

# DISCIPLESHIP TEACHINGS



## MANUAL

**THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR FAITH AND SERMONS AND TEACHINGS**

**TO HELP EMPOWER, ENCOURAGE AND EQUIP**

**ALL CHRISTIANS TO FULFIL THEIR GOD GIVEN DESTINY**

**(May God bless and encourage you as you read these sermon notes and teachings.)**

Notes compiled by: Conrad Fenton

Covering Church: Church of Hope Inc.

GPO Box 3552, Melbourne, 3001

**No copyright. Please reproduce as much as you want.**

Web Site: [www.coh.org.au](http://www.coh.org.au)

# INDEX

	Page No.
<b><i>INTRODUCTION (Building your life on the Word of God)</i></b>	<b>6</b>
<b><i>THE SIX FOUNDATIONS OF OUR FAITH:</i></b>	<b>12</b>
i) Repentance from dead works	12
ii) Faith toward God	14
iii) The Doctrine of Baptisms	15
iv) Laying on of hands	17
v) Resurrection of the dead, and	19
vi) Eternal Judgement	21
 <b><i>DISCIPLESHIP SERMONS AND TEACHINGS:</i></b>	
<b><i>SERMONS:</i></b>	
1. Having courage to make your life count	28
2. Having an overcoming faith	35
3. God's heart for the lost	42
4. Just believe that your life can make a difference in this world	53
5. The faithfulness of God and (our potential in Christ)	62
6. We are called to serve	67
7. God has a unique plan for our life	72
8. Kingdom Power	77

	Page No.
<b>9. Faith for healing</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>10. Letting go of control in our life</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>11. Moving on into all that God has planned for your life</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>12. Putting the past behind</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>13. The importance of persevering in our Christian walk (and encouraging one another)</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>14. 7 Teachings from Prithi and Shobana Tissainayagam (Christian Life Assembly, Victoria, Australia)</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>a) Six teachings on walking in the WISDOM of the Lord</b>	
i) <b>W</b> aiting and seeking to do the Will of God	<b>126</b>
ii) <b>I</b> nfluence through Godly Identity	<b>127</b>
iii) <b>S</b> elf control by Surrendering your life to Christ	<b>128</b>
iv) <b>D</b> isciplined and diligent in our walk with Christ	<b>129</b>
v) <b>O</b> bedient to the Omniscient (All knowing) God	<b>130</b>
vi) <b>M</b> eekness as we walk humbly to honour the Master	<b>131</b>
<b>b) Overcoming Temptation</b>	<b>132</b>

***TEACHINGS FOR EVERYDAY LIFE:***

<b>15.</b>	<b>The need to speak words of life</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>16.</b>	<b>The power of the tongue</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>17.</b>	<b>Godliness with contentment is great gain</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>18.</b>	<b>Finishing our Christian walk strongly</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>19.</b>	<b>The life of king Jehoshaphat</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>20.</b>	<b>The importance of loving and serving others</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>21.</b>	<b>The importance of walking in unity</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>22.</b>	<b>God's incredible love for us</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>23.</b>	<b>The importance of having a right heart</b>	<b>175</b>

***PRACTICAL KEYS TO ABUNDANT LIFE***

<b>24.</b>	<b>Being faithful to our ministry call</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>25.</b>	<b>God has a good plan for our life</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>26.</b>	<b>An overview of what is important for all church leaders</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>27.</b>	<b>Living one day at a time</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>28.</b>	<b>Faith the currency of Heaven</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>29.</b>	<b>7 Keys to help find your fit in the Body of Christ</b>	<b>207</b>
<b>30.</b>	<b>Some keys to answered prayers</b>	<b>211</b>
<b>31.</b>	<b>Attributes of a healthy church</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>32.</b>	<b>Overcoming fear</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>33.</b>	<b>Some keys to overcoming anger</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>34.</b>	<b>The importance of walking in forgiveness</b>	<b>229</b>
<b>35.</b>	<b>Touching Heaven, Changing Earth</b>	<b>231</b>
<b>36.</b>	<b>The greatest is love</b>	<b>234</b>
<b>APPENDIX (DOCTRINAL BELIEFS)</b>		<b>238</b>

# INTRODUCTION

## (Building your life on the Word of God)

This manual has been put together to help encourage and strengthen all believers in their walk with the Lord. As Christians we live in a world which is full of ungodly influences and at times even hostility to the things of God. The Bible has much to say on the importance of all believers being overcomers in this life. **(Revelation 21:7)** **(Revelation 2:11, 17, 26)** **(Revelation 3:5, 10-12, 21)**

Jesus in His life here on earth said many things to His disciples to encourage them. Jesus said to His disciples, *“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”* **(John 16:33)**

**Jesus said as He began talking about the end of this age,**

“And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold, But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” **(Matthew 24:12-13)**

**The Apostle Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy,**

“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” **(2 Timothy 3:12)**

In this world there are both people who are under the sway of the Kingdom of Darkness (the sons of this world) **(Ephesians 2:1-3)** and people who belong to the Kingdom of God (those born again believers who belong to God’s family). **(1 Peter 2:9)** **(Ephesians 2:4-6)** As Christians we need to live in this world but not be of this world. **(1 John 2:15-17)** We need to let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven **(Matthew 5:16)** and not allow the spirit of this world to draw us away from our love for the things of God.

Jesus shared in his parable of the Wheat and the Tares that in this life here on earth we will be living both with those who love God (believers) and those who reject the things of God. **(Matthew 13:24-30 & 36-43)** God has given us His Word to help us in this life to remain strong in our faith.

Building our life on the Word of God is the key to remaining strong in our Christian walk and in fulfilling our God given destiny. God has a unique plan and purpose for every Believer’s life **(Ephesians 2:10)** **(John 15:16)**

***Meditating on the Word of God helps Believers to fulfil their God given destiny.***

**Before leading the Israelites into the Promised Land, the Lord said to Joshua,**

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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 1:8*)

**Psalm one also emphasises the importance of meditating on God’s Word.**

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” (*Psalm 1:1-3*)

**Building our lives on the Word of God will also help us to remain strong during those times when we experience great trials or challenges in life.**

***Jesus Himself emphasised the importance of building our life on the rock.***

“Therefore, whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the **rock**; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” (*Matthew 7:24-27*)

**The words “whoever” and “everyone” emphasise the absolute importance of building our life on the Word of God. The entire Bible is inspired of God (2 Timothy 3:16) and contains all that we need to live a life of fruitfulness here on earth. Jesus made it clear that all those who build their life on His teachings and wisdom will not fall when they go through times of trials and challenges.**

**What can also be seen in this passage of Scripture is that we will all at some time experience challenges and trials in our life. Both the wise man and the foolish man experienced storms (challenges) in their life.**

**This passage of Scripture also makes it clear that for those who disregard the teachings of Jesus and who do not build their life on the Word of God, when the trials and disappointments of life come upon them, they will be inadequately prepared and equipped to handle them.**

***The Word of God also helps us to be prepared and thoroughly equipped for all that God has planned for our life.***

**The Apostle Paul wrote, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)**

***When we become Christians we need to replace our wrong mindsets with the truth that is contained in God’s Word.***

**Jesus Himself said, “If you abide in My word you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32)**

**THE APOSTLE PAUL EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING OUR MINDS RENEWED WHEN WE BECOME A BELIEVER.**

**“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:2)**

**“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)**

**WHEN WE BECOME A CHRISTIAN WE BECOME A NEW CREATION IN CHRIST (2 Corinthians 5:17), A CHILD OF GOD (John 1:12) AND WE ARE ADOPTED INTO GOD’S FAMILY. (Romans 8:15-17)**

***AFTER BECOMING A CHRISTIAN WE NEED TO GAIN A FULLER UNDERSTANDING OF THE INHERITANCE THAT WE HAVE IN CHRIST AND HOW WE CAN FULFIL OUR DESTINY IN CHRIST AS WE LEARN HOW TO WALK AS A CHILD OF GOD. (Romans 12:9-21) THE APOSTLE PAUL PRAYED FOR THE CHRISTIANS IN EPHESES, THAT THEY WOULD GAIN GREATER REVELATION IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST. (Ephesians 1:15-23)***

**When we begin to meditate on the Word of God we start to embrace God’s Kingdom values and attitudes in our life. For those who have come from abusive backgrounds or who have been raised up in other religious traditions, meditating on the Word of God will greatly empower them to have a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ and healthier relationships with others.**

***MANY BENEFITS ARE EXPERIENCED BY A BELIEVER WHEN THEY MEDITATE ON THE WORD OF GOD. SOME OF THESE BENEFITS INCLUDE:***

- **Receiving clear direction for our lives**

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:105)

- **Gaining Revelation from God’s Word**

“Your testimonies are wonderful; Therefore my soul keeps them. The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.” (Psalm 119:129-130)

- **Maintaining peace during the storms of life**

“Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.” (Psalm 119:165)

“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.” (Isaiah 26:3)

- **We are assured of God’s great love for us**

The Bible says much about God’s great love for us. The Apostle Paul wrote, “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)

- **Gaining wisdom for everyday life**

“Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they are ever with me.” (Psalm 119:97-98)

- **Being purified and cleansed from our old habits**

“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:9-11)

- **Having our faith encouraged and uplifted**

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”  
(Romans 10:17)

“This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life.”  
(Psalm 119:50)

**THE WORD OF GOD IS FULL OF MANY PROMISES WHICH NEED TO BE APPROPRIATED BY FAITH** (Hebrews 11:1)

- **Receiving encouragement as God speaks through His Word a word in season (Rhema Word)**

“A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!” (Proverbs 15:23)

**God can speak a rhema word to us as we read the Word of God. When we are praying for help or His direction in life, the Holy Spirit will often make a Scripture or passage of Scripture stand out (*a word in season*) to encourage us or to give us direction in life.**

- **Being equipped and prepared for ministry**

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

- **Receiving correction to help us avoid unwanted pitfalls**

“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law.” (Proverbs 29:18)

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...” (Hosea 4:6)

- **Being blessed and prosperous in life,**

“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD! Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart.” (Psalm 119:1)

- **Gaining Prophetic insight into what is to come as we draw near to the end of this age.** *The gospels, some of the epistles and the books of the minor and major prophets such as Daniel and Ezekiel and the book of Revelation contain much content in relation to what is still to come as we approach the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Millennial reign here on earth.*

- **Preventing us from drifting off into wrong doctrine**

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)

**and**

- **Bringing revival into our lives as the Word fills our heart**

“Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it.

Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way. Establish your word to Your servant, who is devoted to fearing You...Revive me in Your righteousness.” (Psalm 119:33-38, 40)

**The following sermons and teachings are full of the Word of God. It is my prayer that as you read through this manual, you will be greatly encouraged in your Christian walk and that you will be inspired to fulfil God’s plan and destiny for your life as you wholeheartedly commit to loving and serving Him.**

# THE SIX FOUNDATIONS OF OUR FAITH

“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 3:11)

“Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” (Hebrews 6:1-2)

**In this passage of Scripture six doctrines of our faith are identified:**

- i) Repentance from dead works,
- ii) Faith toward God,
- iii) The doctrine of baptisms,
- iv) Laying on of hands,
- v) Resurrection of the dead, and
- vi) Eternal Judgment.

