountability by which they convincingly understand their sin and corruption and embrace the gospel by faith are graciously saved eternally by God through the work of Jesus Christ being elect by sovereign choice, innocent of willful sin, rebellion and unbelief by which works they would be justly condemned to eternal punishment." John MacArthur

What happens to babies who die in the womb? What about infants and young children who die; do they go to Heaven? What is the age of accountability? These are important questions that many people have asked themselves as they or others they know have struggled with the loss of a child. Got to gotquestions.org for answers to these tough questions... "What happens to babies and young children when they die?", "Where do I find the age of accountability in the Bible?", "Do mentally ill people go to heaven?", "What does the Bible say about household salvation?", "What does the Bible say about infant baptism?"

I have not found a pastor or teacher who has addressed the issue with such biblical depth and breadth as John MacArthur. His book, *Safe in the Arms of God*, answers the below questions: "Where is my child?", "What can we say with certainty to those with empty arms?", "How does God regard children?", "What if my child is not among the elect?", "Will I see my child again?", "What is my child's life like in heaven?", "Why did

my child have to die?", "How shall we minister to those who are grieving?" Here are two sermons in which John MacArthur expounds the relevant biblical passages and also addresses many of the same questions as in his book.

- The Salvation of Babies Who Die - Part 1
(<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/80-242>)
- The Salvation of Babies Who Die - Part 2
(<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/80-243>)
- Also, an article: The Age of Accountability
(<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Articles/4836>)

2 Samuel 12:21-23 "His servants asked him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!"
22 He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' 23 But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

What Does the Bible Say About Depression?

www.trustworthyword.com/depression

NOTE: Special thanks to Savannah Clemons, a professional Christian counselor, for her help in putting this chapter together. Her wisdom and experiences were invaluable!

What is depression? Why does depression happen? Depression affects millions of people around the world and is characterized by several weeks of a low/saddened mood, persistent throughout one's day and situations. Depression often has a variety of spiritual, psychological, physiological, relational, and environmental contributing factors (learned behavior, rejection, abuse, trauma, sickness, medicinal side effects, poor health, lack of sleep, negative thinking, anger, guilt, etc.). Treatment of depression thus necessitates a wholistic approach to gain lasting solutions.

Psalm 42:5-6 "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?"

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.
My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you"

What are the differences between discouragement/disappointment and depression? Discouragement/disappointment is usually temporary, related to failure in a specific relationship or a goal and is overcome or put into proper perspective. Depression is lasting, difficult to overcome, and becomes a significant and defining perspective in all areas of one's life.

Psalm 34:18 "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."

What is it like to suffer depression? What are the signs of depression?

No motivation. Difficulty in explaining one's situation to others. Sense of overwhelming darkness. Dramatic change in personality. Lost Hope, hopelessness. Non-communicative, quiet. Withdrawal from life. Low joy and high negativity. Low self-esteem, derogatory remarks about oneself. Verbalization and signs of suicide. Lethargic and tired. Presence of pain without a clear cause. Inability to function with the normal activities of life.

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life" Matthew 6:25

Is depression described in the Bible?

Yes, depression as a temptation and as a sin is described in many places in the Bible...here are some examples:

- Abraham - hopeless for a child in his old age, trusted the Lord in the midst of overwhelming darkness (Genesis 15:3,12)

- Job - in intense emotional, physical, relational, & financial suffering came to points where he hated life and was encouraged to die by his own wife (Job 2:9, 3:11, 3:26, 10:1, 30:15-17)
- Moses - broken and burdened by the suffering of others to the point he was willing to give up his own salvation and life (Exodus 32:32, Numbers 11:14-15)
- David - seen in many of the Psalms and in his loss of his sons (Psalm 38:6-8, Psalm 56:8, 2 Samuel 12:15-23, 18:33)
- Psalm 42 & 43 - powerful Psalms walking through depression
- Elijah - even after a great victory and protection by God, runs away and hides in fear and depression (1 Kings 19)
- Jeremiah - was mocked, persecute, and ignored to the point he wished he wasn't born (Jeremiah 20:14,18)
- Jonah - angry with God and mad at God (Jonah 4:3 & 4:9)
- Jesus - was sorrowful unto death, sweating blood in his suffering (Mark 14:34-36, Luke 22:44)

Proverbs 3:5-8 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ...It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones."

Is it ok to be depressed? What are the dangers of depression?

We must be careful not to minimize, justify, or excuse depression because of its severity, commonality, or frequency. There are definitely some people who experience seasons of depression more frequently than others. We should have compassion on those who experience depression but we should also love them enough to show them how to fight for joy and resist the temptation of depression. If depression is a struggle of yours, reach out for help, it is deadly dangerous and you need friends, pastors, and professionals to help you.

"Half our fears arise from neglect of the Bible." Charles H. Spurgeon

Is it a sin to be depressed? Can a Christian be depressed?

Depression is a form of temptation. It is a temptation to believe a lie about one's self, one's situation, about others, and about God. Since it is a temptation it must be resisted actively. When depression is embraced, entertained, acted upon, or chosen as an identity it becomes sinful. Ongoing unrepentant sin is dangerous and must be confronted with truth. "For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins" Hebrews 10:26

"We cut the root of sin by being more satisfied in God." John Piper

What about mental illness? It is important to understand that some people struggle with worry, anxiety, fear, and depression to such a degree that it paralyzes them while others only have occasional struggles. Mental illness is real, just like a physical illness, and Christians should not neglect to consider medicines and medical solutions that God has provided to help treat and relieve the symptoms of mental illness. Adequate

research should be done concerning the side effects and potential dependence on medicines.

Simultaneous to any medicinal usage, Christians should be reminded that we have a volitional responsibility to know and believe God's revealed truth and actively follow Him in obedience (mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually), regardless of our feelings (Mark 12:30-31). Christians should demonstrate sympathy and compassion towards those dealing with mental illness, even if they do not fully understand or have not experienced similar struggles or mental bondage.

Worry, fear, anxiety, depression, and mental illness should never be looked at from a mere physiological approach. We should be reminded that we have a real, supernatural enemy in Satan who seeks to "kill and destroy" (John 10:10) us (mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually) from loving God and loving others. God's truths are described as the "sword of the Spirit" which is one of our weapons in spiritual warfare as we stand firm in our faith, prayerfully resisting the enemy of our souls (Ephesians 6:10-20). Non-believers who struggle with mental illness should be reminded that their only hope for everlasting peace will be found in Christ Jesus.

- "How Can I Become a Christian?" - www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian
- "How Can I Be Sure I am a Christian?" - www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian

"When anxiety strikes and blurs our vision of God's glory and the greatness of the future that he plans for us, this does not mean that we are faithless, or that we will not make it to heaven. It means our faith is being attacked." John Piper

Christians who struggle with mental illness should not doubt their faith, but should be reminded that they are not helpless or hopeless. They should desperately petition God for relief, but simultaneously see their weakness as an opportunity to grow in faith and dependence on Christ (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). If Jesus chooses not to remove your mental struggles from you, you must trust His grace to be sufficient for you.

"Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:8-10 ESV)

Is it wrong to take psychiatric medicines like antidepressants?

Oftentimes medicine is necessary for mental illness the same as is necessary for physical illness. Psychiatric medicines can be a key component of a wholistic solution when an individual seeks and is ready to receive help. Unfortunately, some discount or discredit the need for medicinal treatment while others abuse and overly-depend on a medicinal aid.

In biblical times, alcohol was used and biblically described & prescribed for medicinal purposes in ways similar to an anti-depressant (Ecclesiastes 9:7, Psalm 104:15, Proverbs 31:6-7, Luke 10:34) but was simultaneously warned about concerning the dangers of misuse, abuse, and over-dependance (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-5, Romans 14:21).

Proverbs 31:4-7 “it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to take strong drink, lest they drink and forget what has been decreed and pervert the rights of all the afflicted.

Give strong drink to the one who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress; let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more.”

What are some myths about depression?

- True Christians never struggle with depression.
- Nothing bad happens to God’s people.
- God doesn’t care about or love me.
- People don’t care about or love me.
- Depression has a simple solution, just have faith.

Daniel 3:17-18 “If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

Will I ever be able to overcome my depression? How can I overcome my depression? Seek the God of comfort. All things are possible to Him. Make all of your requests known to Him, but finish your prayers with a heart of trust in His will and plan. Be like Paul, seeking relief from demonic torment,

2 Corinthians 7:6-7 “But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more.”

- **Recognize Your Situation** - ID your problems, causes, feelings, beliefs, and situation
- **Recognize Your Enemies** - Satan, the world, & humans (yourself included) fight against you
We destroy arguments & every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God (2Cor10:5)
- **Right mind** - believe the truth and repent/turn from wrong belief about yourself & your situation
and take every thought captive to obey Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5)
- **Right action** - avoid sin and act in obedience to God, discipline yourself

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

- **Right feelings** - avoiding false feelings and embrace true feelings
Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”
- **Right suffering** - seek relief from suffering but trust God in your suffering
- Mark 14:35-36 “And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, ‘Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.’”

Hebrews 13:6 So we can confidently say,
"The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

Become as healthy as possible, addressing all areas of your life, see the truths linked below!

Spiritual Health - www.trustworthyword.com/spiritual-health

Mental Health - www.trustworthyword.com/mental-health

Physical Health - www.trustworthyword.com/physical-health

Emotional Health - www.trustworthyword.com/emotional-health

Relational Health - www.trustworthyword.com/relational-health

Home Health - www.trustworthyword.com/home-health

Workplace Health - www.trustworthyword.com/work-place-health

Marital Health - www.trustworthyword.com/30days-improve-marriage

• www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-marriage-roles

Sexual Health - www.trustworthyword.com/sexual-health

• www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sexual-sin

Financial Health - www.trustworthyword.com/financial-health

• www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-money

Tips for those in a season of depression:

- Force yourself to get out and about with people who care about and know you.
- Ask for help from a faithful pastor, an experienced, biblical counselor, and a trusted doctor.
- Sing, memorize, pray & trust God’s truths, don’t just study them. Hope in Jesus.
- Be thankful to God for the blessings in your life, no matter how small they seem at the time.
- Desperately and dependently ask God’s help regularly through His Word.

- Ask Jesus daily for joy and healing. Confess your sinful failures daily and let them go.

God's Spirit produces the fruit of patience and peace which oppose and replace depression. Seek the Spirit's fruit by staying in fellowship with other Christians, staying in the Word of God, desperately seeking God in prayer, and walking in holy living. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness..." Galatians 5:22

"At first blow, our belief in God's promises may sputter and swerve. But whether we stay on track and make it to the finish line depends on whether, by grace, we set in motion a process of resistance — whether we fight back against the unbelief of anxiety." John Piper

How can I help someone who is depressed? What should I do? What should I not do? Not helping is not an option. Be compassionate and sympathetic, even if you do not understand. Be like the friends of the lame man, using your faith and love to carry your friend to Jesus.

DO:

- Be present, even when the depressed wants to be alone.
- Listen and let the depressed process out loud verbally.
- Even if you don't understand, validate their feelings as genuine.
- Love practically - acts of kindness, encouraging notes/emails/texts
- Send encouraging verses as the Lord lays them on your heart
- Let them know when you are thinking, praying, and fasting for them.
- Speak truth in a humble, loving, and compassionate manner.

Proverbs 27:6 "Faithful are the wounds of a friend"

DON'T:

- Give trite/short/simple statements to tough/complex/overwhelming problems.
- Try to solve all their problems as they verbalize them.
- Think the solution will be quick or easy.
- Add to their overwhelming guilt.
- Avoid them or give surface level interaction when you are uncomfortable.

1 John 3:16 "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers."

What does the Bible say about suicide? If you're considering suicide... Don't. Stop. Please call out for help. Your life matters, even if you don't think it does at this moment. Your pain and distress is temporary. There is hope and strength here for the pain you are in right now! There are people that do care about you. Suicide may

seem like the only answer to your problems at the moment. Don't believe that. In truth...

- Suicide doesn't "fix" problems or relieve pain. It creates more problems and pain.
- Suicide isn't a cure for suffering. It creates more suffering.
- Suicide isn't an escape from this world to heaven. It may take you immediately to Hell.

www.trustworthyword.com/suicide

What does the Bible say about worry, fear, and anxiety? Truths about worry are found in several places but two good places to begin our focus are Matthew 6:25-34 and Luke 6:46-49. Just take these two verses (below) and we can see that God commands us not to worry so whenever we disobey him we are acting like we are God at that moment and that we are in charge.

- "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life" Matthew 6:25
- "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" Luke 6:46

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-worry

What does the Bible say about Christian identity? The greatest gift of Christianity is not merely a future existence in Heaven, but is the present and eternal reality of a relationship and unity with Christ (John 15:1-11, 1 Corinthians 6:17). As Christians we must realize that we are not products of our past or present decisions, failures, or successes. Our identity, value, & worth are rooted in our new name and identity in Christ. We focus on knowing God first and foremost and simultaneously discover our amazing nature as God's forever adopted children.

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-christian-identity

HELPFUL RESOURCES

GotQuestions.org

www.412teens.org

"Is It wrong for a Christian to be depressed?" - www.gotquestions.org/Christian-depressed.html

"What does the Bible say about depression?" - www.gotquestions.org/depression-Christian.html

"Should a Christian take anti-depressants?" - www.gotquestions.org/Christian-anti-depressants.html

"Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"
Luke 24:38

TrustworthyWord.com is an international resource, but for those living in the United States of America, here are some suicide hotlines and helpline ready for you now. If you do not live in the USA, please call your local authorities or medical treatment centers for help immediately.

- National Hopeline Network: 1-800-SUICIDE
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (Español: 1-888-628-9454)
- National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-CHILD
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE

What Does the Bible Say About Suicide?

www.trustworthyword.com/suicide

Suicide is a heartbreaking and touchy topic. Everyone reading this has likely been touched, or will be touched, by suicide. Maybe you are having thoughts of, or are considering suicide yourself. Maybe you have lost a loved one due to suicide. Maybe you are concerned for someone who has previously talked about or attempted suicide. *This resource is designed to help you to find God's answers for some of your toughest questions.*

If you're considering suicide...

Don't. Stop. Please call out for help. Your life matters, even if you don't think it does at this moment. Your pain and distress is temporary. There is hope and strength here for the pain you are in right now! There are people that do care about you. Suicide may seem like the only answer to your problems at the moment. Don't believe that. In truth...

- Suicide doesn't "fix" problems or relieve pain. It creates more problems and pain.
- Suicide isn't a cure for suffering. It creates more suffering.
- Suicide isn't an escape from this world to heaven. It may, in fact take you immediately to Hell.

These statements may sound harsh or "unloving," but they are the truth. If you are in the depths of a depression that is so dark and deep that you see no other way out than taking your own life, the truths you are reading now are the very thing you need. If your pain seems inescapable with no end or relief in sight, you need true hope that is rooted in reality. You don't need false hopes or "feel good" statements that temporarily distract you from your situation or pain. You need to know what God has to say to you. He loves and cares for you. He has much to say to you about your pain and suffering. So keep reading to discover His truths...

"What Does the Bible Say about Suffering, Worry, Death, Life & Heaven?"

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-suffering-worry-death-life-and-heaven

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)

Is suicide really that serious? Don't I have the right to take my own life whenever and however I see fit? Suicide is murder, self-murder. Murder is a sin. (Exodus 20:13) God cares about you. The same God who made the universe made you, formed you, and knew you (Jeremiah 1:5, Psalm 22:10; 139:13; 147:3-4). You are not an accident or mistake. God has a purpose and plan for your life. Listen to Him. Trust in Him. Receive His love. Let Him forgive you, heal you, and rescue you.

“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.” (Psalm 147:3-4 ESV)

Aren't there stories and examples of suicide in the Bible? Yes. There are several examples in the Bible of suicide (Judges 9:54, 1 Samuel 31:4-6, 2 Samuel 17:23, 1 Kings 16:18, Matthew 27:5). However, the men that took their own life in the bible were considered wicked and ungodly. Examples of suicide are *described* to us, but suicide is not *prescribed* for us. In other words, they are told as examples and lessons as how NOT to act or react to our troubles in this life. God does not support or allow suicide as a response or option for us, even in the most desperate of situations. Suicide is always condemned by God as sin in the Bible.

Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Isaiah 35:4

I feel so useless and such a burden on everyone. Won't the world be a better place without me? Absolutely not. God has a specific purpose for your life. Even before He created the universe, He already knew us. He already had planned our life. (Psalm 139:16, Ephesians 1:4). Your existence was no accident. Even in your pain and distress, God still has a plan for your life (Jeremiah 29:11).

Is suicide the “unforgivable” sin? If someone commits suicide, will they go to Hell? Is it possible to commit suicide and go to Heaven? There is only one unforgivable sin; the ongoing rebellion and rejection of Jesus as Lord (Matthew 12:31). All other sin is forgivable. Jesus talks about the “unforgivable sin” in Mark 3:22-30. *Suicide is so serious because it is a final act of rejecting God as being in charge of your life, choosing to end your life on your terms and timing. Dying in this state of open rebellion as a non-believer gives you no opportunity afterward to be forgiven of all your sin by trusting in the work of Jesus on the cross* (Luke 16:19-31).

As earlier stated, suicide is murder. Murder is sin. An authentic Christian has been pardoned from all sin, past and future (Romans 8:1); including murder. While it is possible for a Christian to commit suicide, it should be cause for serious concern for the genuineness of one's faith if he doesn't see any other way to deal with life's troubles and struggles other than suicide (1 Corinthians 10:13).

“How Can I Be Sure I am a Christian?”

- www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian

“How Can I Become a Christian?”

- www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian

“What Does the Bible Say about Heaven?”

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-heaven

“What Does the Bible Say about Hell?”

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-hell

What about “assisted suicide” or “active euthanasia”?

Assisted suicide and active euthanasia are terms used to describe the intentional act of ending one’s life in light of a medically declared untreatable or incurable condition (medically diagnosed as eventually ending in the death of the individual). It is often considered and acted upon as an avenue for “speeding up” the apparently inevitable.

Assisted suicide is usually referred to as PAC (physician assisted suicide). PAC involves a physician’s prescription of some sort of lethal medication to the patient. The patient is then responsible for taking this lethal medication themselves. Active euthanasia is similar; however, the treating physician is much more active in the process by administering the lethal medication to the patient himself.

Both of these processes are initiated by the patient’s desire and decision to end their life due to their seemingly incurable and terminal disease or condition. This is not the same as being on life support in an unconscious state. Making such a decision based on medical advice ultimately, however, doesn’t consider the truth that God can heal anyone He chooses to from any illness or otherwise hopeless physical condition, if He wills.

The Bible contains stories and examples of those that express their desires to God for Him to end their life because of extreme mental or spiritual anguish from troubles and suffering (1 Kings 19:1-14, Jonah 4:3, Job 6:8-11). None of these requests are granted by God, however. The Bible tells us that God is the One that determines the day of our death, and not us (Deuteronomy 32:39, Psalm 90:3, 1 Samuel 2:6).

While there may be times that we experience extreme distress and trouble in our life, even to the point of wanting to die, God tells us in His Word that there is always a solution to our problems here on earth, and suicide is not an option for us to consider (1 Corinthians 10:13). Therefore, regardless of the circumstances, assisted suicide and active euthanasia are still considered murder.