**These six doctrines (foundations of our faith) will now be discussed in turn.**

## **i) REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS**

True repentance must always precede true faith. Without such repentance, faith alone is an empty profession. Christ and His apostles preached “Repent and believe.” Any preacher who leaves out the call to repentance is misleading sinners and misrepresenting God. Jesus Himself made it clear to those who told Him about the Galileans who had been killed by Pilate, “...unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3)

### ***WHAT REPENTANCE IS NOT***

- **Repentance is not the conviction of sin.** Conviction brings people to repentance. However many people go to the alter feeling guilty of their sin, but are not willing to let go of their sin.
- **Repentance is not remorse.** A person may have remorse over what they have done, but not wish to repent of what they have done. A person can stand before a judge with tears in his eyes, feeling sorry for himself, not wanting to go to jail, yet not sorry for breaking the law.

- **Repentance is not just a determination to do better (*Reformation*).** Many people make New Year's resolutions however they do not last long. Whilst repentance does involve reformation, if God is not involved in the reformation, if it is not based on the work of the cross, then it is not repentance and it will ultimately fail. Unrepentant Christians are most likely to be caught up in religious works.
- **Repentance is not just being religious.** People can even serve in a church and raise their hand and even shout "Hallelujah" but still not repent.
- **Repentance is not "just believism."** Repentance is not just an emotional feeling.

## ***WHY WE NEED TO REPENT***

Repentance is necessary because we have all sinned. "For all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God." (**Romans 3:23**) There are around 103 sins defined in the Bible in every category imaginable, however the root of all these sins is the same. This root is the rejection of the rule and ways of God, due to unbelief. This root of unbelief must be dealt with through repentance.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (**John 3:16**) The need for repentance must be focused on the condition of a person's heart before a Holy God. The Prophet Jeremiah said, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (**Jeremiah 17:9**)

**A person who has not repented is simply committed to going his own way and doing his own thing apart from God.**

## ***WHAT IS TRUE REPENTANCE***

TRUE repentance has two compulsory components:

- 1) **TRUE REPENTANCE** is based on a recognition that we have sinned. It is the supernatural power of God that has been placed in the gospel, which enables a person to repent. (**God's saving Grace**)
- 2) **TRUE REPENTANCE** also involves a recognition that we are responsible to turn from our sins to God. *Repentance is an inner change of mind resulting in an outward turning back, or turning around, to face and to move in a completely new direction. This turning around has three elements. A turning from sin and dead works, a turning to God, and an intent to serve Him and to obey His commands.*

## ii) FAITH TOWARD GOD

After a person repents, he must then make a *personal response* to the gospel.

***THE BASIC FACTS OF THE GOSPEL ARE:***

- 1) *Christ was delivered by God the Father to the punishment of death on account of our sins*
- 2) *Christ was buried*
- 3) *God raised Him from the dead on the third day, and*
- 4) *Righteousness is received from God through believing these facts*

To receive salvation and the gift of eternal life, each individual soul must make a **direct personal response to Christ.**

***THIS PERSONAL RESPONSE TO CHRIST CAN BE DESCRIBED IN MANY WAYS:***

**i) Calling upon the Name of Christ as Lord**

“For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (*Romans 10:13*)

**ii) Coming to Christ**

Jesus said, “Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (*Matthew 11:28*) “...and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.” (*John 6:37b*)

**iii) Personally receiving Christ**

“He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (*John 1:11-13*)

**iv) Drinking of the water of life, which Christ alone can give**

Jesus said, “But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (*John 4:14*)

***Each individual soul must make a direct personal response to Christ from the heart.***

Jesus said, “Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.” (*Revelations 3:20*)

### iii) THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

“There are two Christian Baptisms. One is the Water Baptism and the other is being Baptised in the Holy Spirit by Jesus. They will now be discussed in turn.

#### WATER BAPTISM

“The bible makes it clear that water baptism is not an optional extra. Jesus Himself was baptized, even though He had no need to repent of sin. (**Mark 1:9**) Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize new believers. (**Matthew 28:19**) Water baptism is for all believers. (**Mark 16:16**) *Water Baptism is an outward expression of what has already taken place in the heart of the new believer.*

Before a person is baptized he must have first repented of his sins and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. (**Acts 16:30-33**) Water Baptism, or baptism by full immersion, is also called the “Believers Baptism”

Baptism speaks of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When we follow the Lord’s command to be baptized, we identify with Him in this way. When you accepted Christ as your Saviour, your sins were forgiven – you became “dead” to your past life. (**2 Corinthians. 5:17**) Baptism signifies this death.

The water into which you are immersed is like a “grave” and indicates that you were buried with Christ. As you rise from the water you testify that you are now a new creation, rising to newness of life (resurrection power) in Christ Jesus. (**Romans 6:4**) (**Colossians 2:12**)

In Water Baptism we identify with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (**Galatians 2:20**) Water Baptism also helps to enable a new believer to separate themselves from their ‘old man’, which was dead in sin, whilst reinforcing their commitment to walk in the newness of life in Christ Jesus. (**Romans 6:1-14**)

#### BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Once a person becomes a Christian, God has another wonderful gift for them - the gift of the Holy Spirit. This gift is known as the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Bible speaks much about this experience. John the Baptist spoke of it, and revealed that Jesus is the Baptiser with the Holy Spirit. (**Mark 1:8**) The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is described in a number of different ways, each way referring to an aspect of this wonderful act:

- i) **Baptism in the Holy Spirit** (John 1:33) – which means immersion into the Spirit
- ii) **Gifts of the Spirit** (1 Corinthians 12) – emphasizing the gift aspect
- iii) **Receiving the Spirit** (Acts 19:2) – referring to the actual moment of reception
- iv) **Filled with the Spirit** (Acts 2:4) – suggesting something poured into a person

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is also spoken of as the promise from the Father, which the disciples were to wait for (**Luke 24:29**), and which they received on the day of Pentecost. (**Acts 2:33**)

Before a person can receive the Holy Spirit, they must be saved (Born Again).  
(**Acts 19:2a**)

**The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the submerging of the whole being into the Spirit of God.** It is being filled with the Holy Spirit Who Himself is a living person.

The Holy Spirit empowers us to minister to others. Jesus promised His disciples that when the Holy Spirit came upon them they would receive power to be His witnesses. (**Act 1:8**) After receiving the Holy Spirit, all the disciples become powerful preachers. Being Baptised in the Holy Spirit enables all believers to witness with greater joy and freedom, and with much more boldness when sharing with others who Jesus is, and what He has done for them. It also helps believers to enter into a richer spiritual awareness of the Lord.

God has given a lasting sign as evidence that we have been baptised in the Holy Spirit. That sign is speaking in tongues, or praying in the Spirit. (**Mark 16:17 and Acts 2:4**) The language that you receive when baptised in the Holy Spirit, is not one that you have learnt with the mind. However, you must use your own mouth and tongue to speak the words that God will give you.

The bible says that God gives good gifts. (**James 1:17a**) The Holy Spirit is one such good and perfect gift from God. **The baptism of the Holy Spirit is available to all believers.** Jesus said, “If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.” (**Luke 11:13**) When Jesus baptises us with the Holy Spirit, He does so in a very personal way, a way that seems to suit our individual lives and personalities.

For some it is at home alone and for others after being prayed for by other Christians. This was very common in the early house churches, (**Acts 8:17**) (**Acts 19:6**), but not always so. (**Acts 10:44-46**) The basic requirement for receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit is defined by the Apostle Paul as the hearing of faith. Six steps of faith and obedience, which help a person to be Baptised in the Holy Spirit, are:

- 1) Repentance** (Acts 3:19)    **and**    **2) Water Baptism** (Acts 2:38)
- 3) Being Thirsty and Hungry for more of the Spirit** (John 7:37-38, Matthew 5:6)
- 4) Asking for the Holy Spirit** (Luke 11:13)
- 5) Drinking (Active process of receiving)** (John 7:37 and Psalm 81:10), *and*
- 6) Yielding (Surrender of will, physical members and intellect)** (Romans 6:13)

## iv) LAYING ON OF HANDS

The fourth foundational doctrine of the Christian Faith is that which is called “Laying on of hands” The laying on of hands is used on a number of occasions for specific purposes. These include:

### 1) Transmitting a spiritual blessing or authority to the one upon whom hands are laid:

In the Old Testament, Joseph brought his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh to his father Jacob, and Jacob blessed them by laying his hands on them. (**Gen. 48:14**)

Believers can also lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. (**Mark 16:17-18**)

Christians can also lay hands on other believers who are seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This was common in the early church. (**Acts 8:18**)

**HOWEVER, THE SCRIPTURE ALSO WARNS US THAT THIS ORDINANCE OF LAYING HANDS UPON BELIEVERS IS NOT TO BE PRACTICED LIGHTLY OR CARELESSLY.**

*Paul told Timothy, “Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people’s sins; keep yourself pure.” (1 Timothy 5:22)*

The next purpose for laying on of hands is the imparting of spiritual gifts (Especially the gift of prophecy). The Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome saying,

“For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established – that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.” (**Romans 1:11-12**)

The Apostle Paul told Timothy, “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” (**2 Timothy 1:6**)

## **2) Acknowledging publicly some spiritual blessing or authority already received from God by the one upon whom hands are laid:**

The Lord told Moses to lay hands on Joshua to inaugurate him in the sight of the congregation and to give some of his authority to him. **(Numbers 27:18-20)**

This action produced a tremendous result in Joshua. Now Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom, and the children of Israel heeded him. **(Deuteronomy 34:9)**

## **3) Publicly committing to God for some special task or ministry the one upon whom hands are laid:**

When the Holy Spirit said for Barnabas and Saul to be separated for the work to which He had called them, the Church Elders at Antioch laid hands on them and sent them away.

The Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” **(Acts 13:2)**

“Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.” **(Acts 13:3)**

**THE APPOINTMENT OF DEACONS AND ELDERS IS ANOTHER NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLE OF WHERE THE ORDINANCE OF LAYING ON OF HANDS IS USED.**

(Acts 6:1-6 {deacons} and Acts 14:21-23 {Elders most likely})

## v) RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

The fifth of the foundational doctrines that are listed in Hebrews 6:1-2 is 'Resurrection of the dead.' The first four doctrines relate to this present time, *however this and the last doctrine* relate to the realm of eternity. There are two universal, irrevocable appointments of God: resurrection and judgment. To this universal appointment of resurrection from the dead, the Bible admits only one class of exceptions, those who never die. (These include those Christians who will be raptured, Enoch, Elijah and those who become righteous during the millennium rule of Christ and never die).

**"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."** (2 Corinthians 5:10) **Judgment concerns the things done in the body while on earth. As it is for the things done in the body that man must answer, God has ordained that man should appear in his body before Him to answer for those things.**

**Therefore resurrection of the body must precede eternal judgment.**

There are two diverging destinies for those who die as believers and those who die having rejected Christ. After death there is a complete and permanent separation between the departed spirits of the righteous and the wicked. Prior to Christ's resurrection, the departed spirits of the righteous were consigned to a certain area of Sheol, the netherworld, which was called "Paradise". Since Christ's death and resurrection, the spirits of all believers who die, ascend immediately and directly into heaven and into the presence of God Himself. (2 Corinthians 5:6, 8)

**For those who die as unbelievers, the dark angel of Death who is a minister of Satan's infernal kingdom, claims their spirit and gives it to another of Satan's dark angels called Hades. Hades takes charge of all the spirits of the unrighteous that he receives from the angel of Death and then conducts them to their appointed place of imprisonment.**

**However for all believers we can be comforted by the words of Jesus,**

**"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die..."** (John 11:25-26)

**"Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."** (John 8:51) AND

**"that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."** (John 3:15)

**The believer's resurrection body will be incorruptible, immortal (incapable of death), a body of beauty and glory (free from all of man's present limitations), and it will be raised up from the grave by the power of the almighty God.**

This contrasts with our earthly bodies which are corruptible and subject to sickness, decay, old age and death, and which are a continual source of humiliation as we struggle with sin, physical needs and limitations, and finally which is committed to the grave in weakness.

**The total resurrection of the righteous, from the moment of Christ's own resurrection down to the resurrection of the tribulation martyrs, (just prior to the millennium), is called by the apostle John, "The First Resurrection." All those who take part in this resurrection are "blessed and holy," that is, they are all righteous believers:**

They include, **i)** Christ Himself, and those of the Old Testament saints who were resurrected at the time that He was resurrected, **ii)** "those who are Christ's at His coming" (being those who died in the faith), **iii)** the two witnesses of the tribulation period, and **iv)** the remainder of the tribulation martyrs, who are resurrected at the close of the tribulation period, and who will share with Christ and the other saints the privilege of ruling and judging the nations on earth.

**The "Final Resurrection" will be mainly for "the spiritually dead" (Those who died in sin and unbelief) and who were not written in the Book of Life. They will be cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:11-15) However, there are two categories of people in the "Final Resurrection" who will be delivered from condemnation. These are the righteous who died during Christ's millennial reign on earth, and the queen of the South (Sheba) and the men of Nineveh referred to by Jesus, who were never granted a revelation of Christ's atoning sacrifice. (Luke 11:31-32)**

## vi) ETERNAL JUDGMENT

The sixth and last of the foundational doctrines is Eternal Judgment. Every person will appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Several scriptures make this very clear.

**“For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”** (Romans 14:10a)

**“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, ...”** (2 Corinth. 5:10a)

Each person will be judged according to the things that he did in the body here on earth. God’s judgment is tempered by His mercy and grace, which was manifested in the mediatorial office and the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

**The blood of Jesus pleads for mercy and forgiveness for the sinner.**

“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” **(Romans 5:6-9)**

In the first instance and by sovereign eternal right, judgment belongs to God the Father. The Apostle Peter speaks of “the Father who without partiality judges according to each one’s work” **(1 Peter 1:17)** Here judgment of all men is declared to be the office of God the Father. However in chapter five of John, Christ reveals that the Father has chosen in His sovereign wisdom to commit all judgment to the Son.

“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent Him.” **(John 5:22-23)** “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.” **(John 5:26-27)**

**Because Christ is also the Son of man as well as the Son of God, (Having both a human and divine nature whilst here on earth), in His judgment He is able to make allowance, from His own experience, for all the infirmities and temptations of human flesh.**

So gracious and merciful, however, is the divine nature in the Son, as like the Father, Christ, too, is unwilling to administer judgment. For this reason He has, in turn transferred the final authority from His own person to the Word of God. Jesus Himself said,

*“And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”* **(John 12:47-48)**

*The final authority of all judgment is vested in the Word of God.*

*This is the impartial, unchanging standard to which all men must one day answer. This same revelation concerning God's Word is given in the Old Testament, for David says to God: "The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of your righteous judgments endures forever." (Psalm 119:160) Therefore all the standards and principles of God's judgment are contained within His Word and endure unchanged forever.*

## **FOUR MAIN PRINCIPLES OF DIVINE JUDGMENT REVEALED IN GOD'S WORD:**

### **1) THAT GOD'S JUDGMENT IS ACCORDING TO TRUTH**

"Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things." (Romans 2:1-2) Jesus Himself says to the Father, "Your word is truth" (John 17:17b)

God's standard does not vary. It is always the truth – the revealed truth of God's Word and it applies just as much to the one who judges as to the one who is judged. (We must all ensure that we apply the truth to ourselves and to our own lives).

### **2) THAT JUDGMENT WILL BE RENDERED TO EACH ONE ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS**

God's judgment is according to our "deeds" In heaven God preserves a complete and flawless record of the entire life of every person. According to this record of his deeds preserved on a heavenly scroll or "book", each person will one day be judged. In the account of the final judgment we read that:

"Books were opened...And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books." (Revelation 20:12)

The whole bible makes it plain that God in His judgment of man, takes into account not merely external actions, but also the deepest and most secret thoughts, impulses and motives of the heart.

"In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel" (Romans 2:16)

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God." (1 Corinthians 4:5)

### **3) THAT GOD'S JUDGMENT IS WITHOUT PARTIALITY (OR RESPECT OF PERSONS)**

Men are often influenced in forming their judgments by such external appearances as race, religion, profession, social position, physical appearance, wealth and education. However God's judgment is not influenced or diverted by any of these things. (God also expects that all those who are charged with judging human affairs should never yield to this influence either).

“For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

### **4) THAT JUDGMENT IS ACCORDING TO THE LIGHT AVAILABLE TO THOSE BEING JUDGED**

Each person will be judged according to measure of moral light and understanding which has been made available him. Those who have had the full knowledge of God's moral standards revealed to them through the law of Moses will be judged by that law.

“For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law.” (Romans 2:12)

But those who have not had the fuller revelation of the law of Moses, will not be judged by the law, but in accordance with the general revelation of God granted to the human race as a whole through the wonders of creation.

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so they are without excuse. (Romans 1:20)

Whoever receives an additional and special revelation through God's Word however, will be judged by the higher standard of moral knowledge granted to them. Therefore judgment is according to light – according to the measure of moral knowledge granted to each person.

## **THREE FINAL JUDGMENTS**

### **1)The judgment of Christian believers before the judgment seat of Christ**

All true Christians will be judged first and will appear before the judgment seat of Christ. This is made clear in Scripture.

“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now if the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?” **(1 Peter 4:17-18)**

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” **(2 Corinthians 5:10)**

**The judgment of Christians will not be a judgment of condemnation.**

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” **(Romans 8:1)**

**The true believer in Christ will never need to be judged at all for the sins he has committed. When a person comes as a sinner in faith to Christ, receiving Him as Saviour and confessing Him as Lord, the whole record of that person’s past sins is immediately and eternally blotted out by God, never to be remembered anymore.**

“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.” **(Isaiah 43:25)**

“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)** “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” **(1 John 2:1-2)**

**These two passages teach that if a believer in Christ sins, and thereafter repents and confesses his sin, the record of his sin is erased, and he himself is cleansed from all unrighteousness.**

**The judgment of Christians will not be in relation to their righteousness, but with their service rendered to Christ. The purpose of the judgment will not be to decide upon either acquittal or condemnation, but rather to assess the reward due to each believer for his service to Christ while on earth.**

## **THE JUDGMENT OF BELIEVERS IS TO DETERMINE THEIR REWARDS**

“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)

## **2) The judgment of the Gentile nations at the close of the great tribulation – Carried out before the throne of Christ’s glory**

After Israel has passed through the fires of the great tribulation and been reconciled again to God through Jesus Christ, there will be no further need for God to judge them. Thereafter, when Christ sets up His earthly Kingdom and takes His seat upon the throne of His Glory, He will need only to judge the Gentile nations remaining alive on earth at the close of the great tribulation.

**“When the Son of Man comes in His Glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.”** (Matthew 25:31-33)

**The purpose of the judgment that follows is to separate the sheep (those whom God accepts) from the goats (those whom God rejects) The sheep will be received into the Kingdom God has prepared for them – that is, Christ’s millennial kingdom. *The goats will have final, irrevocable judgment pronounced upon them, by which they will be banished into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.***

These rejected Gentiles will not be sent forth to Sheol or Hades but directly to the place of final punishment of all rebels – the lake of fire. Into this lake the beast – the Antichrist – and his false prophet already will have been cast. **The separation between sheep and goats is based upon one decisive issue: the way in which those people being judged have treated the brothers of Jesus; that is, the Jewish people.** The intervention of the Lord against the Gentile nations persecuting the Jews and His final reconciliation with Israel are described in Zechariah.

“It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.” (Zechariah 2:9-10)

**Once the sheep have been separated from the Goats, the judgment of the Gentile nations will be complete. All those who are accounted worthy to enter into the period of Christ’s millennial kingdom will have passed through the refining judgments of God.** Israel will have been purged in the fires of the great tribulation, whilst at the close of the tribulation; the Gentiles will be purged by Christ’s own direct intervention and judgment.

After these purging judgments upon both Jews and Gentiles, there will ensue a thousand years of peace and prosperity, with Christ ruling as King over all the earth. At the close of this period of one thousand years, Satan will make one final attempt to organize the Gentile nations in rebellion against Christ and His Kingdom, but this rebellion will be brought to nought by the direct intervention of God. **At this time Satan himself will at last be banished forever from earth and will be cast into the lake of fire, to join the Antichrist and the false prophet who will already be there. All the rebellious among those living at that time will be purged out.**

“Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Revelation 20:7-10)

**After this the third of the final judgments will commence.**

### **3) The judgment of all the remaining dead at the close of the millennium – Carried out before a great white throne**

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” **(Revelations 20:11-15)**

Here is the ultimate end for those who have sinned and rebelled against the authority and holiness of God: to be cast forever into the lake of everlasting fire. Only those whose names are written in the Book of Life will escape this final judgment. The names recorded in this book are those who during their life on earth availed themselves through repentance and faith, of God’s mercy and grace.

As those who put their faith in Christ’s atoning sacrifice will have been resurrected at the commencement of the millennium, and already appeared before the judgment seat of Christ – not for condemnation, but to assess their reward, it seems that the majority of those who appear before the great white throne will ***not*** have fulfilled the conditions for receiving God’s mercy and will therefore be condemned to the lake of fire.

**However there will definitely be at least two categories of people before the great white throne who will escape condemnation and enter into eternal life.**

The first category will consist of people such as the queen of the South and the men of Nineveh, who availed themselves of the mercy, which God offered to them in one brief but decisive revelation of Himself.

**Jesus Himself said**, “The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.” **(Matthew 12:41-42)**

A second category will consist of all those who died in faith during the millennium.