And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?”
Luke 24:38

Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.” Isaiah
35:4

What about cutting, and self-harm? The Bible talks about cutting and self-mutilation in the Old Testament concerning pagan rituals while worshipping false gods. In the New Testament, cutting was mentioned in a story concerning demon possession (Mark 5:2-5).

Cutting and self-harm is something practiced today by some individuals that are dealing with depression, anger, or pain that hasn’t been properly dealt with or addressed. Often, they have had traumatic experiences in life, severe stress, ongoing anxiety, or other difficult life events. As a result, physical pain to oneself in the form of cutting and self-harm serve as an outlet for emotional pain. Self-harm produces a type

of temporary relief from mental and emotional stress, and sometimes even serves as self-punishment for feelings of guilt and self-condemnation.

The Bible doesn't specifically talk about cutting and self-harm as a result of anxiety, stress or depression. However, God does remind us that as Christians, our body does not belong to us anymore, and we should treat it with care (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). A person practicing cutting and self-harm has a false view of themselves and their identity and self-worth. God wants us to know that our worth is found in the love of Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. A personal relationship with Jesus through this work is absolutely necessary to truly understand our actual and full worth. This is the ultimate cure for self-harm and cutting; to see how valuable we are to Christ who sacrificed His life so we may live!

“What Does the Bible Say about Christian Identity?”

- Check out www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-christian-identity

What about mental illness? It is important to understand that some people struggle with worry, anxiety, fear, and depression to such a degree that it paralyzes them, while others only have occasional struggles. Mental illness is real, just like a physical illness, and Christians should not neglect to consider medicines and medical solutions that God has provided to help treat and relieve the symptoms of mental illness. Adequate research should be done concerning the side effects and potential dependence on such medicines.

Simultaneous to any medicinal usage, Christians should be reminded that we have a volitional responsibility to know and believe God's revealed truth and actively follow Him in obedience (mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually), regardless of our feelings (Mark 12:30-31). Christians should demonstrate sympathy and compassion towards those dealing with mental illness, even if they do not fully understand or have not experienced similar struggles or mental bondage.

Worry, fear, anxiety, depression, and mental illness should never be looked at from a mere physiological approach. We should be reminded that we have a real, supernatural enemy in Satan who seeks to “kill and destroy” (John 10:10) us (mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually) from loving God and loving others. God's truths are described as the “sword of the Spirit” which is one of our weapons in spiritual warfare as we stand firm in our faith, prayerfully resisting the enemy of our souls (Ephesians 6:10-20). Non-believers who struggle with mental illness should be reminded that their only hope for everlasting peace will be found in Christ Jesus.

“When anxiety strikes and blurs our vision of God's glory and the greatness of the future that he plans for us, this does not mean that we are faithless, or that we will not make it to heaven. It means our faith is being attacked.” John Piper

Christians who struggle with mental illness should not doubt their faith, but should be reminded that they are not helpless or hopeless. They should desperately petition God

for relief, but simultaneously see their weakness as an opportunity to grow in faith and dependence on Christ (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). If Jesus chooses not to remove your mental struggles from you, you must trust and seek out His grace to be sufficient for you.

Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. [9] But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10] For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:8-10 ESV)

For more on mental and emotional health see:

“What Does the Bible Say about Mental Health?”

- www.trustworthyword.com/mental-health

“What Does the Bible Say about Emotional Health?”

- www.trustworthyword.com/emotional-health

What can I do to help a family grieving from loss of a loved one to suicide?

Families and individuals that have lost a loved one to suicide will deal with ongoing and intense emotions. Along with normal feelings associated with loss, those dealing with suicide can also be dealing with guilt, anger, and shock. Many times, loss to suicide can be unexpected when an individual doesn't share his personal troubles or pains with others as not to “burden them.” Guilt can be felt as a result of thinking of the lost opportunities to talk the deceased about those pains and struggles. Here are some very practical and truth-filled ways of loving and assisting those that have experienced loss due to suicide:

- *Be praying and fasting*, they need healing and strength that only God can provide.
- *Be present with them*, even in silence, lovingly showing you care.
- *Be silent and respect their privacy*, don't ask for details you don't have the right to know.
- *Be sensitive*, think before you speak out shallow, ineffective sayings that hurt more than help.
- *Be helpful*, meals and routine, practical help makes a difference as life goes on.
- *Be patient*, healing can take a long time and things will never be the same.
- *Be a friend*, don't abandon or forget them in their time of need, no matter how awkward or difficult it may be.

“The Lord is near the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit” (Psalms 34:18, ESV)

Ultimately, the family and loved ones of those experiencing such a tragic loss need to be loved. They need to be loved in the way that Christ loves them. Be an example of the

that love by being present in their time of need. This process of grieving can be long and painful, so be patient with them and their emotions. Always be prepared to answer their questions and doubts in love and truth (1 Peter 3:15).

5 TRAGIC STATISTICS CONCERNING SUICIDE

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death in the U.S. for the age groups of 10-14 year olds, 15-24 year olds, and 25-34 year old age groups. (cdc.gov)
- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death overall in the U.S. Homicide ranks 17th. (cdc.gov)
- There is one death by suicide every 12.3 minutes in the U.S. (cdc.gov), and one every 40 seconds in the world. (World Health Organization, AAS)
- There are 800,000 suicides per year worldwide. (World Health Organization, AAS)
- 90% of adolescents that receive treatment for depression are treated successfully (TADS Study)

HELPFUL RESOURCES

www.gotquestions.org

www.412teens.org

TrustworthyWord.com is an international resource, but for those living in the United States of America, here are some suicide hotlines and helpline ready for you now. If you do not live in the USA, please call your local authorities or medical treatment centers for help immediately.

- National Hopeline Network: 1-800-SUICIDE
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (Español: 1-888-628-9454)
- National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-CHILD
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE

What Does the Bible Say About Worry?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-worry

"Half our fears arise from neglect of the Bible." Charles H. Spurgeon

Worry is sin. Truths about worry are found in several places but two good places to begin our focus are Matthew 6:25-34 and Luke 6:46-49. Just take these two verses (below) and we can see that *God commands us not to worry* so whenever we disobey him we are acting like we are God at that moment and that we are in charge.

- "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life" Matthew 6:25
- "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" Luke 6:46

Ongoing unrepentant sin is dangerous and must be confronted with truth.

"For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins" Hebrews 10:26

God's Spirit produces the fruit of patience and peace which oppose and replace worry.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness..." Galatians 5:22

Calling Jesus 'Lord' must be evidenced through faith-produced works of obedience.

"So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." James 2:17

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- “How Can I Become a Christian?” - www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian
- “How Can I Be Sure I am a Christian?” - www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian

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Why do Christians worry? Is it ok to worry sometimes? We must be careful not to minimize, justify, or excuse worry because of its commonality or frequency. There are definitely some people who experience seasons of worry more frequently than others. We should have compassion on those who experience worry but we should also love them enough to show them that worry is a sin.

Even if we are inclined to believing that worry is merely a temptation towards sin, we must not neglect God's warning of the serious danger of temptation. Just because we experience or feel worry is right or justified at times does not make our feelings right or good. We must not also not think ourselves powerless against worry or resign ourselves to an "I can't help it" attitude. All temptation and sin, to include worry, can be resisted through the power of Christ within us.

“At first blow, our belief in God’s promises may sputter and swerve. But whether we stay on track and make it to the finish line depends on whether, by grace, we set in motion a process of resistance — whether we fight back against the unbelief of anxiety.” John Piper

Worry is closely intermingled with doubt, fear, and anxiety.

God has much to say about these subjects:

And have mercy on those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. Jude 1:22-23

So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" Hebrews 13:6

And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. Matthew 28:17

And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?" Luke 24:38

He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." Matthew 14:29-33

But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. Romans 14:23

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. James 1:5-8

for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 2 Timothy 1:7

And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. 25 And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." 26 And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. 27 And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?" Matthew 8:24-27

It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. Psalms 127:2

Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Isaiah 35:4

He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit." 9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? Jeremiah 17:8-9

And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? Luke 12:25-26

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." Matthew 6:31-34

When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. Matthew 10:19

But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42 but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." Luke 10:41-42

I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. 33 But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. 35 I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord. 1 Corinthians 7:32-3

Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:5-7

Nowhere in Scripture do we find a positive command towards or justification of worry, fear (except fear of God), doubt, or anxiety. Let's flee from these temptations and sins!

If you find yourself commonly tempted towards worry, here are some truths to memorize and guide your prayer during those moments and seasons of temptation.

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

Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Mark 14:38

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:13

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. James 1:13-15

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. Proverbs 14:12

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Galatians 6:1

“We cut the root of sin by being more satisfied in God.” John Piper

What Does the Bible Say About Suffering, Worry, Death, Life & Heaven?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-suffering-worry-death-life-and-heaven

PSALMS TO READ AND USE TO GUIDE YOUR PRAYER

Psalm 6, 13, 18, 22, 23, 40, 68, 90, 102, 107, 116, 121, 130, 138, 142

SUFFERING

- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
- Romans 8:17-18 Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
- 2 Timothy 2:10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.
- Hebrews 10:34 You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.
- Revelation 2:10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.
- 2 Timothy 4:6-8 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.
- Job 1:21-22 And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.
- Job 2:10 "Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.
- Job 8:9 for we were born only yesterday and know nothing, and our days on earth are but a shadow.
- Job 9:25 My days are swifter than a runner; they fly away without a glimpse of joy.
- Job 14:2 He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure.
- Isaiah 38:12 Like a shepherd's tent my house has been pulled down and taken from me. Like a weaver I have rolled up my life, & he has cut me off from the loom; day & night you made an end of me.
- James 4:14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."
- 1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world-the cravings of sinful man,

the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does-comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

- 2 Chronicles 32:24 In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. He prayed to the LORD, who answered him and gave him a miraculous sign.
- Psalm 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- Psalm 44:22 Yet for your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.
- Psalm 68:20 Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign LORD comes escape from death.
- Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

WORRY

- Philippians 4:6-8 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things.
- Matthew 6:27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?
- Matthew 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

DEATH

- Psalm 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- Isaiah 25:8 he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.
- Philippians 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
- Job 14:5 Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.
- Psalm 39:5 You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath. Selah
- Psalm 89:47-48 Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have created all men! What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave? Selah
- Psalm 90:9 All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan.
- Psalm 102:3 For my days vanish like smoke; my bones burn like glowing embers.
- Psalm 102:11 My days are like the evening shadow; I wither away like grass.
- Psalm 102:23-24 In the course of my life he broke my strength; he cut short my days. So I said: "Do not take me away, O my God, in the midst of my days; your years go on through all generations.

- Ecclesiastes 6:12 For who knows what is good for a man in life, during the few and meaningless days he passes through like a shadow? Who can tell him what will happen under the sun after he is gone?
- Ecclesiastes 8:8a No man has power over the wind to contain it; so no one has power over the day of his death.
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-2a There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die
- Ecclesiastes 7:1-2 A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of birth. It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart.
- Psalm 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.
- Romans 14:8 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.
- Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.
- Hebrews 9:27-28 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.
- Proverbs 14:32 When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down, but even in death the righteous have a refuge.
- Deuteronomy 32:39 See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.
- 1 Samuel 2:6 The LORD brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up.
- 2 Samuel 22:5-6 The waves of death swirled about me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me
- Psalm 89:48 What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave?
- Isaiah 57:2 Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.
- Philippians 1:20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.
- Hebrews 2:15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death

LIFE

- 1 John 5:12-13 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.
- Romans 8:10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.
- Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
- Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.
- John 5:24 I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.
- John 8:51 I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." (speaking of Spiritual death...i.e. will not enter into Hell but will have eternal life in Heaven)
- Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Romans 8:6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;
- 2 Corinthians 4:12 So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

HEAVEN

- Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.
- Matthew 6:20-21 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
- John 14:2-3 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.
- 2 Corinthians 5:1-9 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.
- Revelation 21:3-4 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."
- Revelation 7:9, 13-17 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ...Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes--who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over

them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

- Luke 20:36 and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.
- Luke 23:43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."
- John 14:2-3 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.
- John 17:24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.
- Philippians 1:23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.
- Colossians 3:23-24 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.
- Daniel 12:13 "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."
- Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."
- 1 Corinthians 9:25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.
- Isaiah 25:8 he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.
- Revelation 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

What Does the Bible Say About Dating?

www.trustworthyword.com/dating

This outline is based on an AWESOME book, *The Ten Commandments of Dating* by Ben Young and Dr. Sam Adams. This book was helpful to me over twenty years ago and is still relevant and helpful today. I have added Bible verses and a few other notes to be as biblical as possible on the subject!

The Ten Commandments of Dating

By Ben Young & Dr. Samuel Adams

Biblical principles and practical wisdom for preparing for and handling the dating scene.

1. THOU SHALT GET A LIFE

“**The Un-Life**” – a life put on hold for a want of a dating relationship

- Mark 12:30 “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”

2. THOU SHALT USE YOUR BRAIN

The key is using your head in the matters of the heart. Romantic love has little to do with real love.

- **Balance** the head and the heart
- **Refrain** from physical intimacy
- **Analyze** your past relationships
- **Include** others in the process
- **Never** neglect opportunities to evaluate along the way
- Jeremiah 17:9-10 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? ‘I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.’”

3. THOU SHALT BE EQUALLY YOKED

Spiritual Connection – **Date only Christians**, no exceptions.

- 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?”

4. THOU SHALT TAKE IT SLOW

THREE reasons to take it slow!

You do not get to know a person in a short period of time

You need time to bond

You protect yourself from getting attached too quickly

SEVEN SLOW MOTION DATING STRATEGIES

1. Make the two-year commitment
2. Make your first date short and casual
3. Don't volunteer too much information up front
4. Delay physical affection

Men are looking for a CAR

- Challenge – long term relationship vs. short term fling
 - Attraction – more to do with personality and character
 - Respect – they respect a woman with boundaries and standards
5. Stay connected with your friends
 6. Do not pray together
 7. Don't mention the M word

5. THOU SHALT SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

A healthy relationship requires good, solid, and well-defined relational boundaries

How to stop people from running over you:

Your body belongs to ~~you~~:CHRIST 1 Cor 6:19-20 Your emotions belong to ~~you~~:CHRIST

Your thoughts belong to ~~you~~:CHRIST Mk 12:30 Your actions belong to ~~you~~:CHRIST 1Thess4:3-6

6. THOU SHALT NOT PLAY HOUSE

Excuses people give: Love, Finances, Practice, & Engagement

The Truth??? Fear, Sex, Manipulation, Immaturity

- Couples that live together before marriage have an 80% higher chance of getting a divorce
- Women who cohabitate are TWICE AS LIKELY to be victims of domestic violence
- Women who cohabitate are FOUR TIMES to experience depression than married women & 71% of women wouldn't cohabitate again

7. THOU SHALT SAVE SEX FOR LATER

Seven BLUNDERS of the Sexual World

- All you need is a condom - *What about disease and pregnancy?*
- You've got to have it - *Is sex your master or is Christ your master?*
- Sex equals intimacy – NO, NO, NO!!! Real Intimacy take hard work, time, self-sacrifice, honesty & commitment.

“Couples who have been married for many years record the highest levels for intimacy, happiness, and dynamic sex”

- If you are in love, it's ok - True love requires a lifelong commitment. Sex outside of marriage is never ok.
- You must sample the goods – A big mistake that will diminish the excitement within marriage.
- It's just a physical thing – Sex is primarily a SOUL thing.
- Everybody is doing it – Look at the damage to marriage and relationships it has done.

How to Save Sex for Later

- Celebrate Wholeness – say no to instant gratification and yes to delayed gratification
- Receive Forgiveness – and recommit yourself to purity until you marry
- Set Clear Boundaries – plan how to keep yourself out of danger
- Stay Accountable – keep friends involved in your life

1 Cor 6:12-20 – READ, BELIEVE, & LIVE IT

8. THOU SHALT FIGHT FAIRLY

Top Four Harmful Responses to Conflict:

- Peace at all costs (Avoidance)
- Win/Lose (Defensiveness)
- You Don't Count (Invalidation)
- All-Out War (Intensification)

Fair Fighting Techniques

1. Dial Down (20 minutes or more of cool-down time)
2. Set the Tone (be careful how you start the conversation)
3. Shut up and listen (shut up and listen)
4. Use "I" Statements ("I feel ___ when ___" – prevents criticism, labeling, accusing, & attacking)
5. Negotiate and Compromise
5. James 1:19-20 "19My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."

9. THOU SHALT NOT IGNORE THE WARNING SIGNS

SEVEN DEADLY SIGNS (Get out quick!!)

1. Abuse – physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual – there is no excuse for abuse, ever.
2. Addictions – alcohol, drugs, pornography, self-injury, gambling (watch out for 'coaddicts')
3. Infidelity – no trust = little relationship
4. Irresponsibility and Immaturity – responsibility IS important
5. No physical/sexual attraction – what???
6. Emotional baggage – aware of their problems? see how it effects relationships?
Getting help?
7. Denial – when you recognize signs but try to rationalize what you are doing

Don't go into a relationship thinking you can FIX or HELP someone. Find someone who already has their act together.

10. THOU SHALT CHOOSE WISELY

Are you making poor choices?

First-available syndrome, Fooled by the externals, Blinded by sex, Going too fast

Discerning Character – what is character?

Faithful, Honest, Committed, Forgiving, Giving

Helpful hints....

- Crisis reveals someone's true character
- Character is who you are when no one is looking
- Friends are a good window into a person's character
- Look back on prior relationships to determine patterns of behavior
- Give it lots of TIME!!!

11. TAKE ACTION!!!!

1. Take a look at yourself
2. Take responsibility for your relationships
3. Take back what you lost
4. Take a look around you
5. Take time out
6. Take these guidelines seriously
 - 1 Corinthians 15:33 "Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.'"
 - Romans 5:3-5 "Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."
 - Proverbs 12:4 "A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones."

INTERNET RESOURCES

- www.gotquestions.org - The most comprehensive and biblical resource for short answers to tough questions
- www.focusonthefamily.com - An amazing collection of biblical answers on many questions in life.
- www.familylife.org - A great resource to prepare for marriage and to understand God's relational truths!

What Does the Bible Say About Marriage Roles?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-marriage-roles

What is the wife's role in marriage?

- Helpmate (Gen 2:18)
- Loving and gracious submission to the leadership of her husband (Eph 5:22, Col 3:18)
- Not strive/resist the leadership of her husband (Gen 3:16, 1 Pet 3:1)
- Respect her husband (Eph 5:33)
- Diligent worker, whether at home or in the workplace (Pro 31)
- Hospitable towards others and generous towards poor (Pro 31)
- Cares for children and household (Prov 31)
- Meet sexual needs of husband (1 Cor 7)
- Be beautiful on the inside (1 Pet 3:4)

What is the husband's role in marriage?