This study of Hebrews has laid the scriptural foundation of doctrine upon which the faith of every Christian can be firmly built. With these foundations in place, it becomes possible to obey the further exhortation of Hebrews 6:1, **“Let us go on to perfection.”**

*(The Study Material for this teaching came from Derek Prince’s “The Spirit Filled Believers Handbook (Foundations for Christian Living from the Bible)” Permission to use this material was given by Derek Prince Ministries)*

# SERMONS

## Having courage to make your life count

BEFORE JOSHUA ENTERED THE *PROMISED LAND* THREE TIMES THE *LORD* TOLD HIM TO HAVE COURAGE

“After the death of Moses the Servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, saying: Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them-the children of Israel.”

“Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses...No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. **I will not leave you nor forsake you.**”

“Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.”

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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.

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of GOOD COURAGE; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God **is with you wherever you go.**”  
(Joshua 1:1-3, 5, 6-9)

## THEN THE ISRAELITES SAID TO JOSHUA

“Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. **Only be strong and of good courage.**”  
(Joshua 1:18)

## **King David also wrote in Psalm 27**

“Wait on the Lord; Be of **good courage**, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord.” (**Psalm 27:14**)

## **WE ALL HAVE TO APPROPRIATE OUR DESTINY IN LIFE**

*WE ARE ALL IN A SPIRITUAL WAR. WE HAVE A VERY REAL ADVERSARY*

The Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the church in Ephesus, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

**(Ephesians 6:10-13)**

## **Jesus said,**

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”  
**(John 10:10)**

## **WHEN SERVING AND LIVING FOR GOD WE WILL EXPERIENCE OPPOSITION**

**“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”**  
**(Acts 14:22b)**

“And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” **(Mark 13:13)**

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God, Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” **(Matthew 5:8-12)**

# WE ALL NEED COURAGE IN THIS LIFE

## WE NEED COURAGE:

- i) To make the right choices (The power of peer group pressure)
- ii) To follow God's plan for your life (Many will give other advice)
- iii) To stand alone at times (We all have a unique plan for our life)
- iv) To leave the past behind and to make a fresh start
- v) When our friends or family have abandoned us
- vi) To **get up** and to **start again** when we have failed in life
- vii) To keep going where there seems no answer to a situation
- viii) To overcome discouragement that wants to make us quit
- ix) To face and conquer our **fears** and **insecurities**
- x) To step out into a new venture or relationship
- xi) TO NEVER GIVE UP ON OUR GOD GIVEN DESTINY

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” (**Galatians 6:9**)

# **SIX KEYS TO HELP US TO HAVE COURAGE TO MAKE OUR LIFE COUNT IN THIS WORLD**

## **1) KNOW WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT YOUR FUTURE**

*(We must not dwell on our past failures and what others have said)*

### ***YOUR PAST SHOULD NOT ROB YOUR FUTURE***

#### ***GOD IS ABLE TO PULL ANYONE OUT OF THE DEEPEST PIT***

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, And **forget not all His benefits**; Who forgives all your iniquities, **(No more shame or guilt)** Who heals all your diseases, **who redeems you life from destruction**, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”  
**(Psalm 103:2-5)**

#### ***WHEN WE COMMIT OUR LIFE TO JESUS CHRIST***

##### **i) We have a new start to life**

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, **all things** have become new.” **(2 Corinthians 5:17)**

##### **ii) We become a child of God (A joint heir with Jesus Christ)**

##### **iii) We are called to reign here on earth**

##### **iv) We have a unique plan for our life**

##### **v) We inherit all the promises of God**

- HIS PROTECTION
- HIS PROVISION
- HEALING AND DIVINE HEALTH

##### **vi) God can and will finish what He started in our life if we **CONTINUALLY** put our trust in Him**

(Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.) **(Philippians 1:6)**

## **2) GOD DOES NOT LOOK FOR THE QUALIFIED**

### ***GOD EMPOWERS THOSE WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM***

*The word of the Lord came to the Prophet Jeremiah in prison, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” (Jeremiah 33:3)*

The apostle Paul said in His letter to the Corinthians, “I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” **(1 Corinthians 2:3-4)**

**“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.” (Ephesians 3:20)**

The Lord said to the apostle Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” **(2 Corinthians 12:9)**

## **3) RENEW YOUR MIND WITH GOD’S WORD**

***(The truth will set you free)***

**Jesus said,**

“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” **(John 8:31a-32)**

**“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:2)**

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...” **(Hosea 4:6a)**

**Jesus said, “Therefore, whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.**

But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” **(Matthew 7:24-27)**

## **THERE ARE GREAT BLESSINGS WHEN WE FOLLOW THE WAYS OF THE LORD AND ARE DOERS OF HIS WORD**

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinner, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; **And whatever he does shall prosper.**” (Psalm 1:1-3)

## **THE BIBLE IS CLEAR: WE HAVE A HOPE AND A FUTURE**

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

**GODS WORD IS FULL OF PROMISES AND WISDOM FOR LIVING LIFE.** (It is a love letter from God to us to help and encourage us here on earth)

## **4) DELIGHT YOURSELF IN THE LORD**

*(His love keeps us strong during the trials of life)*

“Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. **Delight yourself in the Lord,** And He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.” (Psalm 37:3-5)

“You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You. Because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, For in YAH, the Lord is everlasting strength. (Isaiah 26:3-4)

**WE NEED TO LOVE GOD MORE THAT ANY OTHER PERSON OR THING. OUR LOVE FOR HIM WILL ENABLE US TO LOVE OTHERS AND TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES IN LIFE**

## **5) TRUST IN GOD’S FAITHFULNESS**

*(He will never leave nor forsake you)*

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, And whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.” (Jeremiah 17:7-8)

“...For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (Hebrew 13:5-6)

**IF WE STEP OUT AND FOLLOW GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIFE WE WILL SUCCEED IN LIFE AND OUR LIFE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR GENERATION *FOR ALL ETERNITY***

**“For with God nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:37)**

We can do *all things* through Christ who *strengthens us* (Philippians 4:13) and *His strength* is made perfect in our *weakness*” (2 Corinthians 12:9)

## **GOD IS FAITHFUL AND ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS**

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 John 5:14-15)

- **A strong prayer life will help to give us courage in the storms of life**  
“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.” (James 5:17-18)

**Jesus said**, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works that these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **If you ask anything in My name, I WILL DO IT.**” (John 14:12-14)

## **6) WE MUST BE COMMITTED TO FINISHING GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIFE**

**The Apostle Paul** at the end of his life said, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” (2 Timothy 4:8-9)

WE MUST HOLD ON TO OUR FAITH TO RECEIVE OUR ETERNAL REWARDS AND NOT BE LIKE DEMAS WHO WALKED AWAY FROM THE THINGS OF GOD, “**Having loved this present world**” (2 Timothy 4:9) MORE THAN THE THINGS OF GOD

**JUST BELIEVE (What God says about your life)**

- i) YOUR LIFE MATTERS TO HIM, AND
- ii) THAT YOUR LIFE CAN MAKE A BIG IMPACT ON THIS WORLD

# Having an overcoming faith

**- Our battle is not against flesh and blood**

**- Our battle is a spiritual one**

**- The Apostle Paul said to the church in Ephesus**, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” **(Ephesians 6:10-12)**

**- Jesus said Himself said**, “The thief (the devil) does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” **(John 10:10)**

**- AS BELIEVERS WE WILL ENCOUNTER MANY CHALLENGES DURING OUR CHRISTIAN WALK**

*The Apostle Paul said to Timothy*

“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”  
**(2 Timothy 3:12)**

**- AS BELIEVERS WE MUST OVERCOME MANY THINGS**

- i) Temptations**
- ii) Our own sin nature**
- iii) Our own fears and insecurities**
- iv) Discouragement**
- v) Broken relationships, and**
- vi) The pressures and challenges that we face in this world**

**“YET IN ALL THESE THINGS WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH HIM WHO LOVED US” (Romans 8:37)**

## - **THE BIBLE SAYS MUCH ABOUT BEING AN OVERCOMER**

**The Apostle Paul said**, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”  
(Romans 8:18-19)

## **THE BOOK OF REVELATIONS SAYS MUCH ABOUT THE NEED FOR US TO BE OVERCOMERS IN OUR FAITH**

**Jesus said**, “But Hold fast what you have till I come. And He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations – ”  
(Revelations 2:25-26)

## **THE OVERCOMER WIL SHARE IN CHRIST’S TRIUMPH OVER EVIL AND IN HIS MESSIANIC RULE**

**Jesus also said**, “Because you have kept My command to **persevere**, I will also keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.” (Revelation 3:10)

“He who overcomes, I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.” (Revelation 3:12)

## **THE LORD WILL PERMANANTLY HONOR HIS FAITHFUL BELIEVERS**

“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the **cowardly**, **unbelieving**, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:7-8)

## **YOUR FAITH IS THE MOST PRECIOUS THING IN THE WORLD**

**Jesus said**, “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26)

# SOME KEYS TO BEING AN OVERCOMER

## 1) MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD (BIBLE)

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

### GOD'S WORD INSTRUCTS AND EQUIPS US

Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31a-32)

### GOD'S WORD SETS US FREE

The Lord said to Joshua, “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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 1:8)

### GOD'S WORD HELPS US TO PROSPER

## 2) HAVE INTIMACY WITH GOD

### i) The key to fullness of joy

“You will show me the path of life. In your presence is fullness of joy; At your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” (Psalm 16:11)

### ii) Direction for our life

“Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. (Psalm 37:3-5)

### iii) Gives us peace during the storms of life

“You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You. Because He trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, For in YAH, the Lord, is everlasting strength.” (Isaiah 26:3-4)

iv) **Gives us strength** (The joy of the Lord is your strength)

“He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. (**Isaiah 40:29-31**)

v) **Keeps our first love for Jesus burning** (Matthew 5:16)

vi) **Empowers us to live a victorious life**

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marvelled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” (**Acts 4:13**)

### 3) **HAVE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. (**1 John 1:7**)

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (**Hebrews 10:23-25**)

**THE FIRST CHURCH MOVED IN POWER AND DAILY NEW BELIEVERS WERE ADDED TO THE CHURCH. FELLOWSHIP WAS A BIG PART OF THE EARLY CHURCH.**

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and **breaking bread from house to house**, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (**Acts 2:46-47**)

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and **fellowship**, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (**Acts 2:42**)

## 4) BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

**The Apostle Paul emphasised the importance of being continually filled with the Holy Spirit.**

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,” (Ephesians 5:18)

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,” (Jude 20)

**Jesus said,** “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:37b–38)

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him! (Luke 11:13)

## 5) THE POWER OF PRAYER

**Jesus said,** “Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ **and does not doubt in his heart**, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.”