- Spiritual leader (1 Cor 11:3) towards glorifying God and unity with each other (one flesh)
- Not dictatorial or harsh (Col 3:19)
- Leading in a sacrificial way the way Christ loves the church (Eph 5:23)
- Provide - feed and care (Eph 5:29, Gen 3:17-19)
- Protect - love their wives as themselves (Eph 5:28, 1 Pet 3:7)
- Praise your wife (Prov 31:28)
- Meet sexual needs of wife (1 Cor 7)
- Be considerate & respect your wife (1Pet 3:7)

To solve marriage conflict, we must not:

- Be proud against each other – (1 Cor 4:6)
- Judge one another – (Romans 12:16)
- Lie to one another – (Colossians 3:9)
- Be partial with one another – (1 Tim 5:21)
- Provoke or envy one another – (Gal 5:26)
- Lust after one another – (Romans 1:27)
- Hate one another - Titus 3:3
- Take one another to court – (1 Cor 6:1-7)
- Use each other - Galatians 5:15

To solve marriage conflict, we must:

- Be at peace with one another - Mark 9:50
- Love one another - John 13:34; Rom 12:10; 1 Pet 4:8; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12
- Build up one another - Rom 14:19; Eph 4:12; 1Thess 5:11
- Be of the same mind toward one another - Romans 12:16

- Give preference to one another - Romans 12:10
- Greet one another - Romans 16:16
- Esteem others as better than yourself - Philippians 2:3
- Serve one another - Galatians 5:13
- Receive one another - Romans 15:7
- Be devoted to one another - Romans 12:10
- Rejoice or weep with one another - Romans 12:15
- Admonish one another - Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16
- Care for one another - 1 Corinthians 12:25
- Show tolerance to one another - Rom15:1-5; Eph4:2; Col 3:13
- Be kind and forgiving to one another - Ephesians 4:32; Col 3:13
- Submit to one another - Romans 12:10; Ephesians 5:21; 1 Pet 5:5
- Comfort one another - 1 Thessalonians 4:18
- Encourage one another - 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13
- Be compassionate with one another - 1 Peter 3:8
- Pray for one another - James 5:16
- Confess your faults to one another - James 5:16
- Accept one another - Romans 14:1; 15:7

Passages on Marriage

(Ephesians 5:22-33) *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. [24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. [25] Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, [26] that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, [27] so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. [28] In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29] For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, [30] because we are members of his body. [31] "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." [32] This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. [33] However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

(1 Corinthians 11:2-16) *Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. [3] But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. [4] Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, [5] but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. [6] For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. [7]*

For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. [8] For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. [9] Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. [10] That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. [11] Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; [12] for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. [13] Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? [14] Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, [15] but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. [16] If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.

(1 Peter 3:1-7) *[Wives and Husbands] Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, [2] when they see your respectful and pure conduct. [3] Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—[4] but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. [5] For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, [6] as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.[7] Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.*

(Colossians 3:18-25) *Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. [19] Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. [20] Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. [21] Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*

30 Days to Improve Your Marriage

www.trustworthyword.com/30days-improve-marriage

The 30-Day Covenant Love Challenge **Appreciate Your Mate!**

What Is It? A 30-Day challenge to love your spouse without condition for 30 focused minutes each day.

Why?

Covenant Love: Have fun serving God together!

Throughout Scripture, God's people regularly committed to serve God together in covenant. Some Old Testament examples of covenants are seen under the leadership of Moses the prophet (Exodus 24:7-11), the servant-leader Joshua (Joshua 24:14-18), Jehoiada the priest (2 Kings 11:7), Josiah the King (2 Kings 23:1-3), Asa the King (2 Chronicles 15:2), Ezra (Ezra 10:2-5), and Nehemiah the Governor (Nehemiah 9:38, 10:28-29). New Testament examples are seen in Baptism (1 Peter 3:21, 1 Timothy 6:12), the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:24; Matt 26:28), and church membership (Matt 18:15-17, 2 Cor 3:6, Eph 5:23, 1 Cor 15:1-11). Covenants have been part of church history (Pliny the Elder, AD 112 "binding themselves by a solemn oath", Baptist history (see Charles Dewese, Baptist Church Covenants).

In marriage, you have covenanted to serve God together for life!

MARRIAGE IS: God-authored · God-witnessed · God-Accountable · Glorious Gospel Purpose

"the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth . . . she is your companion and your wife by covenant." (Malachi 2:14 ESV)

Give Authority Over Your Body to Your Spouse

"The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. [4] For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. [5] Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." (1 Corinthians 7:1-5 ESV)

Act in Humble Imitation of Christ

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." (Philippians 2:3-4)

How? The Ground Rules

- **Give Your Spouse** Permission to Exercise Authority Over Your Body, Time, Attention & Energy for **30 minutes a day for 30 consecutive days**. Give them the unqualified choice of how you can best love them biblically.
- **Your spouse picks** the category and specifics of the assignment.
- **No whining**, bartering, compromising, negotiating, complaining, huffing, eye-rolling, excuse-making, arguing, or sleeping on the job. Just do it without conditions.
- **Go 110%** all out for your mate. Work hard at loving them. Appreciate Your Mate.
- **Pay Attention** to Your Mate. Study them to Do Better. Extend Your Commitment.
- If you know others participating in this... **pray for and encourage them**, but DO NOT ASK for details, their covenant commitments may be personal and private!

Here are some categories and ideas to best understand how to love your spouse!

from the “Five Love Languages” by Gary Chapman

Quality Time: Date Your Mate Ideas

Neighborhood Walk & Talk · Mall Strolling · Cabin Retreat · City Action · Coffee & Donuts · Lattes & Beignets · Breakfast in Bed · Scenic Picnic · Star Gazing · Hayride · Art Show · Bonfire Roast · Bike Ride · Sports Game · Outdoors Hiking · Carnivals, Fairs, or Festivals · Movie on the Couch Night · Movie Theater Night · Fondue Feast · Dinner on a Train · Countryside Drive · Fireside Reading · Bake Something Sweet · Orchard or Pumpkin Patch Excursion · Beachside Strolls · Searching for Seashells · Sunrise or Sunset Quiet Time · Couples Extreme Selfie Contest · www.DateCrates.co · Soup Kitchen Service · Buffet Night · Bowling Night · Fancy Dinner · Fast Food Fun · Golfing & Golf Carting · Amusement Park · Lakeside Lovers · Rent a Boat · Home Spa · Get-Away Spa · Sushi Night · Experimental Eating Evening · Board Game Night · Arcade Fun · Discover Dancing (Ballroom, Salsa, Club, Square, Line) · Museum Musing · Exercise & Workout Together · Race a 5k, Color Run, or Mud Run · Birdwatching · Hunting · Fishing · River Float (Canoeing, Kayaking or Tubing) · Cave Exploring · Improv or Comedy Show · Zoo Time · Bookstore Wandering · Restaurant Romance · Drive-In Night · Skype/Facetime Dates (when apart) · Gourmet Grocery Store Shopping · Pizza Night · Rent a Hotel Room Nearby · Attend a Ballet, Musical, Concert, Opera or Play · Spring Shopping for Plants or Flowers Mini-Road Trip · Linger at a Local Landmark · Make a Matinee · Find a Splash Park · Make & Take Gifts to a Nursing Home · Camping Weekend · Play in a Pet Store · Park & Talk Somewhere Remote · See What You Can Find at a Flea Market · Fondue Night · Watch a Mobile Movie (on a Laptop or Mobile Device) Somewhere Unique · Scavenger Hunt · Ice Skating · Go Karts · Laser Tag · Paintball · View Funny YouTube Videos · Water Ballon/Gun Fight · Volunteer Together · Make a Family Scrapbook · Movie Marathon · Dessert-Only Dinner · Putt-Putt Golf · Play Pool · High School Sports Night · Geo-Caching Treasure Hunt · Public Park Stroll · Arrange and Schedule for a Late-Morning Sleep-In · Write a Letter or

Song · Go Car Shopping · Climb a Tree · People Watch at an Airport · Go Rock Skipping · Babysit Someone Else's Kids · Horseback Riding · Water Ski · Plant a Garden · Go Sailing · Find a Ferry to Ride · Ski or Sled · Skydiving · Make a Snowman · Tennis · Croquet · Water Park · BBQ Night · Homemade Ice Cream · Garage Sale Rampage · Swing and Slide · Feed Ducks, Geese or Fish · Circus · Observatory

Words of Affirmation

Note Writing · Encouragement & Compliment · Text Messages · Love Letters · Song · Poem

Gifts

Surprises · Themed · Delicious Treats · Flowers · Frivolous or Practical · Creative · Personal

Acts of Service

Household Chores · Kid Tasks · Swapping Regular Responsibilities

Physical Touch

Sexual Intimacy · Massage · Cuddling · Hand-Holding

End of the Month Assignment

Write a note or have a conversation, thanking your spouse for sacrificially loving & yielding to you. Be specific with how it impacted you, how it strengthened you, how it energized and encouraged you, and how it motivated you to love God, love your spouse, and love others better.

What Does the Bible Say About Divorce and Remarriage?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-divorce-and-remarriage

“If your opinion about anything contradicts God’s Word, guess which one is wrong?” Rick Warren

**“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”
(Proverbs 14:12 ESV)**

An Introduction and Personal Note. The topic of divorce and remarriage is both a touchy and difficult conversation to have. Many people have been hurt by divorce. Others are offended by such discussions because they perceive the teachings on such issues to be a personal attack on their identity (as a “divorcee” or “remarried”) or plans to pursue remarriage. Many godly Christians have different convictions on this issue. The below convictions are mine alone and not expressive of the convictions my church family.

As a pastor, I have a unique calling to officiate over marriages. In such a capacity I always want to ensure that I follow God’s explicit instructions for the institution He created in marriage. I want to be obedient to His commands and to offer the best counsel to those who are likewise seeking to walk in His wisdom. I have prayed over and studied the Scriptures diligently on this topic and hope that this resource is helpful to you on your own journey of obedience to the Lord.

When I speak with those who have divorced and are pursuing remarriage, I encourage them to read this article (and mainly the Scriptures at the end) and to soak their studies in prayer. May you consider the whole of Scripture on the topic and not simply seek an understanding that appeals to your past experiences, feelings, or future hopes.

If you find yourself reaching conclusions different than mine, or your own pastor, I hope you will show grace towards us. Although I think I am correct on this topic, I acknowledge that I may be wrong in my conclusions. If I encountered a vegetarian who sincerely felt divinely called to not eat meat, I would never demean them or force them to eat meat. Likewise, I hope you will not look down upon nor criticize any pastor with such biblical convictions against officiating certain weddings. May we show grace towards one another in our differences and faithfully follow the convictions that the Lord has given us on this important issue.

James 4:17 “So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.”

What does the Bible say about marriage? Marriage is created by God as lifelong institution between a man and a woman, rooted in creation, with a significance that shows in its comparison to Christ’s relationship with the church (Ephesians 5:22-33). Today marriage is often defined by the emerging trends, understandings, feelings, and opinions of the culture rather than the transcendent, immutable, and eternal truth

found described by the God who created it. This change in understanding and practice has led to an overwhelming number of marriages ending in divorce and resulting in remarriage. Although many sociological, psychological, economic, emotional, and man-centered rationales may be created to explain and justify the practice of divorce and remarriage, the Christian perspective and practice must be rooted in a balanced and holistic application of biblical theology.

The overwhelming practice in today's churches is to allow remarriage in most cases of legal divorce. This is problematic in a society that frequently allows no-fault divorce, thus eliminating most standards or requirements for divorce. In the few churches that do choose to discriminate in the practice of remarriage, it is often confusing and complex to determine accurately the circumstances surrounding the divorce as well as the guilt or innocence of each party involved. In evaluating the Scriptural texts in regard to marriage, divorce, and remarriage the Bible points to the marriage bond as ending only in death, not merely being severed by legal divorce, thereby prohibiting remarriage following divorce no matter the circumstance (Matthew 19:6, Romans 7:1-3, 1 Corinthians 7:10-11,39).

What does the Bible say about divorce? Jesus very clearly says that divorce is not part of God's plan for humanity (Matthew 19:3-12) but was only permitted by Moses because of the hardness of mankind's hearts. As Paul gives guidance to the Corinthians in regard to marriage, he very clearly states in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 that the Lord commands couples not to divorce or separate, but that if they do, they "should remain unmarried or else be reconciled."

God does share that there are occasions when divorce is permitted as the only option and that the believer is "free" from continuing to try to reconcile their marriage with their unbelieving spouse. Examples of such situations may be when an unbelieving spouse is persistent in sexual or adulterous behavior, continuing to abuse their spouse, or abandoning their spouse. Although such divorce situations are allowed for, there is never the implication or approval for remarriage even in situations of "biblical" divorces.

What the Bible say about remarriage after the death of a spouse? God clearly permits remarriage after the death of a spouse and actually encourages remarriage for younger widows (Romans 7:1-3, 1 Corinthians 7:8-9,27-28,39-40; 5:11-16). The only qualification for the remarriage of a widow is that the new spouse must be a Christian (1 Corinthians 7:39, 2 Corinthians 6:14).

What does the Bible say about remarrying the spouse you previously divorced? God clearly allows for remarrying your previously divorced spouse (1 Corinthians 7:10-11) unless either spouse had subsequently remarried someone else (Deuteronomy 24:1-4).

What does the Bible say about singleness?

What about my happiness? How can I be happy if I am divorced and never remarried?

How can I resist lust if I am divorced and not remarried?

God actually speaks very highly of singleness as a gift and a joy (1 Corinthians 7:1, 7-8,26-34,38). We have often idolatrized our happiness and ease of life above the glory

and holiness of God. We cannot justify a sin (remarriage after divorce) merely as a means towards avoiding another sin (depression, lust, etc.). God is sufficient for our needs. If we find ourselves divorced and single, we must trust in the Lord's strength, provision, and fellowship to sustain us no matter the temptations we face in our single state (1 Corinthians 10:13).

What does the Bible say about remarriage after divorce?

Is a remarried person in a continuous state of adultery?

Remarriage after divorce is always labeled by God as a sin or specifically as an act of adultery (Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Malachi 2:14-16, Matthew 5:32, Matthew 19:3-10, Mark 10:1-12, Romans 7:1-3, 1 Corinthians 7). God says clearly in Romans 7:3 that a woman "will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive," explaining that only the death of her husband releases her from the law of marriage and permits her to be remarried.

Christ came to satisfy the penalty of our law-breaking. When we confess Christ as Lord of our life, and believe that He died on the cross and rose from the grave, we know that we "have died to the law" (Romans 7:4) and thus are set free from the eternal consequences of our sin (Romans 6:23). It is important for Christians to understand that "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

Although Christians no longer bear eternal condemnation for their sin, they still recognize that God's laws are "holy" and His commandments are "righteous and good" (Romans 7:12). Christians should desire to avoid what God calls sin or "evil" and to practice what God calls righteous or "good" (Romans 7:18-25). When Christians are convicted by God for any sin, to include a past sin of an unbiblical divorce or remarriage while a previous spouse is still alive, they should confess their sin to God and a trusted Christian friend (1 John 1:9, James 5:16). When such confession occurs, God provides healing and affirms His eternal cleansing and forgiveness. Although such sin is forgiven eternally ("now no condemnation" Romans 8:1), some of the earthly consequences of such a sin may linger. Christians should remember and obey God's ongoing command to walk in holiness in their present marriage or singleness, and accordingly not seek an unbiblical divorce or remarry after a divorce.

Many God-loving Christians have justified remarriage after divorce on the basis of a flawed assumption, that "it is assumed in the Bible that wherever Scripture allows divorce, remarriage is also allowed." Over and over this is shown to be the backbone of their defense, but they fail to show this to be a biblical truth. This is dangerous territory to be in as it is an exegetical fallacy (false way to understanding the meaning of the bible) that you can make an argument from biblical silence.

What if my divorce was based on biblical grounds?

What is my divorce was before I was a Christian?

Doesn't Matthew 5:32, 19:9, or 1 Corinthians 7:15 imply that remarriage after divorce in certain circumstances isn't sin? That when someone is "loosed" or not "bound" it implies the freedom to remarry?

Scripture never speaks positively about or encourages remarriage after divorce. Scripture does not distinguish any sorts of allowance for remarriage based on a

“biblical” divorce or based on a divorce occurring before someone was a Christian. Paul recognizes that divorce may physically and legally end a marriage, but in the eyes of God’s law, the marriage bond and “one flesh union” only ends in death (Matthew 19:6, Romans 7:1-3, 1 Corinthians 7:10-11,39).

The word chosen by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:15 is *luo* in Greek or ‘free’ in English. It is important to note that this is not the same word that he uses for divorce, *chorizo*, (1 Corinthians 7:10,11,15 and Matthew 19:6) or *aphenai* (1 Corinthians 7:11,12,13). The conclusion of this differing word choice is summed up as meaning “that the Christian is not bound to fight in order to preserve togetherness.” Is it also significant to note that the “the word used for ‘bound’ (*douloo*) in verse 15 is not the same word used in verse 39...Paul consistently uses *deo* when speaking of the legal aspect of being bound to one marriage partner (Ro 7:2, 1 Co 7:39) or to one’s betrothed (1 Co 7:27).” Paul uses a different word because he is not giving them the same right to remarry. In contrast, in verse 39 Paul clearly speaks to how the marriage bond ends in death by saying “free to marry” which is a phrase that is noticeably absent from 1 Corinthians 7:15, Matthew 19:9 and 5:32.

Is remarriage after divorce an “unforgivable” sin? *No, the only unforgivable sin is ongoing rejection of Jesus as God as revealed by His Holy Spirit (Mark 3:28-30).* Although divorce is a sin (when not biblically allowed, see 1 Corinthians 7), it is not unforgivable. However, the forgiveness of the sin of divorce does not relieve the earthly consequences of that sin and thus permit remarriage since the previous spouse is still alive. Even if someone’s divorce was “biblical” or they were the “innocent” party, Scripture still labels remarriage as a sin since the previous spouse is still alive. Regardless of the circumstances, the sin of remarriage after divorce is not “unforgivable.”

Isn’t it hypocritical to say divorced men can serve as deacons while saying remarriage after divorce is a sin?

No. Although we may want to personally exercise “grace” and say remarriage after divorce is not a sin, the Bible clearly calls remarriage after divorce a sin because marriage only ends in death, not in divorce. We cannot condone what God clearly calls sin (Romans 1:32, Isaiah 5:20).

Although we may want to uphold “righteousness” by excluding divorced and remarried men from serving as deacons, the Bible upholds God’s grace and faithfulness in the life of believer, showing that no sin is unforgivable. Christians are no longer identified by their past sin and thus do not live under condemnation (Romans 8:1, 1 Corinthians 6:11, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21). The standards and qualifications for deacons and pastors all point to present faithfulness not past sin (i.e. “Who are they now?” NOT past-tense, “Who were they?”, see Acts 6:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9).

What about _____ (example of a godly couple that is remarried after divorce), should they have not gotten married?

The ends (a godly remarried couple) do not justify or rationalize a sin (remarriage after divorce). A remarried couple is not in the ongoing state of adultery, but the sin of adultery (which Jesus explains also happens in our hearts with lust (Matthew 5:27-30)) is serious and should not be ignored, justified, or excused.

I struggle with lust. I need a father/mother for my kids. I am lonely. Isn't remarriage a better solution to these issues than being divorced and single? Won't Jesus forgive me?

Being divorced and single is complicated and not without its own difficulties, struggles, and temptations. Despite these challenges we cannot ignore God's truths on divorce and remarriage. We must seek God in our weakness and seek His strength, grace, and peace to carry us and guide us (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). Although it is true that Jesus can and is willing to forgive all sin, we should not abuse His grace or ignore His truths concerning what is best for us in both singleness and marriage and His warnings of the earthly consequences of sin (Romans 6, 1 Corinthians 7).