**“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.”** (Mark 11:22-24)

**“And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”** (John 14:13-14)

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” (1 John 5:14-15)

**Jesus said,** “And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” (John 16:23-24)

**“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.** (Ephesians 3:20)

## **6) HAVE A SURRENDERED WILL**

### **i) Making right choices**

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” (**Hebrews 12:1**)

“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. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” (**1 John 2:15-17**)

**WE MUST BE CAREFUL THAT THE TEMPTATIONS AND PLEASURES OF THIS WORLD DO NOT STEAL OUR AFFECTIONS FOR GOD**

“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out... But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” (**1 Timothy 6:6, 7, 9-10**)

### **ii) Having right associations**

“Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits.” (**1 Corinthians 15:33**)

“The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.” (**Proverbs 12:26**)

### **iii) Following God’s plan for your life**

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (**Jeremiah 29:11**)

**“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, And whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.”** (Jeremiah 17:7-8)

**WE NEED A VISION FROM GOD FOR LIFE**

**ABUNDANT LIFE COMES FROM FOLLOWING GOD’S PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE**

#### **iv) Walking in love and forgiveness**

“He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”  
**(1 John 2:9-11)**

## **7) PUT ON THE FULL ARMOUR OF GOD**

“Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” **(Ephesians 6:14-17)**

### **FINALLY, KNOW THAT THE LORD IS ALWAYS FAITHFUL AND UNCHANGING**

“For He Himself has said, I will never leave nor forsake you.”

So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” **(Hebrews 13:5a-6)**

#### **The Lord said to Joshua,**

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” **(Joshua 1:9)**

***“IF GOD IS FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?”***  
**(Romans 8:31a)**

# GOD'S HEART FOR THE LOST

- It is so important as Pastors and Christian Leaders that we have a passion for seeing the lost come to Christ
- **Evangelism is more caught than taught.** If a Pastor has a passion for seeing his community coming to Christ, it will have a positive effect on encouraging the whole church to have a vision for reaching the lost.
- Every church must have *both an outreach and discipleship focus*. It is so important that as a church we have a *love for our community*. The apostle Paul wrote:  
**“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” (Galatians 5:14)**
- **Jesus was our example.** He reached out to the Tax Collectors and sinners and ate with them. He attended the wedding where he turned the water into wine. He spent time at the house of a chief tax collector called Zacchaeus.” When people complained Jesus said,  
**“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. “But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” (Matthew 9:12-13)**
- EVERY HEALTHY CHURCH SHOULD HAVE AN OUTWARD FOCUS BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE CHURCH
- It is so important that we *reach out into our community* with the love of Christ (**Church in the streets**)
- We also need to look for God given opportunities of *serving the community* (**Church of Hope**)

**Jesus said,** “You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, **a servant is not greater than his master**; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.

**“If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” (John 13:13-17)**

AS CHRISTIAN LEADERS IT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT WE ARE EXAMPLES TO OUR CHURCH MEMBERS OF WHAT TRUE SERVANTHOOD IS. IF A PASTOR HAS A SERVANT HEART IT WILL PERMEATE THE LIVES OF THOSE WHOM HE SHEPHERDS

- AS CHRISTIAN LEADERS WE NEED TO HAVE A VISION AND A BURDEN TO REACH THE LOST AND THE HURTING.

- **IT BEGINS BY SEEKING GOD FOR HIS COMPASSION FOR LOST SOULS.** *The compassion which caused Jesus Christ to lay down His life as a ransom for many.*

“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. “Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. “Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest.”

**JESUS THEN CALLED HIS TWELVE DISCIPLES AND BESTOWED UPON THEM THE DELEGATED POWER AND AUTHORITY THAT HE HAD, AND SENT THEM OUT TO FIND THE LOST SHEEP OF ISRAEL.**

As pastors we also need to be equipping and encouraging our church members to actively reach out to the lost and hurting, as we lead by EXAMPLE.

- **INTIMACY WITH JESUS** IS THE KEY TO SEEING HIS HEART FOR THE LOST BECOMING A GREATER REALITY IN OUR OWN LIFE.
- Our **love for our community** and commitment to reaching the lost grows as we make our relationship with Jesus Christ our first priority. (We cannot allow the busyness of ministry life to rob us of our time with the Lord)
- When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marvelled. **And they realized that they had been with Jesus.** (Acts 4:13)

“Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.”  
(Psalm 37:4)

AS WE PRAY FOR THE LOST AND SEEK HIS FACE WE BEGIN TO GAIN GOD’S HEART FOR THE LOST

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2)

## **JESUS LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR YOU AND ME. HE LAID IT DOWN FOR THE WHOLE WORLD**

- JESUS HIMSELF SHARED MUCH ABOUT GOD'S LOVE FOR THE LOST. HE SAID,

**"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?"**

**"And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'"**

**I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance." (Luke 15:17) AND**

**AND IN THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON, HOW WHEN THE FATHER SAW HIS PRODIGAL SON IN THE DISTANCE RETURNING HOME HE,**

**"...had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." (Luke 15:20)**

**AND RESTORED HIM TO FULL SONSHIP AND HAD A GREAT PARTY TO CELEBRATE HIS RETURN, SAYING,**

**"for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry." (Luke 15:24)**

- When we have Christ's compassion for the lost we begin to have a passion to reach the lost
- THE APOSTLE PAUL was not ashamed of the gospel.

**"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." (Romans 1:16)**

- He knew the importance of seeing souls saved and **ALSO** encouraging others to be active in the area of Evangelism. He said to the young Pastor Timothy who was his spiritual son,

**"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with long suffering and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2)**

**"But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry." (2 Timothy 4:5)**

- **THE APOSTLE PAUL KNEW THE HEART OF GOD FOR LOST SOULS BECAUSE HIS PASSION WAS TO KNOW CHRIST**

**The Apostle Paul wrote:**

“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” **(Philippians 3:7-8)**

- **THIS LOVE FOR CHRIST compelled the Apostle Paul to preach the gospel and to share his faith in Christ.**

“Now while Paul waited for them in Athens (that was for Silas and Timothy), his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.” (Acts 17:16-17)

The Apostle Paul also wrote,

“For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Corinthians 9:16)

- **THE APOSTLE PAUL KNEW GOD’S HEART FOR EVERY SOUL. (He became all things to all men that he might by all means save some).**

- The great revivalist John Wesley also wrote:

“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”

- **WHEN WE SPEND TIME WITH GOD HE WILL GIVE US HIS VISION FOR REACHING THE LOST (His heart to reach the lost)**

- Ministry is all *about people*. Evangelism is all about bringing a message of hope to the lost

- “The face of a killer started David Wilkerson (The founder of Teen Challenge) on his lonely crusade. One night in his country parsonage (his ministry living quarters) David picked up a Life magazine and saw the tormented face of a teenage gang member accused with six others of brutally murdering another teenager. **And David Wilkerson had to help.**

- EVERY VISION MUST LEAD TO STEPS OF ACTION TO SEE IT COME TO PASS
- **Armed only with the gospel, David Wilkerson went into the slums – and the miracles happened. Crime hardened gang leaders knelt in the streets to pray, frightened children sobbed out their loneliness and anger, and heroin addicts found the courage to break their addiction**
- **WE ALL HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO REACH THE LOST**

*The Apostle Paul wrote:*

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

*“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!”* (Romans 10:14-15)

- **AS CHRISTIAN LEADERS WE ALSO HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY OF HELPING TO ENCOURAGE AND EQUIP ALL OF OUR CHURCH MEMBERS TO SHARE THIER FAITH. (So that all can share the love and hope that we have in Christ with the lost and hurting).**

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the **EQUIPPING** of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.” (Ephesians 4:11-13)

- **We all have a part to play in seeing God’s Kingdom being established here on earth**

- WE MUST NEVER DOUBT THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL TO TRANSFORM OUR CITIES AND VILLAGES

- As we pray and intercede for our cities and villages we will have a compulsion to go into the harvest field to share the good news of the gospel, **speaking the truth in love**. THE HARVEST IS RIPE NOW

**Jesus said**, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” (John 4:35)

- After a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; they were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

- Therefore those who were scattered WENT EVERYWHERE PREACHING THE WORD (**Acts 8:4**)

- Sometimes the trials that we experience help us to refocus on God or to **shake us up if we have become too settled in our comfort zones**. God always has **more** planned for our life and church

- **PHILIP THE EVANGELIST WAS ONE OF THOSE WHO WAS SCATTERED**

**“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.**

**For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed.**

**AND THERE WAS GREAT JOY IN THAT CITY” (Acts 8:5-8)**

- The gospel is good news. It is the only hope for humanity. Only Jesus can save and set the captives free. He who the Son sets free is free indeed.

**Jesus Himself said,** “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul.” (**Matthew 16:26**)

- Backed by prayer and intercession, the gospel has the power to transform our cities. The city of Samaria was transformed by the gospel
- As we spend time in His presence, God will give us his strategy and heart for the lost in our cities and villages
- Like Gideon who defeated an army of 135,000 with just 300 men as he followed the LORD’s instructions, we too will experience success as we follow God’s strategy for reaching the lost in our communities.

- The Lord promises to be with us always, so we can step out in this confidence as we follow His vision for reaching our communities and preach the gospel.

- HOW WE MUST ALSO ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER IN THE BODY OF CHRIST TO HELP SEE OUR CITIES AND VILLAGES COME TO CHRIST

- WE ARE A TEAM (We are all on the stage of redemption reaching out to an audience of lost souls)
- The first church moved in power and souls were added to the church daily

- **THEY WERE ALL OF ONE ACCORD** AND THEY HAD FAVOUR WITH ALL PEOPLE

“So continuing daily with **one accord** in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:46-47)

- PSALM 133 says how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

#### **UNITY IS VERY IMPORTANT TO GOD**

- Jesus fervently prayed to His Father that His followers would be brought to complete unity. (John 17:6-23)

- Jesus Himself said, “By this all will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another” (John 13:35)

- TODAY THERE IS A WORLD FULL OF LOST SOULS. In Europe only a small percentage of people are now believers. In India over one billion people do not know the love of Christ personally
- Jesus said, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creatures. If we love our community we will respond to this call.

- The word of the Lord came to Jonah for him to **arise** and go to Nineveh, that great city, and to preach a message calling that city to repentance

- Jonah initially disregarded this call to preach to those in Nineveh and arose to flee to Tarshish

- i) Whether it was because of fear*
- ii) Whether it was because he had no real concern for the lost in Nineveh (which was most likely the case as he later became angry when God showed mercy on Nineveh), or*
- iii) Whether it was because he had his own agenda*

THE SIMPLE FACT WAS THAT JONAH WAS RUNNING FROM THE LORD'S CALL FOR HIM TO PREACH TO THOSE WHO WERE IN DANGER OF PERISHING IN NINEVEH

- ***All people were impacted by his decision not to preach at Nineveh***

- His life was in turmoil
- Those on the ship that he was travelling in were in danger of being destroyed, and
- Nineveh was about to be judged and destroyed

- How we must all respond to the call to reach the lost

- GOD LOVES ALL PEOPLE AND HIS DESIRE IS THAT NONE WOULD PERISH
- There are now countless millions of precious souls that are heading down the broad path that is leading to hell and destruction (blinded by the little god of this world)
- Countless millions of youth are having their lives destroyed through drugs and alcohol as they try to live in world full of pain and suffering
- JONAH BEGAN PRAYING IN THE BELLY OF THE WHALE. After three days and three nights the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land

- After spending much time in prayer Jonah responded to the Lord's second call to go to Nineveh to preach to them the message of the Lord
- The people from Nineveh turned from their evil ways and were saved as God relented from bringing upon them the disaster that he had planned to bring
- **THERE ARE COUNTLESS MILLIONS IN NEED OF SALVATION.** People that Jesus Christ bled and died for.