Please do not take our word solely on this issue.

Please consider the Scriptures and resources below so that you may personally understand and seek God's wisdom on such a delicate issue.

SCRIPTURES ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Genesis 2:23-24

"²³Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." ²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

"When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, ²and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, ³and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife, ⁴then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the LORD. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance."

Leviticus 21:13-15

"¹³And he shall take a wife in her virginity. ¹⁴A widow, or a divorced woman, or a woman who has been defiled, or a prostitute, these he shall not marry. But he shall take as his wife a virgin of his own people, ¹⁵that he may not profane his offspring among his people, for I am the LORD who sanctifies him."

Malachi 2:14-16

"¹⁴ But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. ¹⁵ Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. ¹⁶"For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his

garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.”

Malachi 2:16

"For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless." (ESV)

"I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith." (NIV)

"For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the LORD of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously." (NASB)

“ For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one’s garment with violence,” Says the LORD of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously.” (NKJV)

Matthew 5:32

“32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Matthew 19:3-12

“3And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?" 4He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,⁵and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." 7They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" 8He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." 10The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." 11But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. 12For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it."

Mark 10:1-12

“1 And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them. 2And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" 3He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" 4They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away." 5And Jesus said to them, "Because

of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. 6But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 7 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, 8and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. 9 What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." 10And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. 11And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, 12and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Luke 16:18

18"Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery."

1 Corinthians 7

"1Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." 2But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. 3 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. 7 I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

8To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am.9But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion. 10To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband 11(but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife. 12To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. 13If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. 14For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. 15But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. 16For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife? 17Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. 18Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. 19 For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. 20 Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. 21Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) 22For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord.

Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. 23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. 24 So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God. 25 Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. 26 I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28 But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. 29 This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, 30 and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, 31 and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away. 32 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. 33 But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. 35 I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord. 36 If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. 37 But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. 38 So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better. 39 A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. 40 Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.”

Romans 7:2-3

“For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.”

1 Timothy 5:14

“So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander”

Ephesians 5:22-33

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in

splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,30because we are members of his body. 31 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

"Be killing sin or it will be killing you." John Owen

Recommended Resources for Further Study

Piper, John. "Divorce & Remarriage: A Position Paper." (July 21, 1986), available online from: <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/divorce-remarriage-a-position-paper> .

Piper, John. "On Divorce & Remarriage in the Event of Adultery." (January 1, 1986), available on-line from: <http://www.desiringgod.org/all-resources/by-topic/divorce-remarriage> .

What Does the Bible Say About Addictions?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-addictions

Romans 14, ESV

Understand the Difference between Truth and Opinion

v.1 As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.

Exercise Grace towards Others

v. 3 Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.

Make a Truth & Spirit-Filled Decision

v.5 Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

v.21-23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

Be Prepared to Stand Before God

v.12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Care More about Others than Your Personal Pleasures/Freedoms

v.13 Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

v.15-19 For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. ... So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up building.

10 Questions to Ask When Evaluating a Possible Addiction:

- The Word's Work: What does the Bible say?
- The Prayer Test: Have I sincerely, openly, honestly prayed about it?
- The Spirit's Work: Am I ashamed? Convicted? Should I be?
- Godly Counsel: What do my godly friends and family think?
- Government's Work: Is it legal or illegal?
- The Transparency Test: Am I hiding this behavior from anyone? Why?
- Gospel-Harm: Does it harm my Gospel witness to others?
- Others-Harm: Is it helpful or harmful to others? Put others at risk?
- Self-Harm: Is it helpful or harmful to me? Use of time/talent/treasures?
- Offensive: Does it offend others around me? Set a good example?

Areas to Consider:

Alcohol, Marijuana, Coffee/Caffeine, Shopping, Thrill-Seeking/Adrenaline, Sleeping, TV, Video Games, Medications, Cutting, Gambling, Sexual Sin, Over Eating/Sugar, Eating Disorders, Smoking/Dipping, Sports, Vanity

“All things are lawful for me,’ but not all things are helpful. ‘All things are lawful for me,’ but I will not be dominated by anything”. (1 Corinthians 6:12)

What Does the Bible Say About Alcohol?

www.trustworthyword.com/alcohol

The drinking of alcohol is an issue that is particularly touchy within modern America, much less so in many other countries and times in history. The influence of prohibition and the temperance movement in American history has probably shaped more Western Christian views on the issue more than Scripture has, even to the point of misinterpreting the Bible. Tradition and opinion can be dangerous (Romans 14:1 & Colossians 2:8) apart from God's wisdom, so let's discover together what the Bible *really* says about alcohol...

Alcohol brings some good. God allows for and describes several positive aspects to alcohol. It can serve as a tool for the relief of physical, mental, and emotional pain (Proverbs 31:6-7). In contexts where clean water is unavailable, alcohol can serve as a hygienic drink and has medicinal value (1 Timothy 5:23, Luke 10:34). Alcohol can be responsibly used for the special purposes of celebration and socialization (John 2:1-11).

Alcohol brings a lot of dangers. Arrogance. Combativeness. Impaired judgment. Abuse. Anger. Increased sin. Decreased job performance. Poverty. Damaged health. Broken relationships. Diminished Christian witness (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-5, Romans 14:21).

Many of us have seen and experienced the irreversible damage caused by drunkenness. We've witnessed firsthand the destruction of lives, marriages, families, and friendships from the misuse of alcohol.

Is it wrong to drink alcohol? Not usually. In moderation and at appropriate times, alcohol drinking is described in either neutral or positive ways at several places in the Bible (Ecclesiastes 9:7, Psalm 104:15, Amos 9:14). Jesus' first miracle was the creation of wine from water (John 2:1-11). Jesus used wine at His last supper to symbolize His life-giving blood sacrifice and then pointed forward to Heaven with the inclusion of wine as a beverage (Matthew 26:27-29). But God also points out valid reasons to abstain from alcohol even when it is permissible (Romans 14).

Is it wrong to get drunk? Yes. In excess, whether drunk, tipsy, or slightly impaired, alcohol harms yourself and others. Drunkenness (whether drunk, tipsy, or slightly impaired) is universally prohibited and warned against by God...for a reason. Drunkenness leads to earthly and eternal destruction (Isaiah 5:11; 5:22, 1 Peter 4:3, Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:21). God loves us enough to command us away from it and lovingly warn us of its dangers.

Is it wrong to sell and serve alcohol in our community? No, not if it is legalized. Proper protections and enforcement are needed. But...just because something can be done, doesn't mean it should be done (1 Corinthians 6:12).

Is it wise to sell and serve alcohol in a community? To bring it into your home? To drink it at all? Maybe. Maybe not. Many can handle the freedom of alcohol responsibly, but many cannot. There may be some local financial advantages and advantages of convenience and pleasure, but the financial cost of alcohol misuse is actually higher than the gain (<https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/alcohol-facts-and-statistics>). It could be wise for a community to avoid alcohol because of its many dangers but it could also be unloving to prohibit what God allows. Ultimately the drinking of alcohol is a personal preference or individual choice allowed by the Scriptures. Some believers who choose to drink see the substance as a gift from God and find themselves not tempted towards drunkenness. Others who choose to abstain see temptations and costs as too high to justify their own personal usage.

- Wisdom tells us to distance ourselves from danger (Proverbs 6:27-28).
- Wisdom tells us to distance ourselves from destructive temptations (Romans 13:14, 1 Corinthians 10:12-13).
- Wisdom tells us to seek the good of others and our community (Jeremiah 29:7, Philippians 2:3-4).

If alcohol has many implicit dangers, and many destructive possibilities, we must consider if we truly want to bring it closer to our community, families, and self, weighing out the benefits with the risks?

What about other addictions? When considering an addictive substance, we need to consider 1) its legality 2) its potential benefits 3) its potential harms to self 4) potential harms to others and 5) its potential for control. Romans 14 is a great passage and here is a helpful handout on that passage and topic: www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-addictions

- A food addiction can lead to obesity, which can damage one's heart and so much more.
- A smoking addiction can quickly harm one's lungs and those breathing the air around you.
- A shopping, hobby, or gambling habit can quickly consume one's finances and time.
- Workaholicism leads to family neglect. Laziness leads to poverty.
- Pornography is adultery and can short circuit a healthy sexuality within marriage.
- Alcohol abuse can damage one's liver, affect one's decisions, and endanger others.
- A marijuana or drug addiction quickly damages one's brain and ruins lives.

With any potentially addictive substance we need to consider the potential harms in light of the potential goods and make decisions that take into account the impact on our witness and the effect on the lives of others around us. In such discussions we need to avoid temptations to self-righteousness or moralism, realizing we are not saved by our own good works and it is only by God's grace we are not dominated by Satan and our own addictive inclinations.

Did Jesus make some sort of non-alcoholic wine? Some sort of different, less-alcoholic wine? Did Jesus drink alcoholic wine? Did the disciples drink alcoholic wine?

Jesus' first miracle involved making "good wine" that was complimented by the master of the feast and not complained about (John 2:1-11). The same greek word used here (οἶνον) is also used in other passages referring to alcoholic wine (http://biblehub.com/greek/oionon_3631.htm). Another greek word is used for wine in four other places by Paul but is described similarly (οἶνον http://biblehub.com/greek/oiono__3631.htm) with the emphasis being on moderation (Paul to Timothy to use a little for his health, 1 Timothy 5:23) and not too much or being addicted.

In Luke 7:33-44 Jesus ("The Son of Man has come eating and drinking") is distinguished from John the Baptist ("drinking no wine") and accused by the Pharisees as both a glutton and a drunkard. This distinction and accusation makes a strong suggestion that Jesus did drink alcoholic wine. There is another word used for wine (sometimes translated "sweet" or "new" wine) only in Acts 2:13 (Γλεύκος http://biblehub.com/greek/gleukous_1098.htm) but it is similarly referenced as alcoholic in an accusation of drunkenness.

On the cross Jesus refuses "wine mixed with myrrh" (Mark 15:23 that could have eased his pain) but receives a "sour wine" on the cross (Mark 15:36, John 19:30 that prolongs his pain and fulfilled Psalm 69:21: see - <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-wine-jesus-drank>) but he had already told his disciples he would not taste the "fruit of the vine" again until He was in His Father's Kingdom (Matthew 26:29, Mark 14:25, Luke 22:18). What is "fruit of the vine"? Could it be grape juice? Ultimately, without pasteurization or refrigeration, grape juice begins to ferment and become alcoholic. So a freshly squeezed juice may have little or no alcohol, but otherwise outside of grape harvest time (June-September in Israel <https://www.gci.org/law/festivals/harvest>) any drink of fruit would involve fermentation and alcohol. Jesus' crucifixion would have been late March and early April so any fruit of the vine drink preceding his crucifixion would have certainly been fermented and alcoholic.

It is wise to note that the alcohol of Jesus' day was probably much less alcoholic by content so anyone who feels the biblical and faith-formed freedom to drink alcohol today should be extra cautious as it can lead to drunkenness more quickly than the alcohol of Jesus' day.

Should pastors not be allowed to drink alcohol? While there is much wisdom in those who feel personally led to abstain from wine, the Biblical qualifications for pastors and church leaders doesn't advocate for abstinence from alcohol but rather from drunkenness or addiction to alcohol (1 Timothy 3:3,3:8 & Titus 1:7 http://biblehub.com/greek/paroinon_3943.htm). Some may point to biblical wisdom and commands against alcohol to kings and priests but ignore that this was most often connected to a voluntary (not forced) Nazarite vow (Numbers 6:1-20 or set aside similarly like John in Luke 1:15) after which they can drink wine again, serving in the

inner court or on duty (Leviticus 10:9 & Ezekiel 44:21), or with warning against drunkenness because of the need to clearly make decisions (Proverbs 31:4). While some seminaries, denominations, and churches may require abstinence from alcohol as an act of wisdom, the Bible does not. Can pastors drink alcohol? The Bible says yes. Should pastors drink alcohol? The Bible seems to leave that up to the individual conscience of the pastor (Romans 14).

We must be consistent. Some point to Romans 14:21 (“It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.”) as a reason for pastors or Christians not to drink alcoholic beverages but then steer away from the offense of meat-eating to the vegetarian. However, the next verse indicates the focus on personal faithful conviction from and accountability to God on the issue of food and drink (Romans 14:22 “The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God”).

Why is drunkenness so serious? Unlike some other addictions (gluttony, gambling, smoking, shopping, hobby-ism, workaholism, etc.) alcohol misuse presents a more sudden and direct harm to others through vehicular accidents, abuse, and neglect. Even more concerning, ongoing & unrepentant drunkenness is pointed to as an identification of those without salvation who are headed towards an eternity in Hell (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 & Galatians 5:19-21).

Does the Bible say alcohol is evil? Did Jesus say alcohol is evil? If alcohol is so dangerous, why are we biblically allowed to drink it? Throughout Scripture blame is not attributed to a substance or object, but the sin of our heart is the main concern.

- Food is not the main concern, the love of food seen in gluttony is the sin (Proverbs 23:2 & 23:20-21 and Philippians 3:19).
- Money is not the main concern, the love of money seen in greed or covetousness is the sin (1 Timothy 6:9-10).
- Carved images (idols) are not the main concern (they are nothing but wood ultimately, Isaiah 44:19 & 1 Corinthians 8:4), the love of idols seen in the making, retention, and worship of idols that is the sin (1 John 5:21 & Revelation 9:20).
- Alcohol is not the main concern; it is the love of alcohol seen in drunkenness is the sin. So what? There is biblical wisdom in avoiding tempting substances and in avoiding it as a stumbling block in the lives of others...but the application of those truths are more personal practice than universal prohibition or universal allowance.

Doesn't Proverbs 20:1 call wine and strong drink a sin? This passage is often quoted out of the context of the type of literature: a proverb. A proverb is a general truth statement and observation from which to derive wisdom. Accordingly, the emphasis again is not on the substance but on not being led astray by them to where one's judgment and behavior (mocking and brawling) is influenced by the substance.

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.”
Proverbs 20:1 (ESV)

What should I do if someone I love has a strongly different opinion than me on this issue? Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get anger (James 1:19-20). Study the Scriptures together on the topic but don't let a difference of opinion become a source of division. Love the person more than winning an argument. Prioritize the Gospel and the Scriptures as you talk. Reconsider your own traditions in the light of the Word. Realize the Bible grants freedom of differences on issues like food (not gluttony) and drink (not drunkenness).

Should we use wine with the Lord's Supper/Communion? Jesus did. The Early Church did. The vast majority of churches today still do. It wasn't until 1869 that the pasteurization of grape juice was discovered by Thomas Welch, a dedicated Methodist and Prohibitionist, who made "Dr. Welch's Unfermented Wine" (grape juice) that was used primarily by churches as for its first twenty years. Is there wisdom in offering a non-alcoholic "fruit of the vine" since it is now? Could be. Is wine a better symbol and more accurate to the original Lord's Supper? Yes. Individual churches must come to their own conclusions based on their culture and the Scriptures. Consider Paul when writing to the church at Corinth on the Lord's Supper/Communion. He rebukes them for using the bread and the cup for gluttony and drunkenness, warning that their misuse has led to sickness and death and a consequence, yet he never advocates for alcoholic abstinence or for the change of the cup to a non-alcoholic substance (1 Corinthians 11:17-34).

Here are some of the relevant Bible passages

Alcohol brings some good:

- Psalm 104:14–15 (ESV) "You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart."
- Proverbs 31:6–7 "Give strong drink to the one who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress; let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more."
- Ecclesiastes 9:7 "Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do."
- Amos 9:14 "I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit."
- 1 Timothy 5:23 "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments."
- Luke 10:34 "He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him."
- John 2:1–11 "On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. [2] Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. [3] When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." [4] And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." [5] His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." [6] Now there

were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. [7] Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. [8] And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it. [9] When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom [10] and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.” [11] This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.”

- Matthew 26:27–29 “And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.’”

Misuse of Alcohol brings a lot of dangers:

- Proverbs 20:1 “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.”
- Proverbs 23:29–35 “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine. Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart utter perverse things. You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast. “They struck me,” you will say, “but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I must have another drink.”
- Proverbs 31:4–5 “It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to take strong drink, lest they drink and forget what has been decreed and pervert the rights of all the afflicted.”
- Romans 14:21 “It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.”
- Isaiah 5:11–12 “Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may run after strong drink, who tarry late into the evening as wine inflames them! They have lyre and harp, tambourine and flute and wine at their feasts, but they do not regard the deeds of the LORD, or see the work of his hands.”
- Isaiah 5:22 “Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink”
- 1 Peter 4:3–5 “For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”
- Ephesians 5:18 “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit”

- Galatians 5:19–21 “Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”
- 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

Use Wisdom in Your Preferences and Practices

- 1 Corinthians 6:12 “‘All things are lawful for me,’ but not all things are helpful. ‘All things are lawful for me,’ but I will not be dominated by anything.”
- Proverbs 6:27–28 “Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched?”
- Romans 13:14 “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”
- 1 Corinthians 10:12–13 “Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. [13] No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”
- Jeremiah 29:7 “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.”
- Philippians 2:3-4 “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Check out gotquestions.org for some helpful perspectives on this and many other issues!

For statistics on alcohol use and misuse in America visit:

<https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/alcohol-facts-and-statistics>

- Alcohol generates \$223 billion annually in the US but costs \$249 billion from misuse. 10% of all kids live with a parent with alcohol problems. 88,000 people die from alcohol related causes every year. 15 million Americans have an alcohol use disorder, affecting many through neglect, abuse, and assault. Alcohol is the leading “gateway drug” into illicit drugs.

10 Questions to Ask When Evaluating Your Personal Practice with Alcohol:

- The Word’s Work: What does the Bible say?
- The Prayer Test: Have I sincerely, openly, honestly prayed about it?

- The Spirit's Work: Am I ashamed? Convicted? Should I be?
- Godly Counsel: What do my godly friends and family think?
- Government's Work: Is it legal or illegal?
- The Transparency Test: Am I hiding this behavior from anyone? Why?
- Gospel-Harm: Does it harm my Gospel witness to others?
- Others-Harm: Is it helpful or harmful to others? Put others at risk?
- Self-Harm: Is it helpful or harmful to me? Use of time/talent/treasures?
- Offensive: Does it offend others around me? Set a good example?

“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. (1 Corinthians 6:12)

What Does the Bible Say About Sexual Sin?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sexual-sin

“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.” (Hebrews 13:4, ESV)

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality” (1 Corinthians 6:9)

“Be killing sin or it will be killing you.” John Owen

Where in the Bible does it talk about sexual sin?

(www.biblestudytools.com)

Amiantos (Greek) – UNDEFILED (English), free from that by which the nature of a thing is deformed [Heb 13:4 (marriage bed), 7:26 (high priest), James 1:27 (pure religion), 1 Peter 1:4 (spiritual inheritance)]

Adikos (Greek) - UNRIGHTEOUS (English), wicked, unjust (1 Cor 6:1,9)

Akatharsia (Greek) – IMPURITY (English), uncleanness, lustful (2 Cor 12:21, Gal 5:19, Eph 4:19, 5:3, Col 3:5, 1 Thess 4:7)

Epithumia (Greek) – LUST (English), desire, craving, longing, desire for what is forbidden (37 times in NT!)