- **AS PASTORS AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS**

- i) We need to have a love for our community
- ii) We need to draw close to Jesus to get His heart and His compassion for the lost
- iii) We need to seek God for His vision and strategy to reach the lost in our city
- iv) We must believe in the power of the gospel to change lives and encourage all those in our church to share their faith
- v) We must seek to encourage other Pastors and believers as we strive to maintain unity within the Body of Christ. A key to experiencing God's favour and blessings, and
- vi) We must simply just step out in obedience and "Go" into all the world and share the gospel beginning with our own community

- **JESUS CAME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST**

- He gave His life for this cause
- The Harvest is ripe. There are multitudes in the valley of decision
- So too must we give our life to seeing those bound up by the devil being set free and becoming part of the family of God
- He who wins souls is wise, and
- Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever

**I WILL NOW CONCLUDE BY SHARING ABOUT ONE MAN WHO HAD GOD'S HEART FOR THE LOST**

## **JOHN HARPER (A true hero of the faith)**

- John Harper was born to a pair of solid Christian parents on May the 29<sup>th</sup>, 1872
- On the last Sunday of March 1886, when 13 years old, John Harper received Jesus as the Lord of his life
- Four years later at the age of 17, John Harper began preaching in the streets of his village pouring out his soul to see lost people come to Christ
- As John Harper's life unfolded he was consumed by a passion to read and to preach the Word of God
- After five or six years of toiling on street corners preaching the gospel and working in a mill during the day, John Harper started his own church in September of 1896.
- This church started with just 25 members and over the next 13 years grew to 500 members
- During this time John Harper got married but shortly after was widowed. However during this brief marriage God blessed him with a beautiful little girl named Nana.
- Ironically, John Harper almost drowned on three occasions
- When two and a half years of age, he almost drowned when he fell into a well but his mother resuscitated him
- At the age of 26 he was swept out to sea by a reverse current and barely survived
- And if this was not enough, at the age of 32 he faced death on a leaking ship in the Mediterranean.
- It was like God was preparing him for what would come next
- On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1912 the RMS Titanic was sailing swiftly on the bitterly cold ocean waters
- On board this ship were many rich people
- At 11.40 pm on that fateful night, an iceberg scraped the ships starboard side and ripping open six watertight air compartments
- The sea poured in.

- On board the ship that night was John Harper and his much beloved six year old daughter Nana.
- According to documented reports as soon as it became apparent the boat was about to sink, he immediately took his daughter to a lifeboat
- It is reasonable to assume that this widowed preacher could also have easily got on board this lifeboat and been saved
- However this thought never crossed John Harper's mind
- He bent down and kissed his precious little girl; looking into her eyes he told her that she would see him again someday.
- The flares going off in the dark sky reflected the tears on his face as he turned and headed towards the crowd of desperate humanity on the sinking ocean liner
- As the rear of the huge ship began to lurch upwards, John Harper made his way up the deck yelling, "Women, children and unsaved into the life boats."
- As the ship began to break in half many people dived into the icy waters. 1528 people went into the frigid waters.
- John Harper was seen swimming frantically to people in the water leading them to Christ before hypothermia became fatal
- John Harper swam up to one young man who had climbed up on a piece of debris
- John Harper between breaths said "Are you saved?" This young man replied no.
- Harper then tried to lead him to Christ only to have the young man who was in shock, reply no.
- John Harper then took off his own life jacket and threw it to the young man
- A few minutes later John Harper swam back to this young man and led him to Christ
- Of the 1528 people who went into the icy waters that night only six survived. One of them was this young man
- Four years later, at a survivors meeting, this young man stood up in tears and recounted how John Harper had led him to Christ
- Mr Harper had tried to swim back to help others, yet because of the cold had become too weak to swim.
- HIS LAST WORDS BEFORE GOING UNDER IN THE FRIGID WATERS WERE, **"Believe on the Name of the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."**

# JUST BELIEVE THAT YOUR LIFE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THIS WORLD

- **The Bible gives an account of the life of a man called Joseph who loved God and honoured God in all that he did.”**
- **Joseph had a dream of Greatness. (Genesis 37:3-11)**

“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colours. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. {Sometimes we must be careful about who we share our dreams with} So he said to them, “Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: “There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf.”

“And his brothers said to him, “Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?” **So they hated him even more** for his dreams and for his words. Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, “Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.”

“So he told it to his father and his brothers and his **father rebuked** him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before your?”

“And his brothers **envied him**, but his father kept the matter in mind.”

- **We all need to have a VISION for our life. This will keep our dreams alive. God has a plan for each and every one of us.**

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

# WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT THE LIFE OF JOSEPH

## 1) GOD DOES NOT LOOK FOR THE QUALIFIED BUT FOR THOSE WHO WILL TRUST HIM AND FOLLOW HIS PLAN FOR THEIR LIFE.

- Joseph was just 17 years old when God gave him the dream of greatness
- Age is no barrier to being used of God (Moses was 80 years old when God called him to be used to deliver Israel from their bondage in Egypt)
- God often uses the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. (The great King David was the youngest and a shepherd boy, who God raised up to be King of Israel.)
- **GOD ENABLES AND EMPOWERS THOSE WHO ARE OBEDIENT TO HIS CALL ON THEIR LIFE**

Reinherd Bonnke was called by God to be a missionary to Africa. Three others had failed to respond to God's call. After some very tough years God gave Reinherd Bonnke a dream of a Blood washed Africa. After humble beginnings 40 years ago, Bonnke now preaches to one million at each of the gospel meetings that he holds.

## 2) TO FULFILL OUR GOD GIVEN DESTINY WE WILL NEED TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES AND OUR OWN "FEARS"

- **Joseph was rebuked by his father**
- **Joseph was envied by his brothers**
- **His brothers even wanted to kill him** (Genesis 37:12,13,18,19)

"Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am." Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, ..."

Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. Then they said to one another, 'Look, this dreamer is coming!'

### 3) **NOTHING CAN THWART GOD’S PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE IF YOU TRUST AND OBEY HIS WILL FOR YOUR LIFE**

“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; **(Philippians 1:6)**

“For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.” **(Psalm 91:11)**

“Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.” **(Psalm 37:3-5)**

### **GOD USED JOSEPH’S YOUNGER BROTHER REUBEN TO THWART THE PLANS OF THE OLDER BROTHERS TO KILL JOSEPH.**

**The older brothers said**, “Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, ‘Some wild beast has devoured him.’ We shall see what will become of his dreams!”

“But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, “Let us not kill him.” And Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him”- that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.” **(Genesis 37:20-22)**

### **GOD DIRECTS OUR STEPS WHEN WE LIVE FOR HIM**

**“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way.”** (Psalm 37:23)

“So Judah said to his older brothers, “What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh.” And his brothers listened. Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.” **(Genesis 37:26-28)**

#### 4) WE WILL ALL HAVE BOTH VALLEYS AND PEAKS IN OUR LIFE. WE LIVE IN A FALLEN WORLD

- JOSEPH'S DREAM OF GREATNESS WAS A MOUNTAIN TOP EXPERIENCE
- ***ALMOST IMMEDIATELY JOSEPH ENTERED A WINTER SEASON OF 13 YEARS (A Valley Experience)***
- **Sold into slavery**
- **Was bought by Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh**

“Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.” (Genesis 39:10)

- **Was wrongly accused of making advances to Potiphar's wife after he fled her advances**

“...Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, “Lie with me.” But he refused and said to his master's wife, “Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand.”

“There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.”

But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, that she caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me.” But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.” (Genesis 39:6-12) **POTIPHAR'S WIFE THEN ACCUSED JOSEPH OF MAKING ADVANCES TOWARDS HER** (Genesis 39:13-19)

- **Joseph was then put in jail**  
 “Then Joseph’s master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king’s prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison.” (Genesis 39:20)
- **Joseph interprets the dreams of the Baker and Butler in prison**  
 “It came to pass after these things that the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt...So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined...Then the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man’s dream in one night and each man’s dream with its own interpretation.” (Genesis 40:1,3, 5) **Joseph was able to interpret both of their dreams** (Genesis 40:6-19)
- **The chief butler forgot about Joseph when freed**  
**Joseph said to the chief butler,** “But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and **also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon.**” (Genesis 40:14-15)  
 “Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.” (Genesis 40:23)
- **Two more years in jail**  
 “Then it came to pass, at the end of **two full years**, that Pharaoh had a dream; ...” (Genesis 41:1)
- ***God can and will help us during the challenges in our life if we place our trust in Him***
- ***God can pull us out of every pit, (Just as Joseph was pulled out of the pit by his brothers to begin his journey to Egypt), EVEN THOSE WE HAVE DUG FOR OURSELVES***

## 5) GOD PREPARES PEOPLE FOR GREATNESS

- *It is in the crucible of life that God prepares people for greatness*
- *DURING THESE TRIALS OUR FAITH IS ESTABLISHED*
- *It is only when God has broken us that we can be used to do great and mighty things for Him*
- **GOD USES THE SITUATIONS AND CIRCUMSTANCES IN OUR LIVES TO PREPARE US FOR HIS WORK (TO ESTABLISH OUR FAITH IN HIM)**

*This side of Heaven we will all experience:*

- i) *Trials*
- ii) *Tribulations*
- iii) *Rejection*
- iv) *Injustices*
- v) *Disappointments*
- vi) *Discouragement*
- vii) *SETBACKS, or*
- viii) *AT TIMES, a sense of inadequacy or hopelessness in some situations*

***IT IS IN THE OVERCOMING OF THESE CHALLENGES THAT GOD PREPARES US FOR GREATNESS.***

## 6) GOD IS ALWAYS WITH US DURING THE STORMS OF LIFE THAT WE GO THROUGH

- Joseph received favour wherever he went

### i) In Potiphar's House

“The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favour in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority.

So it was, from this time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, **that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake**; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field. (Genesis 39:2-5)

### ii) In Prison

“Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison. But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. *The keeper of the prison did not look into anything* that was under Joseph's authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper.” (Genesis 39:20-23)

### iii) With Pharaoh (Pharaoh calls for Joseph)

“Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it.” “Then Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.” (Genesis 41:14-16)

## 7) WE MUST ALLOW GOD TO DO HIS COMPLETE WORK OF PREPARATION IN OUR LIVES

- We must continue to do the Godly thing, rather than the expedient thing, at all times. (**Joseph chose to never compromise his integrity**)
- **THE GREATER THE MISERY, OFTEN THE GREATER THE MINISTRY AND PLAN GOD HAS FOR A PERSON'S LIFE**

***GOD CAN USE ALL OF OUR PAST BAD EXPERIENCES AND EVEN MISTAKES FOR HIS GLORY, AS WE COMFORT OTHERS IN THEIR SUFFERINGS. During trials, we must always cling to Jesus. He will never leave nor forsake us.***

### - **THE WINTER SEASON WILL COME TO AN END**

#### PHARAOH PROMOTES JOSEPH

“... Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh (**Genesis 41:17-24**) are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do: (**Genesis 41:26-31**) ... And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. (**SEVEN YEARS OF GREAT PLENTY FOLLOWED BY SEVEN YEARS OF GREAT FAMINE IN EGYPT**) Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt.”

“Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. Then that food shall be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine.” (**Genesis 41:25,32-36**)

“And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?” Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.”

**“AND PHARAOH SAID TO JOSEPH, “SEE, I HAVE SET YOU OVER ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT.”** “Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had...” **AND “SET HIM OVER ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT.”** (Genesis 41:41-43)

**8) WE MUST ALWAYS KNOW AND SEE THAT GOD IS AND HAS BEEN SOVEREIGN IN ALL OUR CIRCUMSTANCES.**  
**(Even the tough times in our life)**

**After Joseph revealed himself to his brothers he said, it was God who had sent him to Egypt.**

“But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; **for God sent me before you** to preserve life...**And God sent me before you** to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, **but God...**” (Genesis 45:5,7-8a)

**We all have a choice in life how we react to negative situations in our life. We can either,**

- i) Draw close to God and become better, OR
- ii) Blame God and others and become bitter

**9) WE SEE THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS IN JOSEPH’S LIFE**

“Then he (**Joseph**) asked them (**His brothers**) about their well-being, and said, “Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?”...Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son, and said, “Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me? And he said, “God be gracious to you, my son.” Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep. And he went into his chamber and wept there.” (Genesis 43:27-30)

“Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, “Make everyone go out from me!” So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph; does my father still live?” (Genesis 45:1-3)

**JOSEPH HAD NO UNFORGIVENESS TOWARDS HIS BROTHERS WHO HAD SOLD HIM INTO SLAVERY MANY YEARS EARLIER**

**Joseph told his brothers,** “God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. “You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children’s children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. **THERE I WILL PROVIDE FOR YOU, LEST YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD, AND ALL THT YOU HAVE, COME TO POVERTY; FOR THERE ARE STILL FIVE YEARS OF FAMINE.**” (Genesis 45:9-11)

# THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD AND (*OUR POTENTIAL IN CHRIST*)

- We have all made mistakes in life
- No one has had a perfect upbringing
- All of us will at times be let down by others
- Many of us have had many negative words spoken over our life
- We can all have regrets over our past failures
- But God can see the potential in each and every one of us

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:11-13)

<b>WHEN WE PUT OUR FAITH AND TRUST IN JESUS CHRIST WE CAN BE <u>ASSURED</u> OF GOD’S FAITHFULNESS</b>
---

## ***HE WILL MEET OUR EVERY NEED***

**Jesus said**, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”

“Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:25,26 &33)

***HE WILL GIVE US PURPOSE AND MEANING IN LIFE  
(God has a unique plan for our life)***

“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)

***HE IS ABLE TO RESTORE BROKEN LIVES. GOD IS ABLE TO  
PULL US OUT OF THE DEEPEST PIT. (He is the God of second chances)***

**King David wrote**, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (Psalm 103:2-5)

***GOD PROMISES TO BLESS THOSE WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM***

“Thus says the Lord:

“Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited.

Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, NOR WILL CEASE FROM YIELDING FRUIT.” (Jeremiah 17:5-8)

**“You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.”** (Isaiah 26:3-4)

## **GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIFE IS FAR BIGGER THAN WE COULD IMAGINE**

- **God does not depend on our limited abilities**
- **He empowers ordinary people to do great things for Him**
- **When we walk with Jesus He makes ZEROS into TENS because He is the ONE.**
- **God has often called the least likely people and raised them up to greatness.**
  - i) King David (Was a mere shepherd boy)
  - ii) Moses (Was 80 and tending sheep when God called him to lead Israel out of bondage in Egypt.)
  - iii) Joseph (Was only 17 when God gave him a dream of greatness)
  - iv) Four unlearned fishermen who chose to follow Jesus became world changers
  - v) David Cleary (Ex Ku Klux Klan Leader) has now served the Lord for 14 years preaching all over the world to tens of thousands at a time
  - vi) The Apostle Paul (After persecuting the early Christian church) had an encounter with Jesus Christ and became a great apostle of the faith.
  - vii) Steve Hill was once a drug addict and violent man who gave his life to Jesus. He is now a pastor and evangelist who saw hundreds of thousands of people being saved during the Pensacola Revival.

**GOD WILL EVEN USE OUR PAST MISTAKES AND FAILURES TO BLESS OTHERS**

*GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIFE IS FAR HIGHER THAN ANY OF OUR OWN EXPECTATIONS*

## ***ALL GOD NEEDS IS OUR AVAILABILITY***

### **THE APOSTLE PAUL WROTE:**

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,” (**Ephesians 3:20**)

### **THE BOOK OF ISAIAH ALSO SAYS**

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.” (**Isaiah 55:8-9**)

### **JESUS HIMSELF SAID:**

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (**John 10:10**)

**IN THIS WORLD THERE IS AN ADVERSARY THAT IS OUT TO ROB YOU OF YOUR DESTINY IN GOD. THE DEVIL WILL CONTINUALLY TRY TO CAUSE YOU TO MAKE WRONG CHOICES WHICH WILL KEEP YOU AWAY FROM GOD’S BEST**

**JESUS THOUGH WANTS YOU TO EXPERIENCE THE ABUNDANT LIFE THAT HE WILL GIVE TO ALL THOSE WHO TRUST IN HIM**

## **LIFE IS FULL OF CHOICES**

- **BEFORE I BECAME A CHRISTIAN I MADE MANY WRONG CHOICES IN LIFE**
- **BEFORE I BECAME A CHRISTIAN I RELIED ON MY OWN LIMITED ABILITIES**
- **MY LIFE WAS INFLUENCED AND IMPACTED BY MY EXPERIENCES GROWING UP**
- **WITHOUT GOD I CARRIED THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD ON MY OWN SHOULDERS FOR 29 YEARS**
- **BUT ONE ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS CHRIST SET ME FREE**

## THE APOSTLE PAUL WROTE:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” (1 Corinthians 2:9)

### **I NOW WANT TO CONCLUDE WITH THREE CHOICES THAT WE CAN ALL MAKE, WHICH WILL ENABLE EACH OF US TO REALISE OUR FULL POTENTIAL IN GOD**

- 1) **WE MUST CHOOSE TO PUT OUR PAST BEHIND. WE CAN NOT ALLOW OUR PAST TO ROB US OF THE FUTURE THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE**

**The Apostle Paul wrote:** “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; **but one thing I do**, *forgetting* those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:12-14)

- 2) **WE MUST SURRENDER ALL OF OUR LIFE TO JESUS CHRIST. WE NEED TO GIVE HIM FIRST PLACE IN OUR LIFE. HE WILL NEVER LEAVE NOR FORSAKE YOU.**

**Jesus said,** “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour.” (John 12:24-26) **AND**

- 3) **WE MUST SIMPLY CONTINUALLY TRUST AND OBEY THE LORD. IN DOING THIS WE WILL BUILD OUR LIFE ON THE ROCK.**

**Jesus said,** “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.” (Matthew 7:24-25)

**WHEN OUR LIFE IS BUILT ON CHRIST, WHEN THE STORMS OF LIFE COME WE WILL NOT FALL BUT STAND, AND AS WE CONTINUE TO WALK WITH THE LORD, OUR LIVES WILL MAKE A GREAT IMPACT ON THIS WORLD, AND WE WILL EXPERIENCE THE ABUNDANT LIFE THAT JESUS SPOKE OF.**

# WE ARE CALLED TO SERVE

(Making our lives count: God's way)

## Jesus told "THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS"

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man travelling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. (Matthew 25:14-15)

"But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his Lord's money." (Matthew 25:18)

"After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them." (Matthew 25:19)

"...He who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' (Matthew 25:20)

"He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' (Matthew 25:22)

The lord commended them both for being faithful over a few things, and made them ruler over many things and told them both to, enter into the joy of your Lord. (Matthew 25:21,23)

But to the servant who buried his talent (Who was referred to as a wicked and lazy servant), his lord said, "Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 25:28-30)

IN THIS PARABLE JESUS ADDRESSES THE FACT THAT GREAT JOY COMES FROM SERVING HIM, *WHILST GREAT REMORSE AND REGRETS WILL COME FROM FORFEITING ONE'S REWARD FOR COMMITTED SERVICE IN GOD'S KINGDOM* (*Through burying ones gifts and talents and not using them for God's glory*)

**“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”. (1 John 3:16)**

“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*)

***“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another” (John 15:16-17)***

***JESUS WAS THE EXAMPLE (He said to His disciples)***

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (*Matthew 20:26-28*)

***HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR LIVES COUNT  
(So that our lives will bear fruit for all eternity)***

***1) We must let our light so shine before men***

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see you good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:14-16**)

## 2) *By Serving Others (With God's love)*

**“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”**  
(Galatians 5:13)

### ***GOD'S LOVE IS IN OUR HEARTS ONCE WE BECOME A CHRISTIAN***

**“Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”**  
(Romans 5:5)

**“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”** (Galatians 6:9)

**“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”**  
(Philippians 2:3)

## 3) *Using Our God Given Gifts and Abilities (We are all unique)*

**“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”**

**“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them.”**

**“If prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”** (Romans 12:3:8)

## 4) *Where God Places us*

**“But now God has set the members each one of them, in the body just as He pleased...And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”**  
(1 Corinthians 12:18,26)

**“Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing.”** (Psalm 92:13-14)

## 5) To lead people to Christ and to build up others

### **LEADING PEOPLE TO CHRIST**

**“And he who wins souls is wise.” (Proverbs 11:30a)**

***The Apostle Paul said to those in Colosse,***

“Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labour, striving to His working which works in me mightily.” (Colossians 1:28-29)

***The Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans***

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things.” (Romans 10:15a)

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. (Romans 1:16)

### **BUILDING UP OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE LORD**

“Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.” (1 Corinthians 14:12)

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God,

**To a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,**

**But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head-Christ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by **WHAT EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES, ACCORDING TO THE EFFECTIVE WORKING BY WHICH EVERY PART DOES ITS SHARE**, causes growth of the body for the edifying or itself in LOVE.” (Ephesians 4:11-16)**

## **WE ARE A TEAM**

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:24-25)

6) *Through laying down our lives for others*

Jesus said “**For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.**” (Mark 3:35)

“The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” (John 12:23a-25)

7) *Knowing that your labour for the Lord is not in vain*

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 15:58)

“If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour.” (John 12:26)

<p><i>IN A WORLD FULL OF <u>TEMPTATIONS</u> AND <u>DISTRACTIONS</u> HOW DO WE KEEP UP <u>OUR PASSION</u> TO <u>SERVE JESUS</u> AND <u>OTHERS</u></i></p>
--

1) *Living for Jesus is a DAILY CHOICE*

2) *We need to Delight ourselves in the Lord (A true worshipper)*

3) *We need to set our minds on things above (Keep our eyes on Jesus)*

4) *We have to guard our eyes and ears from worldly things*

5) *We need to meditate on things which are wholesome and edifying*

6) *We must COMMIT to following God's plan for your life*

7) *We need to have an obedient and repentant heart (Keep short accounts with God)*

8) *We must continually choose to walk in love towards others*

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy- meditate on these things. (Philippians 4:8)

“Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4) “Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.” (Proverbs 16:3)

“The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few.” (Matthew 9:37a)

# GOD HAS A UNIQUE PLAN FOR OUR LIFE

**(We must not compare ourselves with others)**

**(Firstly) What does God think about you?**

“For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; *Marvellous are Your works*, And that my soul knows very well.” **(Psalm 139:13-14)**

(As Christians “we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”) **(Ephesians 2:10)**

“My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, And **skilfully wrought** in the lowest parts of the earth. **(Earth is a metaphor for “the womb”)** Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they were all written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.”