Porneia (Greek) – SEXUAL IMMORALITY (English), illicit sexual intercourse, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, w/animals metaphor: the worship of idols (Matt 15:19 and Mark 7:21 ‘out of the heart’, accusation against Jesus’ birth John 8:41, Acts 15:20,29, 21:25, 1 Cor 5:1, 6:13,18, 7:2, 2 Cor 12:21, Gal 5:19, Eph 5:3, Col 3:5, 1 Thess 4:3, Rev 9:21)

- **Pornos** – sexually immoral, a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse, a fornicator, a male prostitute (1 Cor 5:9-11,6:9, Eph 5:5, 1 Tim 1:10, Heb 12:16, 13:4, Rev 21:8, 22:15)
- **Porne** - any woman indulging in unlawful sexual intercourse, whether for gain or for lust, harlot, prostitute (1 Corinthians 6:15-15, Babylon (Revelation), Rahab, Prodigal Son (Luke 15:30), Parable of the Two Sons (Matthew 21:28-32))

Moicheia (Greek) – ADULTERY (English), (Matthew 15:19 and Mark 7:21 ‘out of the heart’)

- **Moichao** - to have unlawful intercourse with another's wife, to commit adultery with (used four times, all regarding remarriage after divorce - Mark 10:11-12, Matthew 5:32, 19:9)
- **Moichos** – an adulterer, metaphor: one who is unfaithful to god, ungodly (Luke 18:11, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Hebrews 13:4)

HOMOSEXUALITY – Where does the Bible talk about homosexuality?

- Romans 1:24-32, Genesis 19 , Leviticus 18:22 , 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 , Galatians 5:19-21 , Ephesians 5:3-3 , 1 Timothy 1:9,10 , Jude 7
- 1 Corinthians 6:9 – ESV “nor men who practice homosexuality” (refers to passive & active partners in homosexual acts)
- *Malakos* (Greek) – effeminate, of a boy kept for homosexual relations with a man, submits his body to unnatural lewdness
- *Arsenokoites* (Greek) – homosexual, one who lies with a male as with a female, sodomite, homosexual (1 Tim 1:10, 1 Cor 6:9)

And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11 ESV)

“If your opinion about anything contradicts God’s Word, guess which one is wrong?”
Rick Warren

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.” (Proverbs 14:12)

Living in a Sex-Saturated World: Our Response

“But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ... 5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” (Ephesians 5:3-6)

“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” (Colossians 3:5)

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS

Unmarried? Stop Choosing & Embracing Sexual Activity/Thoughts, Wait Until You Are Married

Married? Stay Married, Sexual Activity/Thoughts Only With Your Spouse, “Best defense is a good offense,” have a “Song of Solomon,” passionate, regular, loving sex life in your marriage!

HOW CAN I LIVE PURELY IN A SEX-SATURATED WORLD?
MEN & WOMEN – GUARD your eyes, ears, mouth, mind, heart, hands, fingers, & feet

“I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin?” (Job 31:1)

Cautions & Safeguards In Marriage (www.pureintimacy.org)

- Open sharing of all communication avenues (email, Facebook, text messaging, IM, Twitter, etc.)
- Never be alone with someone of the opposite sex
- Are you hiding something? Not telling the whole story? Why?
- Talk with your spouse & share any struggles or needs that you feel aren't being met.
- Bounce your eyes. If you find yourself looking at someone lustfully, bounce your eyes another direction.
- Understand the needs and love language of your spouse.
- If someone is attractive to you, put up safeguards in your interactions with them.

Cautions & Safeguards Outside of Marriage

What is the Bible's stance on sex? Sex is good, when it is done God's way. Sex is designed by God for a picture of the Gospel union, for pleasure, and for procreation...but His plan is for it to only happen in marriage....and marriage is always defined by God's voice as between a man and a woman, for life (Romans 7:1-3, 1 Corinthians 7:39).

"If anyone says that sex in itself is bad, Christianity contradicts him at once." C.S. Lewis

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world - the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life - is not from the Father but from the world. (1 John 2:15-16)

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. (Hebrews 10:26-27)

Is sexual sin really that serious? Yes, it is much more serious than we realize. 1 Corinthians 6:18 tells us to flee sexual immorality. Sexual sin is different because it is a sin against our body, inside our body. We are not designed by God for multiple sexual partners or relationships. We must acknowledge and confess that we are all sexual sinners.

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death." (Proverbs 14:12)

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 describes God's plan for us...to please Him and not ourselves. His will is for us to be sanctified, to be made more holy. One main avenue of sanctification is seen, or not seen, in how we control our bodies sexually. God warns that He is the avenger of sexual sin and how it harms not just you, but others. Ignoring the seriousness of sexual sin is not a matter of personal opinion. It is not simple opposition

to a particular viewpoint, pastor, Christian, church, or denomination, but ignoring God's plan for sex means ignoring God himself & His Holy Spirit that He gives to Christians.

“While sex is not the only aspect of physical relationship in a marriage, it is in most cases the most important one, the touchstone for everything else from smiles and daily gestures of tenderness to deeds of kindness and sacrifice...the whole challenge of marital life is simply to catch up in all other departments with the pure rapture of the physical relationship at its best.” Mike Mason

How do I know is something is sexually immoral? How much can I do? Are you at peace with what you are doing? Are you ashamed? Do you hide it? Do you justify or minimize it? Does it affect your witness? Do you have doubts? (and Romans 14:23)

- “But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.” (Ephesians 5:3)
- “But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.” (Romans 14:23)

Is it right to “force” biblical beliefs on a nation that is primarily non-Christian? The Bible is described as God's voice. Even though our nation and others are not primarily Christians, God is sovereign over them. When a nation's leaders or people disregard, disrespect, and disobey God, there are consequences. When we ignore the Bible it shows we are ignoring God by shutting our ears to His voice.

God tells us through the prophet Samuel that: (1 Samuel 12:14-15) “If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well. [15] But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king.”

We (Christians) want it to go well for America, its people and its leaders. We don't want our God against our nation. Moralism will not save our nation. A God-centered heart will rescue our nation from further consequences of our sin. We need to pray that our nation begins to fear, serve, and obey the Lord and stop rebelling against His good plan.

“A married couple gives a severe blow to the head of that ancient serpent when they aim to give as much sexual satisfaction to each other as possible. Is it not a mark of amazing grace that on top of all the pleasure that the sexual side of marriage brings, it also proves to be a fearsome weapon against our ancient foe?... Marriage at its exquisite peak of pleasure speaks powerfully the truth of covenant- keeping love between Christ and his church. And that love is the most powerful force in the world.” John Piper

What should Christians do right now as our beliefs continue to be attacked and legislated against?

Pray. Our problem is not ultimately with our government. Our problem is with our hearts. God is in the business of changing hearts so we need to fervently, passionately, and continuously beg our God to change the hearts of Americans away from self-love and towards Christ.

Model. Walk in God's commandments. Let people see the Gospel in your marriages, your lives, and your words. When people see and hear of God's working in you, they will hopefully be changed from the inside out.

Love. We are to model Christ-like love. That means loving people with our thoughts, words, and actions even when they don't deserve it. Sometimes love is patient, gentle, and kind, but Proverbs 27:5 tells us that "open rebuke is better than hidden love." Let's lovingly shower people with God's truths in our words and actions.

How should we treat family and friends who are in heterosexual or homosexual sin?

Love them. Do not hide the truth from them. Do not avoid them, but be careful not to be drawn into whatever sins they are in love with. Show them you care for them. Be compassionate. Be humble. Be prepared to give answers to the questions they may have about God and His good plan of sexuality. Pray for them. Intercede to God on their behalf, that God changes their hearts.

What should I do if I am struggling with heterosexual or homosexual sin?

- Trust in Christ if you never have. Moralism, or being good, does not save you. Only an ongoing, trusting relationship with Jesus can save you.
- Test yourself to ensure you are in the faith. If you have a habitual, ongoing sin read the book of 1 John. If you say you are a Christian, but you continue to walk in sin and show you love the darkness and the world more than you love the light & Christ, you may not be a Christian at all.
- If you are a Christian and are struggling with sin seek help:
 - Confess – Confess your sin. Be honest and open with God.
 - Repent - Turn from the evil you've been practicing.
 - Be In God's Word – It has all the answers. Discover them.
 - Be In Prayer – Ask God for help. You have God's Spirit alive in you. Stop grieving Him and start talking to Him.
 - Be In Church – Connect with a local, Bible-teaching church. Outside of the church is referred to "Satan's realm." Be connected with Christ through a local body of believers.
 - Be With Believers – Confess your sin struggle with a Christian. Ask them to pray for you. Ask them to help you. Seek their encouragement.

God "desires that all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:4)

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

HELPFUL RESOURCES

www.covenanteyes.com

www.gotquestions.org

- “10 Myths About Lust” by Jared Moore (<http://cbmw.org/men/manhood/10-myths-about-lust>)
- *Intended for Pleasure: Sex Technique & Sexual Fulfillment in Christian Marriage* Ed & Gaye Wheat
- *A Celebration of Sex: A Guide to Enjoying God's Gift of Sexual Intimacy* By Douglas E. Rosenau
- *For Women Only: What You Need to Know about the Inner Lives of Men* By Shaunti Feldhahn
- *For Men Only: A Straightforward Guide to the Inner Lives of Women* By Shaunti and Jeff Feldhahn
- *Winning the Battle Within: Realistic Steps to Overcoming Sexual Strongholds* By Neil T. Anderson
- *Sex Is Not the Problem (Lust Is): Sexual Purity in a Lust-Saturated World* By Joshua Harris

How to Protect Yourself and Your Family from Porn

www.trustworthyword.com/protect-from-porn

Understand the Dangers for Everyone

from: "Pornography Statistics" - www.covenanteyes.com/pornography-facts-and-statistics/

When a child or adolescent is directly exposed to pornography the following effects have been documented:

- Lasting negative or traumatic emotional responses.
- Earlier onset of first sexual intercourse, thereby increasing the risk of STDs over the lifespan.
- The belief that superior sexual satisfaction is attainable without having affection for one's partner, thereby reinforcing the commoditization of sex and the objectification of humans.
- The belief that being married or having a family are unattractive prospects.
- Increased risk for developing sexual compulsions and addictive behavior.
- Increased risk of exposure to incorrect information about human sexuality long before a minor is able to contextualize this information in ways an adult brain could.

Pornography consumption is associated with the following six trends, among others:

- Increased marital distress, and risk of separation and divorce
- Decreased marital intimacy and sexual satisfaction
- Infidelity
- Increased appetite for more graphic types of pornography and sexual activity associated with abusive, illegal or unsafe practices
- Devaluation of monogamy, marriage and child rearing
- An increasing number of people struggling with compulsive and addictive sexual behavior

"Your Brain on Porn: 5 Ways Porn Warps Your Brain and Biblical Ways to Renew It"

- www.covenanteyes.com/brain-ebook/

"When Children View Pornography"

- www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/sexuality/when-children-use-pornography/when-children-view-pornography

Recognize the Prevalence of the Problem

- 64% of self-identified Christian men and 15% of self-identified Christian women view pornography at least once a month (compared to 65% of non-Christian men and 30% of non-Christian women).

- The average of first time pornography exposure is estimated to be down to 8 years old.
- 93% of boys and 62% of girls were exposed to pornography before 18.
- 66.5% of young men and 48.7% of young women said viewing pornographic materials is an acceptable way to express one's sexuality.
- Men who admit to masturbating once a week or more: Single Men - 48%, Married Men - 44%, Divorced Men - 68%
- The following percentages of men say they view pornography at least once a month: 18-30-year olds, 79%; 31-49-year-olds, 67%; 50-68-year-olds, 49% (Barna, 2014)
- 63% of adult men and 36% of women have looked at pornography at least on time *while at work* in the past 3 months
- "Pornography Statistics" - www.covenanteyes.com/pornography-facts-and-statistics/

Admit the Seriousness of the Sin: We Must Answer to God

- "33 Reasons I Need to Abstain from Porn" - 33 Reasons Why I Need to Abstain from Porn" by Jason George - www.covenanteyes.com/2013/05/29/33-reasons-to-abstain-from-porn/
- (Hebrews 13:4 ESV) Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.
- (1 Corinthians 6:9) Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality
- (1 Corinthians 6:11) And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
- (Ephesians 5:3-6) But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ... 5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.
- (Colossians 3:5) Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.
- (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8) For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. 8 Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you."

How to Protect Yourself and Your Family

- “Before the Birds and the Bees” www.challies.com/articles/before-the-birds-and-the-bees
- “The Porn Free Family Plan” www.challies.com/articles/the-porn-free-family-plan
- “Protect Your Family with the Circle” www.challies.com/resources/protect-your-family-with-circle
- **Have an Internet Filtering Plan - Covenant Eyes** - covenanteyes.com/signup/
- **Buy & Use this App!** “Overcome Porn: 40 Day Challenge” by Covenant Eyes
- www.covenanteyes.com
- **Read and Find Help** - Covenant Eyes - E-Books - a wide collection of helpful resources! www.covenanteyes.com/singles-guide/
- “What Does the Bible Say about Sexual Sin?” www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sexual-sin
- “What Does the Bible Say about Homosexuality?” www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-homosexuality

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5. Bounce your eyes. If you find yourself looking at someone lustfully, bounce your eyes another direction.
6. Understand the needs and love language of your spouse.
7. If someone is attractive to you, put up safeguards in your interactions with them.

What Does the Bible Say About Homosexuality and Gender Identity?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-homosexuality

“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”
(Hebrews 13:4, ESV)

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality”
(1 Corinthians 6:9)

“If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination”
(Leviticus 20:13)

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”
(Proverbs 14:12)

Is God anti-gay?

No, but God is against everyone who lives for and values themselves more than God (Ezra 8:22). For those who embrace the identity of “homosexual,” “lesbian,” “gay,” “bisexual,” “transgender,” or “queer,” they have chosen an identity apart from God (1 John 3:9-10). God is against their sin (Romans 3:10-12,23), and they are storing up His wrath for themselves (Romans 2:5). The good news is that God is patient towards us, “not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” (2 Peter 3:9, 1 Timothy 2:4). God shows us His amazing love through the sacrificial, substitutionary death of His Son Jesus on the Cross while we were still choosing to live life our own way (Romans 5:6-11). God wants everyone who has chosen the identity of gay to admit and turn from their sin, believe He lovingly died on the Cross and rose from the grave, and confess Christ as Lord (Romans 10:9-10).

God “desires that all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:4)

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

What does the Bible say about homosexuality?

Homosexuality is repeatedly condemned as sin without qualification or nuance.

Romans 1:24-32, Genesis 19, Leviticus 18:22 ; 20:13, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:3-6, 1 Timothy 1:9,10, Jude 7.

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; [27] and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. [28] And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. (Romans 1:26-28)

Homosexuality is the embracing and practice of same-sex lusts, desires, acts, pride, and identity. Homosexuality is contrary to God's portrayal of the Gospel in marriage and is contrary to His creation of nature, physically, anatomically, reproductively, and a perversion of His plan for sexual pleasure.

- 1 Corinthians 6:9 – ESV “nor men who practice homosexuality” (refers to passive & active partners in homosexual acts)
- *Malakos* (Greek) – effeminate, of a boy kept for homosexual relations with a man, submits his body to unnatural lewdness
- *Arsenokoites* (Greek) – homosexual, one who lies with a male as with a female, sodomite, homosexual (1 Tim 1:10, 1 Cor 6:9)

This is not a new or modern-day issue. Paul writes to Christians in Corinth, saying (to include reference to the sin of homosexuality), “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Is someone born gay? Does God create homosexuals?

No, someone is not born gay or created by God to be homosexual. God does not tempt anyone with sin or evil (James 1:13-15), such as the sin of homosexuality (Romans 1:24-32, Genesis 19, Leviticus 18:22 ; 20:13, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:3-3, 1 Timothy 1:9,10, Jude 7). Just as there is no genetic excuse for anger, murder, lust, adultery, greed, theft, or lying, there is no genetic excuse for homosexuality or any other sin.

Everyone is born with inherited sin with both guilt of and inclination towards sin (Romans 5:12, Jeremiah 17:9, Psalm 51:3-5). We all then choose to sin against our Creator by failing to treasure and value God above any other thing. We all morally rebel against God's commands and will be held accountable according to His perfect, Holy standard (Romans 3:10-12, 23).

Our family and cultural environment may influence us toward a particular type of sin, but sin is ultimately a personal choice of law breaking that we make. We should not be surprised or shocked when non-believers do not understand God's truths or yield to

obey His plans. Such ongoing submission to and choice of sin as their practice and identity reveals their lost state.

Is same-sex attraction a sin?

No. Same-sex attraction describes the temptation towards choosing the sin of homosexuality. When homosexual attraction is embraced as an acceptable desire, action, or identity, then it becomes sinful intent. When same-sex attraction is recognized as leading towards sin, dishonorable passions, and unnatural actions, it can be resisted through the power of a relationship with Christ. Thus, same-sex attraction is not a sin in itself, but is a temptation that must be resisted. Accordingly, it is often more helpful to refer to people as experiencing same-sex attraction rather than to identify them by the sin of homosexuality.

In a similar way, heterosexual attraction is not sinful in itself. When heterosexual attraction is embraced as an acceptable desire, action, or identity outside of God's plan of marriage between one man and one woman for life, it becomes lustful and adulterous sin (Romans 1:24-32, James 1:12-15, and Matthew 5:27-32).

Can someone be a gay Christian?

No. It is not possible to simultaneously embrace or identify with a sin while simultaneously claiming to having yielded their lives to Christ's lordship. It is possible to be a Christian who struggles with same-sex attraction yet recognizes homosexuality as sin and actively resists their fleshly desires.

No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. [10] By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:9-10 ESV)

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. (Hebrews 10:26-27)

Should Christians be for or against homosexual marriage, unions, and adoptions? Is it right to “force” biblical beliefs on a nation that is primarily non-Christian?

The Bible is described as God's voice. Even though our nation and others are not primarily Christians, God is sovereign over them. When a nation's leaders or people disregard, disrespect, and disobey God, there are consequences. When we ignore the Bible it shows we are ignoring God by shutting our ears to His voice.

God tells us through the prophet Samuel that: (1 Samuel 12:14-15) “If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well. [15] But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the

commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king.”

We (Christians) should want it to go well for our country, its people and its leaders. We don't want our God against our nation. Moralism will not save our nation. A God-centered heart will rescue our nation from further consequences of our sin. We need to pray that our nation begins to fear, serve, and obey the Lord and stop rebelling against His good plan.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world - the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life - is not from the Father but from the world. (1 John 2:15-16)

How should we treat family and friends who are in homosexual sin?

Love them. Do not hide the truth from them. Do not avoid them, but be careful not to be drawn into whatever sins they are in love with. Show them you care for them. Be compassionate. Be humble. Be prepared to give answers to the questions they may have about God and His good plan of sexuality. Pray for them. Intercede to God on their behalf, that God changes their hearts. It is never too late for the Gospel.

What should I do if I am struggling with same-sex attraction or homosexual sin?

- Trust in Christ if you never have. Moralism, or being good, does not save you. Only an ongoing, trusting relationship with Jesus can save you.
- Test yourself to ensure you are in the faith. If you have a habitual, ongoing sin read the book of 1 John. If you say you are a Christian, but you continue to walk in sin, you show you love the darkness and the world more than you love the light & Christ, and you are not be a Christian at all. (1 John 1:6)
- If you are a Christian and are struggling with sin, seek help.
- Recognize that your sexual feeling is not your identity, you are much more than your sexuality.
- Confess – Confess your sin. Be honest and open with God. (1 John 1:9)
- Repent - Turn from the evil you've been practicing.
- Be In God's Word – It has all the answers. Discover them.
- Recognize that singleness is a gift from God (1 Corinthians 7). Ask God to remove your same-sex attractions and to change your desires and attractions towards the opposite-sex.
- Be In Prayer – Ask God for help. You have God's Spirit alive in you. Stop grieving Him and start talking to Him.
- Be In Church – Connect with a local, Bible-teaching church. Outside of the church is referred to “Satan's realm.” Be connected with Christ through a local body of believers.
- Be With Believers – Confess your sin struggle with a Christian. Ask them to pray for you. Ask them to help you. Seek their encouragement.

What about gender identity issues?

Similar to same-sex attraction, gender confusion itself is not a sin. When someone embraces a gender identity apart from their biological, genetically verifiable, God-given identity, it is sin. God created mankind “male and female” (Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139, 1 Corinthians 6:9). When someone identifies, acts, or dresses contrary to their biological gender, they have rebelled against God’s creative plan.

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

Promoting gender as a choice does great harm with both earthly and eternal consequences (Jeremiah 7:23). Rejecting God’s plan and instead choosing to trust in one’s feelings (Jeremiah 17:9-10) and following one’s fleshly desires (1 John 2:15-16) results in eternal death (Proverbs 14:12).

“A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God.” (Deuteronomy 22:5 ESV)

“But this command I gave them: ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.’” (Jeremiah 7:23 ESV)

What about polygamy? Pedophilia? Bestiality?

Although these issues may not be widespread in our current days, there has been both previous cultural embracement of such sin and clear biblical condemnation of such sin (Deuteronomy 17:17, Genesis 2:24, 1 Timothy 3:2,12, Titus 1:6, Ephesians 5:22-33; Galatians 5:16-21, Romans 1:31, 2 Timothy 3:2, Matthew 18:1-14; Exodus 22:19, Leviticus 18:23, Leviticus 20:15-16, Deuteronomy 27:21). We are warned by Scripture that history repeats itself so we must be prepared for such a repetition of unlawful and unholy sexual activity.

“What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.” (Ecclesiastes 1:9 ESV)

HELPFUL RESOURCES

www.covenanteyes.com

www.gotquestions.org

- “10 Myths About Lust” by Jared Moore (<http://cbmw.org/men/manhood/10-myths-about-lust>)
- *Is God Anti-Gay? And Other Questions about Homosexuality, the Bible, and Same-Sex Attraction* by Sam Allberry
- *God and the Gay Christian? A Response to Matthew Vines*, Edited by R. Albert Mohler, Jr.

- *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert : An English Professor's Journey into Christian Faith* by Rosaria Champagne Butterfield
- *Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexual Identity and Union with Christ* by Rosaria Champagne Butterfield

A Biblical Response to Pride Month

Have you noticed the increased emphasis on validating, affirming, and encouraging LGBTQ+ in America, especially during “Pride Month” (June)? Rainbow flags at U.S. Embassies. Company logos changed to a rainbow pattern. An onslaught of advertising campaigns. Products created to celebrate a sexual revolution. Such rapid and radical changes in our society can often overwhelm us. How should a biblical Christian understand our culture? What should followers of Jesus do?

1 Chronicles 12:32 “Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do”

1. Love God - Understanding False Religion. Read 1 John. Just because someone calls themselves a Christian doesn’t make them a genuine believer. Rebellion against God’s authority and Biblical commands reveals both a false religion and a false conversion. If God’s voice in Scripture is not one’s authority, Jesus is not one’s Lord and Savior. A true love of God is evidenced in obedience and submission to His Word.

Matthew 15:8 “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me”

2. Practice Self-Control - Understanding Cultural History. Be slow to speak. The sexual revolution in America didn’t happen overnight, and was overwhelmingly found in heterosexual sin before LGBTQ+ sin. Decades of sensuality, pornography, no-fault divorce, serial marriage, fornication, adultery, prostitution, abuse, and more have led us to the LGBTQ+ rebellion against God. We are all broken sexually in our sin. This cycle of sexual sin has happened repeatedly in many other cultures. We are on a historical and moral path towards even more destructive sexual immorality: polygamy, polyamory, pedophilia, bestiality, virtual sex, and sex bots.

Ecclesiastes 1:9 “What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.”

3. Be Kind to LGBTQ+ People - Understanding Relationships. Many who identify as lesbian, gay, transgender, bi-sexual, queer, or any number of evolving labels have suffered intense hatred, insults, abuse, and attacks. Get to know your LGBTQ+ neighbors. Listen to their stories. Weep with their hurts. Find ways to show them genuine, Christian love without condoning or approving their sinful choices and self-identification.

Luke 6:27–28 “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.”

4. Exhibit Faithfulness - Understanding Spiritual Truths. The increasingly rampant heterosexual, homosexual, and gender identity sins are “false to the truth...earthly, unspiritual, demonic” (James 3:14–15). Validating, affirming,

approving, accepting, endorsing, encouraging, supporting, promoting, and celebrating LGBTQ+ is foolish, unnatural, dishonorable, impure, and offensive to our Holy God (Romans 1:18-32). Watch out! Before you form or share your opinion on LGBTQ+, examine the Scriptures in the pursuit of faithfulness to God's truth (Romans 1:24-32, Genesis 19, Leviticus 18:22; 20:13, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:3-6, 1 Timothy 1:9-10, Jude 7). Do not bend the knee to the false god of LGBTQ+ pride.

Romans 1:24, 26-27, 32 "Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves...For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; [27] and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. ...Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them."

The world says "love is love," but God explains that "God is love" (1 John 4:8,16); He is the definition and definer of true love.

The world encourages "love yourself" while God warns of the danger of being deceived to follow "the course of the world" in pursuing the "desires of the body and the mind" (Ephesians 2:1-3).

The world advertises "you be you", but God says "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

The world teaches you to follow your "own truth" and understanding of god, while God proclaims "whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him"(1 John 2:4-6).

Isaiah 5:20 "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!"

5. Be A Joy-Filled Presence - Understanding Eternal Consequences. Those who continue in sexual sin, whether heterosexual or homosexual, have chosen a path to Hell. When surrounded by cultural evil, may be choose to be like Noah, Daniel, Paul, the church in Philadelphia, and so many more faithful saints, keeping God's Word and not denying His name (Revelation 3:8). We must choose to be an evangelistic, joy-filled presence among those who are perishing.

1 Corinthians 6:9 "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality."

6. Endure - Understanding God's Plan. Don't be surprised when people hate you for standing on God's Word concerning the sinfulness of LGBTQ+ (1 John 3:13-14). Some might falsely accuse you of being homophobic or a bigot. Others may threaten and attack you (Matthew 5:10-11). Stand firm (Ephesians 6:10-20). Turn the other

cheek (Luke 6:29). When possible, speak truth, with humility, as an act of love. Live in righteousness, evidencing the bright light of true love to a dark world. Practice genuine love.

Romans 12:9 “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.”

Here are some helpful biblical resources for you to consider!

- **What does the Bible say about homosexuality?** - <http://www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-homosexuality>
- **How can I be sure I'm a Christian?** - <http://www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian>
- **How can I become a Christian?** - <http://www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian>
- **Evidence for Jesus** - <http://www.trustworthyword.com/evidence-for-jesus>

What Does the Bible Say About Voting and Politics?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-voting-and-politics

Why is this issue important? Regardless of our political party persuasion, we must consider the issues and character behind the often emotional and misleading political process. How we conduct ourselves through the political season is just as important as the ballots we cast on Election Day.

What does the Bible teach?

Ignore Human Opinions about Government. Don't be swayed by appearances or opinion in politics. We must put aside our tradition and political upbringing, and ensure that our identity is more rooted in Christ than it is in our political party. Our loyalty must be higher to Christ's way, purpose, and truth so that we are not swayed by mere human opinion.

(Mark 12:14) "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God."

Understand God's Purpose in Government. God's "kingdom rules over all" (Psalm 103:19) so we must be not lose hope in the midst of the ups and downs of political life. One day, "every knee will bow...every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:10-11), but until that day, God has instituted government as a form of common grace to both believers and unbelievers. Along with the family, it is a form of societal organization. Government is designed to restrain and deter evil, but also is designed to be a proponent of good (Romans 13:4). Even when governmental authority acts evil, it is still ultimately under God's authority.

(Romans 13:1) "For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God."

John MacArthur - "In whatever of the many forms it exists, civil authority derives directly from God ... No matter what form it takes, no human government at any time in history, at any place on earth, among any people on earth, at any level of society, has ever existed or will ever exist apart from the sovereign authority of God"

- No exceptions. Hitler, Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Middle Ages, Tribes led by Shamans

Know God's Role in Government.

(Hosea 8:4) They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not.

When governments fear, follow, serve, and obey the Lord “it will be well” (1 Samuel 12:14). When governments disobey and rebel against God’s good plans, “the hand of the Lord will be against you and your king” (1 Samuel 12:15).

Biblical Examples of Political Rule.

- Old Testament Law – Moral, Ceremonial, Governmental
 - Theocracy – God rules through the prophets
 - (in a Democracy the people rule)
- Moses – setting up judges over the tribes
- Joshua 24 – elders, heads, officers, judges
 - Joshua v.15 “choose this day whom you will serve”
 - v.15 “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”
 - people v.24 “The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey.”
- Kings – people rebelled against God’s plan
- Nation of Israel – conquered Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome
 - “hand of the Lord will be against you and your king”
- King Nebuchadnezzar

(Daniel 5:18, 21) O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. ... He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will.

- King Belshazzar – Babylon - hand writing on the wall – brought down (Daniel 5:23-26) but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored. Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN. This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end;

- King Cyrus – Persia – used by God to release the people of Israel
2 Chronicles 36:22-23, Ezra 1 – King Cyrus - Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up.’”

The Politician’s Role in Government.

(Romans 13:3) For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.

- (Isaiah 5:20 ESV) [20] Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!
- (Romans 13:4) he is God's servant for your good.
- Joseph in Egypt, Daniel in Babylon, Esther in Persia
- (Romans 13:6) For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.
- President = God's servant, a minister of God
- Regardless of his policies, regardless of his faith or lack thereof

Our Role in Government.

(Romans 13:1) Let every person be subject to the governing authorities

- v.6 To avoid God's wrath – for the sake of conscience
- Attempt to influence government to be more in line with God's timeless truths and principles
- Our battle is a spiritual, unseen battle, not merely a battle with flesh and blood
- Fixing governments is not evangelism or discipleship, yet it is a loving action to seek the good of your neighbor, the defenseless, and where you live.

(1 Corinthians 10:24) Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.

(Proverbs 31:8) Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute.

(Jeremiah 29:7) But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Pay Your Taxes, Register to Vote, & Inform Yourself. No matter how our taxes are spent, we have an obligation to diligently pay our taxes. When equipped with the ability to influence one's government by voting, one should make the effort to register and be informed as to the facts. Prayer should be the underlying and foundational approach to seeking a God-honoring government (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

(Mark 12: 17) "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's."

(1 Timothy 2:1-2) "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way."

Obey the Authorities. Do you find yourself complaining more or praying more for your leaders? We are reminded of the influence of honor, obedience and submission to even secular and oppressive authorities (Titus 3:1, 1 Peter 2:13-17) so "that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people" (1 Peter 2:15).

The only allowance for governmental disobedience is when governmental law directly opposes the worship and obedience of God (i.e., Jewish midwives in Egypt refusing to

murder newly born male babies, Exodus 1:17; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refusing to worship idols, Daniel 3; Daniel's steadfast praying to God, Daniel 6; Peter & John's refusal to stop preaching the Gospel, Acts 4:18-20).

(Romans 13:2,5) "Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment... Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience."

Vote Wisely. When voting, be sure to avoid decisions based on tradition, stereotypes, emotions, or pride. Instead embrace God's truth and wisdom and make decisions that value the kingdom of God more than the kingdom of man. Realize that neither moralizing society nor politicizing the church is the solution to the world's problems.

The world does not change from the outside in, but from the inside out – through the Gospel (Mark 12:17) "Render...to God the things that are God's."

- Do you spend more effort, time, passion, energy, money, and devotion to convincing others to follow your political persuasion...or to follow your Christ?
- Do you get more worked up watching a debate between politicians...than watching a neighbor, coworker, friend, or family member rebel against God and run full throttle for hell?
- Do you place more hope in America? Or in Christ?

(Matthew 6:33-34) "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

How Should a Christian Vote?

Don't you wish God made it more clear how you should vote? Here are some biblical principles to consider before, during, and after you cast your ballot for Governor, President, or any politician.

Prayerfully. Pray more, politick less. Our nation and state are divided greatly with polarizing views between political parties. What is a Christian to do? Pray first. Pray continually. Pray consistently. Pray equally for those leaders you agree with and also for those with whom you disagree.

1 Timothy 2:1–2 "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way." (ESV)

Biblically. The Bible has a lot to say about Biblical issues. God cares about the poor, immigrants, marriage, dignity of life at all stages (including unborn babies, terminally ill, and elderly), racial equity, religious liberty, sexual ethics, war, economics, international relations, women's rights, children's rights, education, housing, and criminal justice.

Which politicians, if any, model a genuine trust in Jesus? Which party's policies and platforms are most in line with God's plan for humanity? These questions are important in clarifying how to vote in complicated and contentious times. Know what God says before you vote.

1 Samuel 12:14–15 "If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well. But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king."

Privately. Why advertise your vote? Is pride tied to your partisan politics? Do you honestly think that your social media posts make people change their votes? Would you change your vote or position because of someone else's yard sign, t-shirt, bumper-sticker, hat, or social media post?

Many Christians have done great damage to their Christian witness through political bias, pride, snarkiness, mockery, and endorsement of ungodly characters. Go private with your political persuasions during this polarized season.

Proverbs 10:19 "When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent."

Wisely. Are you willing to reconsider your vote? Would you reevaluate your opinions? Have you listened closely and considered the positions of all sides? Do you understand the perspectives of those with a different political persuasion? Do your homework before you cast your ballot and don't just trust the sound bites and media moments.

Proverbs 11:14 "Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety."

Selflessly. Do you vote only for what is in your best interest and agenda? Or are you voting in the best interest of the common good? Vote in a way that benefits and prioritizes others more than yourself.

Philippians 2:3-4 "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Humbly & Respectfully. Your vote is important, but what changes a nation ultimately is the Gospel. Are you more passionate and public about your politics or about your Jesus? Do you put more hope in the next election cycle than you do in Jesus' return?

Godly Christians often feel led to vote in different ways. Some may vote Republican. Others feel led to vote Democrat. Still others choose to vote for a third-party candidate that might never win. Others Christians may feel called not to vote at all. You may be right in the choice you make, but then again, you could be wrong. Be humble.

People will view issues differently than you. Be kind. Friends, family, coworkers and neighbors will vote differently than you. That's their prerogative, stay calm. Don't let discussions devolve into arguments. Know where you stand but be respectful towards others.

Romans 14:1 "As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions."

May these truths and principles guide us into, through, and beyond our election seasons.

A Prayer for Our Nation

I wrote this on the occasion of visiting the White House, the United States Capitol, and the Supreme Court. Regardless of the nation in which you live, may this prayer be a help to guide you to prayer for your leaders, government, and nation.

Have you ever thought about how you would pray over our nation's leaders if you had the opportunity? How you would lead them into the presence of our Creator and pray on their behalf?

Here is an idea of how I might pray in the White House, Capitol, or Supreme Court if I had the chance:

“As we prepare to converse with our Creator, I invite you, if you are physically able, to join me on our knees in speaking to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Father God, Lord Jesus, Holy Spirit. You are amazing. You are wonderful. You are powerful. There is no-one like you God.

Thank you for who you are and for the privilege of another day of life. Thank you for the ability to even have access to you right now through prayer.

You have told us that...

“if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14 ESV)

So here we are now before you. Humbled in hearts. On our knees.

Please forgive us. So much wickedness has passed through our minds, hearts, lips, and our lives. We are guilty. As individuals. As leaders. As a nation. Forgive us.

We need you. We love you. We want you. We trust you. Jesus, lead us into your presence. Give us your wisdom for the daily decisions that we encounter today and everyday as your servants and representatives.

God, heal us as only You can. Our nation is hurting. Our people are divided. Our world is in chaos. Thank you for sending your Son to save us from Satan, sin, and Hell. Help us to “be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.” Help us to “shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15 ESV).

Jesus, I lift up these leaders to you. Thank you for giving them to our nation. Protect their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. If any have not

received and submitted to you as Lord and Savior, I pray for you to save their souls. Guard their minds from Satanic and worldly deception and focus their minds on your truth. Keep their hearts from the Evil One and guide their affections to your throne-room. Encourage and strengthen their marriages and families with the love you have for us. Use these men and women greatly for the welfare of their hometown communities and states. Unite them together under your commands for the sake of our nation.

In the name of the Jesus we pray, amen.”

1 Timothy 2:1–5 “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (ESV)

Christians, We Must Stop Our Partisan Politics!

Dear Reverend Franklin Graham and Pastor Robert Jeffress (and many of us Christians),

I see that you love Jesus, but I'm concerned about your apparent love of partisan politics. Please stop promoting the President and endorsing the Republican party, but choose instead to focus on promoting Jesus and endorsing His Word. **Love on and pray for both parties and endorse neither.** Each partisan political statement you make diminishes and dampens your Gospel reach and impact. True and lasting change is not found in the power or influence of a politician or a party. Gospel power transforms in ways that governments never can, so please stop compromising and limiting your Christian witness. You can better use your platform to speak biblical truth and to show Jesus' love across party lines if you communicate in a non-partisan manner.

- Matthew 5:44 "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (ESV)

Stop Politicking. Most of us have gotten sucked into the drama of politics. We need to be more biblical and less political. I write this openly and publicly, because the message is not only to you, but for me and for every pastor. This advice is not just for us pastors, but for all of us who identify as followers of Jesus. Our partisan political involvement is having a negative gospel impact. People are not hearing our spiritual Good News because they are deafened and distracted by the political news we are promoting with a self-righteous spirit. Martin Lloyd-Jones explained it well that "a demonstration of great interest in political and social matters never succeed in attracting people to Christianity." We have a higher calling. Put the humble beauty of Jesus in front of us and move away from the ugly arrogance of modern politics.

- 1 Peter 5:5 "Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Quit Playing Party Politics. I need this reminder about my ultimate allegiance. You should hear this. We should not be partisan Republicans, Democrats, or any other political party. As Tim Keller shares, "The historical Christian positions on social issues do not fit into contemporary political alignments." We are called to talk about Jesus to both sides and not isolate our audience with our political dispositions and opinions. We cannot present a distorted view of Christianity that identifies the Christian faith with a particular political party. Christian nationalism in America is advertising that one must vote Republican or you are not really a Christian. Republicans are now unlikely to hear about Jesus from Democrats and Democrats probably will not hear about Jesus from Republicans. This compromise of our Gospel witness should disturb us.

Franklin, We all would do well to heed the sage advice of your parents. Your dad, Billy Graham, wisely shared that "evangelicals can't be closely identified with any particular party or person. We have to stand in the middle, to preach to all the people, right and

left. I haven't been faithful to my own advice in the past. I will in the future." Your mom, Ruth Graham, responded to President Lyndon B. Johnson's request for political advice from your dad with boldness and clarity saying, "Billy ought to limit his advice to you to religious and spiritual matters."

We need to stop our public political flag waving, skip political rallies, put down our posters, remove our campaign hats, and pull out our yard signs. People don't need our polarizing and biased opinions; they need the truth of our King Jesus. Our hope, passions, resources, and focus should be prioritized on the return of the King of Kings and not on the next election cycle. Our identity is in Jesus not in our party affiliation. Put the Kingdom of God in front of the kingdom of man.

- 2 Timothy 2:4 "No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him."

You Have Lost Perspective. I've lost focus at times too. We've put too much trust in manmade systems. Partisan politics are man-created forms of pollution that cloud out the deeper and more urgent realities. Governments offer nationalistic hope and purpose, and are God-ordained for our good, but can never fully deliver on their promises. The world doesn't need to hear about our party affiliation or our political endorsements, so don't tweet and post like they do. We can take a stand on issues in a biblically nonpartisan manner. We must avoid being labeled by (or identifying as) a particular political party whenever possible. Put eternal hope in front of us instead of hope in the next set of polls.

- Colossians 3:2 "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."

Acknowledge Your Hypocrisy and Hatred. We've all played the hypocrite and spoken unkindly towards those different than us. It may not be intentional but it is a reality nonetheless for all of us. We are all more blind to our predispositions and biases than we realize. We often sin similarly to those we critique. The world doesn't need our snarkiness or sarcasm. They need our love. We should be gentle and kind with our "opponents."

If we lend our public endorsement of a politician or party, then we should commit to consistently speak to the seriousness of their sin and future failures as well. John Calvin, when teaching about John the Baptist's confrontation of King Herod, explains that "John has thus, by his example, furnished an undoubted rule for pious teachers, not to wink at the faults of princes, so as to purchase their favor at this price, how advantageous soever that favor might appear to be to the public interests." We must not overlook the sin of some while attacking the sin of others. Moral inconsistency is hypocrisy.

Our countrymen need our meekness, love, and prayers. We can engage those we disagree with compassionate conviction but we must be consistent across the political spectrum. Put a humble peacemaking spirit in front of us in place of argumentative arrogance.

- 1 Timothy 2:8 “I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling”

You Are Being Manipulated. I’ve been co-opted too. We all have been used. We may not realize it but while politicking we are frequently being maneuvered like a pawn by savvy press and powerful politicians. When we publicly jump on a political bandwagon we will likely travel further than we ought to ride. We need to dismount and follow Jesus more closely instead of getting visibly sidetracked by earthly matters. Put God’s platform in front of us and push away governmental partisanship.

- Philippians 3:20 “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”

You Aren’t As Right As You Think You Are. I am not either. None of us are. We often think too highly of ourselves. The more we speak, the greater potential we have to sin. In the complex day and age we live in, it is difficult to speak to all of the platforms, policies, and issues accurately and comprehensively. We are typically misinformed, under-informed, imbalanced, partial, and overwhelmed. We need to behold the biblical truth more than we notice the national news. Very few of us have the ability and humility to speak well publicly to the many issues filling our feeds. Put biblical truth in front of us in lieu of human opinions.

- 1 Corinthians 3:7 “So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”

You Can’t Fix This Nation. Neither can I. None of us can. Only Jesus is able. Often, we think and talk like we are more important and capable than we actually are. Partisan politics makes life about us when life is actually about God: Father, Son, & Holy Spirit. We are His mouthpiece to the world. We need to stick to His truth. We need to be faithful to the time He has given us. We need to prioritize Jesus in our lives, our love, and our hope. We need to remember the primary need of our society is not a political victory, but a spiritual victory in Christ.

- James 3:13–15 “Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.”

Christians, we need quit our partisan politicking but not our political engagement. It’s not too late to change. We can do better. There is a way to engage our culture without compromising our Gospel witness. Tim Keller explains that “while believers can register under a party affiliation and be active in politics, they should not identify the Christian church or faith with a political party as the only Christian one.” Here are some guidelines that may help us all in the future.

12 Rules of Political Engagement for Christians

- 1. God First** - God's truth is always above man's opinions. Reevaluate your political positions with the Bible in hand.
- 2. Others Second** - We must put the needs of others before our own agendas. We can better love our neighbors with tangible actions rather than just trusting in our cast ballot.
- 3. Self Less** - We need humility in all our communications and attitudes. Before we post or speak we should consider the tone and approach we choose. Our daily decisions should demonstrate a care for those different than us.
- 4. Default to Non-Partisan** - Unless our profession requires it, most Christians should strongly consider the wisdom of being publicly nonpartisan. In these divisive times it may be best to stay away from partisan political posts, rallies, posters, yard signs, and headgear.
- 5. Your Vote Is Important** - You have the responsibility and privilege to be politically informed and go to the polls whenever you have the opportunity.
- 6. Private Persuasion Is Often Better** - Some issues deserve our public discussion and commentary. More may be gained through private, personal conversations without the rhetoric found in many public forums.
- 7. Humble & Respectful Disagreement** - We are all created in the image of God. We ought to speak kindly to all with the reminder that no-one is beyond the life-changing hope of Christ. We must love our political "enemies."
- 8. Avoid Absolutes** - Recognize our temptation towards sound bites and the demonization of others. Avoid over-simplifying situations and categorizing groups with stereotypes.
- 9. Pray More than You Speak** - We often fall into the trap of believing that our voices to mankind make a bigger difference than our prayers to the Creator of the Universe. Prayer is our primary political calling.
- 10. Share the Gospel More than Your Political Persuasions** - Elections and governments come and go. True and lasting hope is only found in the Kingdom of God through Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Live and speak in light of these priorities. Be more passionate about winning souls than winning arguments or elections.
- 11. Resist as a Last Resort** - Rare biblical and historical examples exist to show and prepare us for times where courageous rebellion is called for in order to remain faithful to God. The broad biblical guidance is to honor and submit to the authorities whenever possible.
- 12. The 1% Exception** - Although 99-ish% of us should probably be nonpartisan monarchists (prioritizing the Kingdom of God), 1% of us may be called by God into service within a partisan political sphere. If that is you, please stay faithful to God's truths in your policies and platforms no matter the personal cost. Speak to the good, without flattery or partiality, in both parties. Confront the bad, with love and humility, in both parties. Practice the fruits of the Holy Spirit at all times towards your political opponents talking with "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22).

Christians, we can do better. Let's love on and pray for those we disagree with.

In Christ,
Jonathan Carl, A Monarchist Pastor Waiting for the King of Kings to Return and Make
All Things New

1 Timothy 2:1–2 “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.”

Helpful Perspectives on the Topic

- “How Do Christians Fit Into the Two-Party System? They Don’t” by Tim Keller
- “The Non-Partisan Politics of Jesus” by Scott Sauls
- “The Church, Politics, & Bonhoeffer’s Way Forward” by Steve Bezner (Part 1)
- “Faith and Healthy Democracy” by Paul D. Miller
- “How Christians Can Prepare for the 2020 Election” by Daniel Bennett
- *A Prophet with Honor: The Billy Graham Story* by William Martin

What Does the Bible Say About Abortion?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-abortion

Six Scriptural Reasons Abortion is a Problem

- (Exodus 20:13) You shall not murder.
- (Proverbs 31:8) Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute.
- (Jeremiah 1:5) Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.
- (Psalm 22:10) On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God.
- (Psalm 139:13) For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
- (Exodus 21:22-25) When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. [23] But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, [24] eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, [25] burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

Three Statistical Reasons Abortion is a Problem in the United States

- # of American deaths in US military conflicts, 1776-present(236yrs)= 1,326,626; # of American lives aborted from 1973-2008(35yrs)=~50million
- # of homicides in US from 1973-2008 = 589,945; # of abortions in US from 1973-2008, ~50,000,000
- # of homicides in 2008 in US = 16,442, # of abortions in 2008 in US = ~1.21million

Three Statistical Reasons Abortion is a Problem in Kentucky

(the state I live in...for perspective)

- In Kentucky in 2005 the #1 cause of death was heart disease (10,572), #2 was cancer (9,943), & #3 cause of death was abortion (3,870).
- In Kentucky (2005) there were 3,870 abortion deaths; more than due to stroke (2,103), accident (2,264), flu/pneumonia (996) or suicide (548)
- In Kentucky in 2005, there were 3,870 deaths due to abortion; more than all of the combined deaths of those aged 0-44 (3,361).

The Impact of Abortion on our Population

Here are some tragic abortion statistics of how many adults we are missing in our adult population.

- 30,006,290 US Citizens cannot vote today...because they were killed by abortion from 1973-1993 (12%+ of the US Voting-Age Population).

- 230,000+ Kentucky Citizens cannot vote today because they were killed by abortion from 1973-1993 (7% of Kentucky Voting-Age Population).

HELPFUL RESOURCES

www.gotquestions.org www.ccel.us/AbortionandtheXian.toc.html

What Does the Bible Say About Multi-Level or Network Marketing?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-multi-level-or-network-marketing

Over the years I've been asked good questions about Amway, Zija, Team National, etc. (all with at least 4 out of 5 characteristics of an MLM: <http://www.mlm-thetruth.com/evaluating-mlms/list-mlms-evaluated/>). Here is what the Bible says about MLMs (multi-level marketing) or network marketing. Oftentimes these companies offer ways to supplement income from home and offer enticing stories of people who have made significant amounts of money through their business model. God directs pastors to "teach these things" (1 Timothy 6:3-10) about the dangers of pursuing wealth and desiring to be rich: (Timothy 6:10) "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs."

Some people's motives are genuinely focused on providing income for their family (which is a good thing). Many people in regular, wage/salary-earning jobs can encounter the same temptations as those in MLMs. We must be careful, because the ends (earning an income) do not justify every means (how one goes about working/earning a living). Count the cost of your time and methods and its effect on your relationships.

Dr. Jon Taylor shares some helpful resources at www.mlm-thetruth.com evidencing his research of over 500 MLMs (including Amway, Team National, and Zija) that supports his claim that "approximately 99.9% of ALL recruits (including dropouts) lost money, after subtracting ALL expenses, including minimum operating expenses and "incentivized purchases" (needed to qualify for commissions or bonuses) of goods and services from the company. ...the odds of profiting from gaming tables in Las Vegas are far better."

What is multilevel or network marketing?

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission explains: "In multilevel or network marketing, individuals sell products to the public — often by word of mouth and direct sales. Typically, distributors earn commissions, not only for their own sales, but also for sales made by the people they recruit. Not all multilevel marketing plans are legitimate. If the money you make is based on your sales to the public, it may be a legitimate multilevel marketing plan. If the money you make is based on the number of people you recruit and your sales to them, it's not. It's a pyramid scheme. Pyramid schemes are illegal, and the vast majority of participants lose money. If you're considering buying into a multilevel marketing plan, get the details." (<https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/guidance/multilevel-marketing>)

How do I know if _____ is multilevel or network marketing?

Do your research before you spend any money or make any sort of commitment. Here is a good resource for comparing characteristics of the company and business model you

are considering with established patterns of MLMs and network marketing. www.mlm-thetruth.com/evaluating-mlms/

What does the Bible say about the ethics of our workplace?

We must not seek to covet the possessions of others (10th commandment), steal or defraud others (8th commandment), or lie and deceive others through misinformation or disinformation (9th commandment). Jesus summarizes the law, sharing that the second greatest commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:30-31, Exodus 20:1-17). We must consider if our workplace motives are self-focused or others-focused, that "whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

What do I do if I am already involved with an MLM and am convicted about its business model? Prayerfully consider: 1) Quitting your MLM and distancing yourself from its name and reputation 2) Apologizing to anyone you may have wronged 3) Seeking godly council and accountability when making future business/investment decisions 4) Cautioning others who may be considering MLM involvement.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Philippians 2:3-4

In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Acts 20:35

TOP 5 BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES AND VERSES ON PROSPERITY

- **Be Content With What You Have** – 1 Timothy 6:6-8 "But godliness with contentment is great gain, 7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content." *Are you pursuing more stuff? Are you content now?*
- **The Love of Money = Roots Of All Kinds of Evil** – 1 Timothy 6:9-10 "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." *Do you love money? Are you tempted for more? What consumes your thoughts & wants?*
- **Loving & Trusting In Wealth = Impossible to Enter Into God's Kingdom** – Mark 10:17-31 "And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!'" *Do you see wealth as dangerous or desirable?*
- **Store Up Treasures in Heaven** – Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is,

there your heart will be also." *What do you treasure and value? How would you respond if you lost all your possessions?*

- **Riches Never Satisfy** – Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. 11 When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes?" *What makes you happy? How do you find satisfaction in life?*

(two close runners up...Don't Associate with Greedy People who Claim to be Christians (1 Corinthians 5:11) & An Entitlement Attitude is a Deadly Attitude - Achan (Joshua 7:10-26))

TOP 5 QUOTES ON MONEY & PROSPERITY

- "The most obvious lesson in Christ's teaching is that there is no happiness in having or getting anything, but only in giving." Henry Drummond
- "Nothing I am sure has such a tendency to quench the fire of religion as the possession of money." J.C. Ryle
- "God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving." Randy Alcorn
- "It is prosperity that we cannot endure." Martin Luther
- "Few are made better by prosperity, whom afflictions make worse." William Gurnall

TOP 5 BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES AND VERSES ON FINANCES

1. It Is His Money: It All Belongs to God. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

2. Budget & Be Responsible. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' (Luke 14:28-30)

3. Spend Less than You Earn: Pay Your Bills. But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:8). So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

4. Work Hard To Live. Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. ...10For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. 11 For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. (2 Thessalonians 3:6,10-12)

5. Work Hard to Give. In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” (Acts 20:35)

The bottom line? Anyone considering MLMs needs to know the facts about their chances of actually realizing a profit for their time/effort and consider the truthfulness of MLM and Network marketing claims and the ethical concerns with MLM methodology and business practices. *Christians need to consider the reputation of the companies they associate with and consider the implications and effects such participation may have on their Christian witness among the friends they solicit and in their community.*

HELPFUL RESOURCES

www.mlm-thetruth.com/tools1/consumerguides/typical-mlm-deceptions/
www.gotquestions.org/multi-level-marketing.html
www.desiringgod.org/sermons/magnifying-god-with-money
www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-booby-trap-in-the-christian-budget

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?
(Jeremiah 17:9 ESV)

God's description of idolatry?

"The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play."
(Exodus 32:6, 1 Corinthians 10:7)

Don't waste your life!

What Does the Bible Say About Money?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-money

1. **Everything Belongs to God** – Genesis 1:1, Psalm 24:1, Haggai 2:8, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
2. **God Makes It Possible for You to Earn Money** – Deuteronomy 8:18
3. **An Entitlement Attitude is a Deadly Attitude** - Achan (Joshua 7:10-26)
4. **Prioritize God and Give to Him Before Anyone Else** - Proverbs 3:9-10
5. **God Blesses Those Financially Who Honor Him Financially** – Proverbs 3:9-10
6. **Don't Work Hard to Get Rich** – Proverbs 23:4-5
7. **Desire Only Your Daily Needs** – Proverbs 30:8-9
8. **Riches Never Satisfy** – Ecclesiastes 5:10-11
9. **Not Giving to God = Robbing From God** - Malachi 3:8
10. **Stealing A Little Leads Towards Stealing A Lot** - Judas (John 12:6, Matthew 26:15)
11. **Do Not Give to Receive Praises of Men** – Matthew 6:1-4
12. **Store Up Treasures in Heaven** – Matthew 6:19-20
13. **Can't Serve God and Money** - Matthew 6:24
14. **Pay Your Bills, As You Expect To Be Paid** – Matthew 7:12
15. **You Must Be Willing To Abandon Everything to Follow Jesus** - Matthew 19:6-19, Mark 10:21
16. **Investing In God Reaps Immense Dividends** – Matthew 19:27-29
17. **Faithfulness With Little Will Result In Being Entrusted With Much** – Matthew 25:21
18. **Impossible for Money-Lovers to Enter Into God's Kingdom** – Mark 10:25
19. **Lavish Giving Out of Poverty – Poor Widow** - Mark 12:43-44
20. **Giving and Blessing Are Connected** - Luke 6:38
21. **Be Rich Toward God** – Luke 12:19-21
22. **Don't Financially Commit to Something You Can't Financially Finish** – Luke 14:28-30
23. **Must Give Up Rights Over Everything to Follow Jesus** – Luke 14:33
24. **Heart Change Results In Giving Change – Zacchaeus** – Luke 19:8
25. **What You Treasure, Reflects Your Heart's Health** – Luke 6:45, 12:34
26. **The Early Church Shared Everything they Possessed** – Acts 4:32, 2:44

- 27. Work Hard Because It Is More Blessed to Give than to Receive** – Acts 20:35
- 28. Christians Ask and Contribute On Behalf of Other Christians and Missions Work** – Acts 11:29-30; 12:25; 20:3-4; 24:7, Galatians 2:10, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 8-9, Romans 15:25-33
- 29. Ananias and Sapphira Die for False Giving** – Acts 5:1-11
- 30. God Knows What We Give – Cornelius & Memorial Offering** – Acts 10:2-4
- 31. We Will One Day Give An Account of Our Lives to God** - Romans 14:10, 12
- 32. Don't Associate with Greedy People who Claim to be Christians** - 1 Corinthians 5:11
- 33. God Commands the Support of Gospel Ministers** – 1 Corinthians 9:9,14
- 34. Give When You Get Paid and In Proportion to What You Get Paid or Given** - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2
- 35. Given Even When You Are Extremely Poor, Sacrificially Beyond Your Means** - 2 Corinthians 8:2-3
- 36. Equal Sacrifices Among All Believers** – 2 Corinthians 8:7,13-14
- 37. Sow Little, Reap Little; Sow a Lot, Harvest a Lot** – 2 Corinthians 9:6-9
- 38. Give With A Cheerful Heart** - 2 Corinthians 9:7
- 39. Lavish Giving Pleases God** - Philippians 4:18
- 40. Giving Generously Reflects A Trust in God's Provision** – Philippians 4:19
- 41. Stay Away from Lazy People** – 2 Thessalonians 3:6
- 42. People Unwilling to Work Should Not Benefit (Eat) At Others' Expense** – 2 Thessalonians 3:10
- 43. Work Hard & Quietly; Earn Your Own Living** – 2 Thessalonians 3:11-12
- 44. Not Providing for Your Family & Household = A Denial of Faith** – 1 Timothy 5:8
- 45. Be Content With What You Have** – 1 Timothy 6:6-7
- 46. Love of Money = Roots Of All Kinds of Evil** – 1 Timothy 6:9-10
- 47. Rich Need to Be Humble and Generous** – 1 Timothy 6:17-19
- 48. Everything Good You Have is From God** – James 1:17
- 49. Lay Down Our Lives for Christ** – 1 John 3:16-19
- 50. Not Giving to Meet Needs = Reason to Question One's Salvation** – 1 John 3:17

Questions on Money and Giving

How often do I need to give? As often as you are paid or receive money or income.

How much do I need to give? The tithe is a consistent biblical, joyous standard for giving, but the Christian should desire and seek to give offerings that go beyond it. Give proportionately to what you receive.

Do I tithe before (gross income) or after taxes (net income)? Scriptural giving always gives God the best, and gives to Him first. We should give proportionately to what we earn before taxes (gross income).

Is it ok to give to Christian charities instead of the church? Is it ok to designate my offering instead of giving to the “general fund”? Committed giving through the local church is the common theme of Scripture. This allows the church to prayerfully and corporately decide priorities and avenues of Gospel ministry through budgeting. Offerings beyond the tithe should be encouraged to go through designated offerings & charities.

I don't have enough money to give. Can I just wait to have enough? God consistently tells us to prioritize him first in our giving. Often times our issue is not money flow in, but the money we've overspent or over committed. We must live within our means and be both faithful to give to God and faithful to pay our debts.

Quotes on Money and Giving

“Never be afraid of giving up your best, and God will give you His better.”
James Hinton

“The most obvious lesson in Christ's teaching is that there is no happiness in having or getting anything, but only in giving.”
Henry Drummond

“The cistern contains: The fountain overflows.”
William Blake

“Get all you can, save all you can and give all you can.”
John Wesley

“Give according to your income, lest God make your income according to your giving.”
~**Unknown**

“You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.”
Amy Carmichael

“Feel for others – in your pocket.”
Charles Spurgeon

“Nothing I am sure has such a tendency to quench the fire of religion as the possession of money.”
J.C. Ryle

“It is prosperity that we cannot endure.”
Martin Luther

“God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving.”
Randy Alcorn

“When blessed with wealth, let them withdraw from the competition of vanity and be modest, retiring from ostentation, and not be the slaves of fashion.”
William Wilberforce

“Few are made better by prosperity, whom afflictions make worse.”
William Gurnall

What Does the Bible Say About Idols?

www.trustworthyword.com/idols

Exodus 20:3–6 “You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.” (ESV)

Characteristics of Idols - What are they like?

Man Created

- Acts 7:41 “And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands.”

Part of the Creation, Inanimate (without life)

- Isaiah 44:15 “Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it.”
- Jeremiah 10:5 “idols...Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good.”
- 1 Corinthians 8:4 “Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that ‘an idol has no real existence,’ and that ‘there is no God but one.’”

Dedicated to Demons, Continuing to the Last Days

- Revelation 9:20 “The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk”

Counterfeit of God-Worship and God-Directed Sacrifices

- 2 Corinthians 11:14–15 “And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. [15] So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.” (see Matthew 4:9, Satan’s desire to be worshiped)

Purposes of Idols - Why are they made and worshiped?

- **Fake Religion**
- **Self-Control**
- **Self-Worship**
- **Ancestor Worship**
- **Fearful Avoidance of Suffering**
- **Covetous Desire for Pleasures**

Examples of Idols

1 Corinthians 8:5–6 “For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—[6] yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist”

- **Ancestor Worship** - dedicated to family members who have died as a form of worship & respect
- **Animism/Spiritism** - crafted in tribal religions in varying forms dedicated to either named or unnamed spirits for specific purposes or protections
- **Polytheism** - common in formal religions to named deities, sometimes particular “gods” are assigned to certain families, villages, or people groups
- **Occult** - more overtly connected to demonic worship with the desire for demonic wisdom, empowerment, or protection
- **Atheism** - objects of materialism or self-knowledge that bring temporary comfort or relief from the fear of death or for a greater sense of self-identity, self-satisfaction, or self-empowerment
- **Nominal Christianity** - health, wealth, status, materialism, family, sports, entertainment, substances, appearance, work, education, food,

Dangers of Idols

Evidence of Lostness, Destined to Hell

Galatians 5:19–21 “Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Connected to the Demonic

1 Corinthians 10:14–22 “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. [15] I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. [16] The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? [17] Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. [18] Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? [19] What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? [20] No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. [21] You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

Provoking the One, True God to Anger

- 1 Corinthians 10:22 “Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he”

Just Wrath and Punishment

- Acts 7:42 “But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets”

Cycle of Enslavement

- 1 Corinthians 12:2 “You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led.”

Commands from God about Idols

Avoid Idols & Idolatry-Connected Items & Practices

- Acts 15:20 “but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.”
- 1 John 5:21 “Little children, keep yourselves from idols”
- 1 Corinthians 10:14 “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry”

Be Bothered By Them: Cannot Serve Both Idols and God

- Acts 17:16 “Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.”
- 2 Corinthians 6:16 “What agreement has the temple of God with idols?”
- 1 Thessalonians 1:9 “how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (see Eze 23:29)

Share the Gospel with Idol Worshipers

- Acts 17:22–23 “Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.”

Avoid Behaviors Similar to Idol-Worship: Avoid Hypocrisy

- Romans 2:22 “You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?”

Destroy Your Idols

- Colossians 3:5 “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

Food Sacrifices - Be Careful and Wise

- Acts 15:29 “you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols”
- 1 Corinthians 8:9–13 “But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. [12] Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.”
- 1 Corinthians 10:27–28 “If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. [28] But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience”
- Revelation 2:14, 20 rebuke for “eating food sacrificed to idols”

Worship Services - Avoid Them Altogether

1 Corinthians 10:21 “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.”

Run from the Most Common Form of Idolatry Today: The Idol of Self

As a child, I remember learning the Ten Commandments. When I heard of the second commandment, about not making, serving, sacrificing to, or bowing down to idols, I thought that would be the easiest commandment to obey.

Exodus 20:4–5 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath...You shall not bow down to them or serve them.”

As I grew older, I traveled across America and to Asia, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and Africa and saw many instances of devotion, veneration, prayer, and sacrifices to images, icons, relics, sites, statues, charms, the dead, and idols in Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Mormonism, ancestor worship, Catholicism, and tribal religions. These practices seemed so foreign to me that I continued in my confidence that I would never struggle with the sin of idolatry.

Deuteronomy 4:16–19 “beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female”

But then, when I read the definition of an “idol” (“an object of extreme devotion; a greatly loved or admired person”) I realized that I may be more guilty of idolatry than I cared to admit. What is the most common form of idolatry today? The idolatry that you and I have all been guilty of?

The idolatry of self.

Colossians 3:5 “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and *covetousness, which is idolatry.*”

Why is covetousness equated with idolatry? Idolatry happens when we treat anyone, including ourselves, as a replacement to God. When we desire something that God hasn't provided, and seek to obtain it apart from His sovereign hand, we commit idolatry. When we treat something that God has provided with greater love, trust, and commitment than towards our Creator, we commit idolatry. When we try to find a way out of suffering, or avoid it altogether, apart from seeking the Lord's deliverance, we commit idolatry. When we love, trust, and obey ourselves more than God, we commit idolatry.

Isaiah 2:8 “Their land is filled with idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made.”

Our culture encourages us to worship and trust ourselves. You be you. You only live once. Your truth. Our culture daily feeds the idol of self: health, wealth, status, image,

vanity, reputation, materialism, family, sports, entertainment, substances, appearance, work, education, & food. Billboards. Commercials. Ads. Social Media. Entertainment. Everywhere we look we see the encouragement to prioritize and love ourselves.

Romans 1:22–25 “Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man”

Many “good things” can become “God things” in our life if we are not careful. The book of 1 John, which distinguishes true faith from false faith, ends with an important warning to born-again followers of Jesus: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21).

May we repent of and run from the idolatry of self.

What Does the Bible Say About Secret Sin?

All of us face a common temptation to sin, especially in secret. Our particular temptations may be different, but our struggle with sin is real. God has a lot to say to help us as we struggle with secret sin.

Romans 7:15 “For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.”

Secret Sin Is Common. In the story of Moses, before he commits murder, he looks around to see if he is alone. His hope, as he sinned, was to keep his sin secret. Do you have a struggle that you are seeking to keep secret? You are not alone in this temptation and struggle.

Exodus 2:12 “He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.”

Secret Sin Gets Exposed. Even if we feel we have hidden our sin from others, God wants us to know that He knows. God warns us because he wants us to confess our sin, change direction with our life, and to find healing and restoration with Him and others. Ultimately all sin is against God, so we must take it seriously and take proper steps of repentance towards Him.

Numbers 32:23 “behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out.”

Secret Sin Has External Consequences. When Moses murdered, very real consequences followed with him being forced to flee the home and people he had known for his whole life. Our sin has real, life-impacting consequences. The quicker we confess and repent, the quicker the healing and relief can occur.

Luke 12:2 “Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.”

Secret Sin Has Internal Consequences. When you carry around your sin, it tears you up on the inside. When you confess your sin and carry it to Christ, you realize and enjoy such a relief from the burden. Are you ready for relief?

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Confession Leads to Healing. Secret sin Has relational consequences. When we sin, our relationships with God and others are damaged. Our God is so merciful and gracious to offer us a way back to Him and, as best as possible for us, to try to restore our human relationships.

James 5:16 “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.”

Repentance Leads to Restoration. Without confession to, repentance towards, and trust in Jesus we remain under condemnation. In Christ, we will be convicted to confess and repent in such a way that we experience and enjoy His goodness in an amazing way. Is there a sin you need to confess? Go to Jesus and go to those you’ve hurt and experience the goodness of Jesus.

Romans 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Best Children's Bible Apps

www.trustworthyword.com/childrens-bible-apps

Children's Bibles

- **Bible for Kids** (FREE) - LifeChurch.TV , YouVersion
BEST FREE Children's Bible App!!!
- **The Beginner's Bible** (some is free) - HarperCollins Christian Publishing
○ *BEST PAID Children's Bible App!!!*
- **Bible.is KIDZ** (FREE) - Faith Comes by Hearing - Listen. See. Grow.
- **God's Love: A Bible Storybook** - Positive Action for Christ

Bible Verse Memory

- **God's Word: Hide It!** (FREE) - Kingdom Media, LLC
- **Verses - Bible Memory** (cost varies based on translation) Verses, Ltd. Co. (under iPhone apps)

Bible Trivia

- **Superbook Bible Trivia Game** (FREE) - The Christian Broadcasting Network
- **Scripture Champion** (FREE) - Kingdom Media LLC

Bible Songs

- **Cubbies Bible Verse Music: Sing Along with Scripture Songs from AWANA** - Kingdom Media
- **Bible Songs: Sing Along with Noah and other Bible Heroes for Children** - Kingdom Media
- **GarageBand** (FREE) - Apple (to play along with Christian music)

Various Bible Apps

- **Got Questions?** (FREE) Got Questions Ministries
- **Superbook Kid's Bible, Videos, and Games** (FREE - videos can be downloaded if you are a subscriber) - The Christian Broadcasting Network
Best Bible Video Series for Kids!!
Subscribe at: <https://www.cbn.com/giving/special/sbdvdclub.aspx>
- **Owlegories** (FREE - full videos can be purchased) - Spy House, LLC

Bibles for All Ages

- **ESV Study Bible** - Crossway
BEST PAID Study Bible

Also get as an in-app purchase within the ESV Bible

- **Gideons** (FREE) - Faith Comes by Hearing
BEST FREE Audio Bible

Also can get through Bible.is App

Multiple languages to read or listen!

YouVersion Bible (FREE) - LifeChurch.TV , YouVersion
#1 Rated and Downloaded Bible App

Bible Characters

4soils.com has a collection of Bible Characters apps (a few are free, but most have various prices with bundled prices having the most value) - Kingdom Media

Life of Jesus Bundle, Miracles of Jesus bundle, Parables of Jesus bundle, Bible Heroes bundle, Esther, David, Joseph, Noah, Jonah, Daniel

Fun Ideas on How to Use Children's Bible Apps

- 1. Trivia Contest:** Pair up or have a group competition using a trivia app!
- 2. Bible Verse Lookup:** Have a race to see who can find a verse first!
- 3. Character Discovery:** Challenge your child to find a particular character or story on the SuperBook or another app.
- 4. Scripture Artwork:** Use an app to draw out a Scripture or color a story activity.
- 5. Music Play Along:** Use GarageBand to play instruments & sing a song or hymn.
- 6. Find and Listen:** Use Bible.is KIDZ or ESV Study Bible to play the Bible out loud.
- 7. Bible Memory:** Memorize a verse for a prize using an app to help!
- 8. Got Questions:** Find some challenging and interesting questions with Bible answers!
- 9. Sing Along:** Sing loud and proud as you place a Bible song!
- 10. Church Happenings Exploration:** Use your church's app to explore activities.
- 11. Language Lookup:** Use the Gideons app to read a Bible verse in another language.
- 12. Verse Connections:** Use the ESV Study Bible to use notes to find corresponding verses or Bible references.

How to Talk to Your Kids About the Toughest Topics

www.trustworthyword.com/tough-topics-kids

6 Tips on “The Talks”

- **Just Do It** - Yes this is a tough (and super awkward!!!) topic. But if you don't teach your child, someone else will. If you don't protect your child, someone may harm them. So don't wait for your kid's friends, teachers, TV or the internet to “educate” your children. Take the initiative. The best offense is a good defense! So stay ahead of the game with age appropriate books and resources as shared below.
- **Speak Simply & Shortly** - See what questions your kids ask and give brief, easy to understand answers. Think through short answers. Use good clarifying questions to create dialogue. Here are some free (from FocusOnTheFamily.com), age-appropriate biblical responses, questions, wisdom, and prayers to help prepare to respond on the issues of:
 - **Transgender:** <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/socialissues/sexuality/talking-to-your-children-about-transgender-issues>
 - **Homosexuality:** <http://media.focusonthefamily.com/free-downloads/pdf/2017-httycah-online.pdf>
 - **Sex:** <http://media.focusonthefamily.com/free-downloads/pdf/The-Talk.pdf>
 - **Marriage:** http://media.focusonthefamily.com/fotf/pdf/channels/social-issues/2017_tv_httycam_printready.pdf
- **Tell the Truth** - Try to incorporate Bible truths wherever you can. You may not remember all the details of a Bible story or verse, but start with what you remember. Be honest if you don't know but commit to help find a good answer later on. Try GotQuestions.org or GQkidz.org
- **Keep the Conversation Going** - Be sure not to shut down the conversation. Use open ended questions. Thank your kids for bringing up tough situations and tell them how much you enjoyed talking with them. Share that you hope that you want to continue to safely answer their questions anytime they desire. Affirm how proud you are of them for wanting to know God's answers.
- **Be Nice** - Encourage your child. Be kind in your tone of voice. Don't be defensive or argumentative. Don't insult or condescend to others. Avoid anger when you hear what your child may have seen, heard, or experienced elsewhere. Help your child to see people's main need as Jesus, not moralism (being a good person).
- **Pray, Pray, Pray!**- Preparing for, starting with, and ending conversations with prayer is crucial. We need God all the time, but asking for His wisdom and help in such difficult discussions is essential. Praying in such situations models godly humility and God-dependence to your kids, showing them that Jesus and the Bible are our authorities and not merely human opinions.

Top 6 Parenting Resources for “The Talks”!

To Guide & Equip Your Kids On Gender, Sex, & Purity

- “The Talks” by Barrett and Jenifer Johnson (on RightNow Media)
- “How and When to Tell Your Kids About Sex” – by Stan and Brenna Jones
- “Six Ways to Keep the “Little” in Your Girl” (SecretKeeperGirl.com)
- “Six Ways to Keep the “Good” in Your Boy” by Dannah Gresh
- “Raising a Modern-Day Knight” – by Robert Lewis
- “Raising a Modern-Day Princess” - by Pam Farrell and Doreen Hanna
- “Stepping Up: A Call to Courageous Manhood” – by Dennis Rainey
- “Letters to My Daughters: The Art of Being a Wife” - by Barbara Rainey

Top Resources for Children (By Age)

Ages 3-7:

13. *The Princess and the Kiss* and *The Squire and the Scroll* by Jennie Bishop
14. *The Story of Me* by Stan and Brenna Jones (“God’s Design for Sex Series #1”)
15. *Before I Was Born* by Carolyn Nystrom (“God’s Design for Sex Series #2”)
16. *Good Pictures Bad Pictures Jr.: A Simple Plan to Protect Young Minds* by Kristen A. Jenson

Ages 8-12:

- *Good Pictures, Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today’s Young Kids* by Kristen A. Jenson and Gail Poyner
- *What’s the Big Deal? Why God Cares About Sex* by Stan&Brenna Jones (“God’s Design for Sex Series #3”)
- *The Ultimate Girls’ Body Book* by Walt Larimore & Dr.Mari Wohlever
- *The Ultimate Boys’ Body Book* by Walt Larimore, MD
- *It’s Great to Be a Guy* by Jarrod Sechler with Dannah Gresh
- *It’s Great to Be a Girl* by Dannah Gresh and Suzy Weibel
- *Passport2Purity* by FamilyLife
- *So You’re About to Be a Teenager* by Dennis, Barbara, Samuel, and Rebecca Rainey

Ages 13+:

- *Facing the Facts: The Truth About Sex and You* by Stan and Brenna Jones (“God’s Design for Sex Series,” #4)
- *Every Young Man’s Battle: Strategies for Victory in the Real World of Sexual Temptation* by Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker
- *Every Young Woman’s Battle: Guarding Your Mind, Heart, and Body* by Shannon Ethridge and Stephen Arterburn
- *Passport2Identity* by FamilyLife
- *Aggressive Girls, Clueless Boys & Interviewing Your Daughter’s Date* by Dennis Rainey

Top 6 Most Helpful Online Resources

- www.familylife.com - Biblical resources especially focused on strengthening marriages.
- www.focusonthefamily.org - Biblical equipping with an excellent emphasis on parenting.
- www.gotquestions.org - Biblical answers to over 500,000 life questions.
- www.familymatters.net - Great small group resources for marriage and parenting.
- www.covenanteyes.com - Pornography accountability software.
- www.livingout.org - Biblical help to those experiencing same-sex attraction.

Circle Home & CircleGo - www.meetcircle.com - This is the best way for families to manage content and time online, on any device. (\$99 for home version & \$5/month for up to 10 devices on CircleGo)

- **CircleGo** - Your family's mobile devices, now managed across all networks. Everything covered, now everywhere. Apps are the new Internet, and managing them wherever your kid goes is a must for parents. Filters and Time Limits apply anywhere and everywhere, even for apps like Snapchat, Instagram, and YouTube.

Bark: www.bark.us The best way to have your child's text messages, images, emails and social media communications scanned and categorized for concerning content. Includes many other features with controlling access, managing time online, and providing location updates.

About the Author

Dr. Jonathan Carl



Jonathan Carl grew up in the great state of Texas as the oldest of six kids. He graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point and served in the U.S. Army as a tanker with a combat tour in Iraq in the early 2000s. He had the joy of journeying to Kentucky where he met and married his wonderful wife, Brittney. Several years later he became the lead pastor at South Fork Baptist Church where he has served for over a decade.

He enjoyed the opportunities to study and earn his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Evangelism & Missions from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Jonathan & Brittney have four daughters (Sophia, Lydia, Alia & Mia) with whom they enjoy spending every spare minute they can.