“How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When **I am awake, I am still with You.**” **(Psalm 139:15-18)**

## **WE ALL HAVE A “HOPE” BECAUSE OF JESUS**

Jesus said, “...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” **(John 10:10)**

Jesus also said, “...If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” **(John 8:31-32)**

Jesus also said, “that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” **(John 3:15)**

**JESUS HOWEVER ALSO WARNED THAT THE DEVIL IS OUT TO DESTROY THE LIVES OF PEOPLE** (Who are made in the image of God)

**THE APOSTLE PETER WROTE:**

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” **(1 Peter 5:8)**

**WE MUST “RESIST THE DEVIL, STEADFAST IN THE FAITH”**

**Sin, death, fear and shame entered the human race when Adam and Eve succumbed to the lies of the devil and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**

The dominion that man had over this world was then handed over to the devil. This dominion is now back in the hands of all those who give their lives to Jesus Christ. All believers are called to reign here on earth. (**Revelation 5:10**)

### ***OUR LIFE TODAY IS A PRODUCT OF***

- i) Our past experiences
- ii) Our past associations (Including family)
- iii) Our knowledge (OR *lack of knowledge of God*)
- iv) The choices we have made in life

***BUT KNOW THAT OUR PAST DOES NOT DETERMINE OUR FUTURE.  
GOD HAS THE BEST PLAN FOR OUR LIFE***

**GOD WANTS US TO HAVE A FULFILLED LIFE**

**HOW THEN DO WE WALK IN VICTORY?**

### ***1) ABUNDANT LIFE COMMENCES WHEN WE SURRENDER OUR LIFE TO JESUS CHRIST***

- **When we come to Christ He gives us a new start to life**

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (**2 Corinthians 5:17**)

- **God is able to redeem our lives from destruction**

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies.” (**Psalms 103:2-4**)

- **We have access to His presence**

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,” (**Acts 3:19**)

- **We have the Holy Spirit living on the inside of us**

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” (**Ephesians 4:30**)

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, **He will guide you into all truth**; for He will not speak on His own authority, but what He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” (John 16:13)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control...” (Galatians 5:22-23)

“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own.” (1 Corinthians 6:19)

- **We receive the gift of eternal life**

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” (Romans 8:11)

- **We have a future (No matter how bad our past)**

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

- **We inherit all the promises of God**

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” (Romans 8:16-17)

- **We have a friend who is closer than a brother (He lives in our heart)**

## ***2) WE MUST REFUSE TO DWELL ON THE PAST***

The Apostle Paul said, “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended, but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead.” (Philippians 3:13)

- **Jesus forgives and forgets our past mistakes (sins)**

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:8-9)

“As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.” (Psalm 103:12)

- **We cannot change our past (*But we can learn from our past*)**

- **God often uses our past experiences to bless and comfort others who are now going through similar challenges**

### **3) WE MUST NOT COMPARE OURSELVES WITH OTHERS**

***SOME OF THE DANGERS OR PITFALLS OF COMPARING OURSELVES WITH OTHERS ARE:***

- We can become discouraged during the times when we are experiencing setbacks and challenges in our own life
- We will invariably lose our joy
- We can make some wrong choices
- We will never feel good about ourselves
- It impairs our ability to love others (*Especially those doing well*)
- *We can become slaves to the* OPINIONS *of* OTHERS
- WE FAIL TO SEE WHAT GIFTS AND TALENTS WE HAVE
- *We can often end up living a life to impress others*
- *We can often end up losing our own identity*
- *We can miss God's best plan for our life*

“Now Godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Timothy 6:6)

Your life is special. Your life can bless many people.

**Just believe that your life can make a difference in this world**

### **4) WE NEED TO FOLLOW GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIFE**

(This is the key to abundant life)

Jesus said to His disciples, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.” (John 4:34)

***Jesus came to redeem mankind to His Father in Heaven, to seek and to save the lost. He came to die for our sins, to pay the penalty for our sins, so that we can have eternal life by coming to Him.*** (Jesus loves you incredibly)

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2)

## 5) **KNOW THAT YOU CAN FINISH LIFE WELL**

“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” **(Philippians 1:6)**

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” **(Galatians 6:9)**

“Commit your way to the Lord, TRUST also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.” **(Psalm 37:5)** The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way.” **(Psalm 37:23)**

## 6) **KNOW THAT GOD WILL MEET ALL OF YOUR NEED**

**Jesus Said,**

“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”

“Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’”

“For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But **seek first** the kingdom of God and **His righteousness**, and all these things shall be **added to you**.” **(Matthew 6:25, 26, 31-33)**

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” **(Philippians 4:19)**

## 7) **KNOW THAT GOD “IS FOR YOU”**

**Jesus said,**

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” **(John 15:13)**

**The Apostle Paul wrote**

“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Much more then, <u>having now been justified by His blood</u> , we shall be <u>saved from wrath</u> through Him. <b>(Romans 5:6-9)</b>
--

# KINGDOM POWER

- **When we become Christians we become joint heirs with Jesus Christ**

“For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” (Romans 8:15-17)

- **As Believers we have been called to reign with Jesus Christ here on earth**

“And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe, tongue and people and nation, **And have made us kings and priests to our God; AND WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH.**” (Revelation 5:9-10)

- **WE AS CHRISTIANS ARE CHRIST’S AMBASSADORS HERE ON EARTH**

*AS CHRISTIANS WE ARE MEANT TO LIVE OUR LIVES IN GOD’S STRENGTH AND POWER*

**The word of the Lord to Zerubbabel also applies to the lives of all Believers, “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” Says the Lord of Hosts.”** (Zechariah 4:6)

## THE FIRST CHURCH MOVED IN GOD’S POWER

**(Even the shadow of Peter healed people, such was God’s power working through him)**

“And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them.

Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, **and they were healed.”** (Acts 5:14-16)

JESUS HIMSELF ALSO EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIANS OPERATING IN THE **POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**IT IS JESUS HIMSELF WHO BAPTISES BELIEVERS IN THE HOLY SPIRIT. JOHN THE BAPTIST SAID AS HE WAS BAPTISING PEOPLE WITH WATER,**

“I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Luke 3:16)

**Jesus said to His disciples before ascending to Heaven:**

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

**THIS POWER WAS RECEIVED ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST**

“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all **filled** with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:1-4)

**THIS EXPERIENCE IN RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT TRANSFORMED THE LIVES OF THE DISCIPLES**

**They turned from being a group of disciples full of character flaws, who had just fled following the arrest of Jesus, to a group of disciples who turned the world upside down with the gospel**

**THE APOSTLE PAUL HIMSELF PRAYED FOR THE CHRISTIANS IN EPHESUS THAT THEY WOULD:**

“know the love of Christ which passes knowledge”

**AND**

“that they would be filled with all the fullness of God”

## I WILL NOW SHARE ABOUT A NUMBER OF AREAS RELATING TO KINGDOM POWER

### 1) GOD'S WORD

“For the word of God is **living and powerful**, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)

#### - *God's Word will not return void*

“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11)

#### - *There is power in the preached word*

The Apostle Paul wrote, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17)

The Apostle Paul also wrote, “For I am not ashamed of *the gospel* of Christ, for it is the *power of God* to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” (Romans 1:16)

“So the **word** of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.” (Acts 19:20)

#### - *Abiding in God's word sets people free*

Jesus said, “If you abide in My word you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32)

- **HOWEVER, DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD IS A “RESISTER” TO GOD'S POWER OPERATING FULLY IN OUR LIFE**

### 2) GOD'S POWER FLOWS THROUGH US (We are like a tap. When we begin to preach the tap is turned on and God's power flows through us)

“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.” (2 Corinthians 3:5)

**The Apostle Paul wrote:**

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13)

**GOD ANOINTS US AND EMPOWERS US FOR EVERY TASK HE GIVES US TO DO. THE APOSTLE PAUL SAID TO THOSE IN CORINTH,**

“I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:3-5)

### 3) **GOD’S STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN OUR WEAKNESS**

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” (2 Corinthians 4:7)

**The Lord said to Apostle Paul**, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)

### 4) **THERE IS POWER IN THE GOSPEL**

**The Apostle Paul wrote:**

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” (Romans 1:16)

**AND**

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18)

### **HOWEVER THE GOSPEL MUST BE PREACHED IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**The apostle Paul wrote:**

“For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.” (1 Thessalonians 1:5)

### **AND TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH**

“For I determined not to know anything among you **except Jesus Christ and Him crucified**. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power,” (1 Corinthians 2:2-4)

### **WHEN PHILIP THE EVANGELIST PREACHED IN SAMARIA MULTITUDES BECAME CHRISTIANS**

HEALINGS AND DELIVERANCES ACCOMPANIED THE PREACHING OF THE WORD

### **THERE WAS GREAT JOY IN THAT CITY**

“Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip went to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and **seeing the miracles** which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.” (Acts 8:4-8)

## 5) THERE IS POWER IN PRAISE AND WORSHIP

**WHEN PAUL AND SILAS WERE THROWN IN JAIL AFTER RECEIVING MANY STRIPES, THEY BEGAN TO PRAY AND SING HYMNS**

“But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed.” (Acts 16:25-26)

**THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER AND HIS HOUSEHOLD WERE ALL THEN SAVED**

## 6) JESUS EMPOWERS AND GIVES AUTHORITY TO BELIEVERS TO OPERATE IN KINGDOM POWER

“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues, they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover.” (Mark 16:17-18)

**WE MUST CONTINUALLY ABIDE IN HIM.**

(Jesus must always be our first love) {John 15:4-5}

**THERE IS POWER IN THE NAME OF JESUS**  
(The Name above all Names)

Jesus said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” (Matthew 28:18)

Jesus also said to his disciples “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” (John 14:12-14)

**THE FIRST DISCIPLES TARRYED IN JERUSALEM UNTIL THEY WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. Then they began to operate in power as they preached the gospel.**

*As believers it is so important that we live and minister in the power of the Holy Spirit. We must continually be filled with His power.*

## **HOW TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**To receive the gift of the Holy Spirit a believer must simply ask their heavenly Father for the special gift of the Holy Spirit.**

“If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.” (Luke 11:13)

**Like the gift of salvation it is to be received – By Grace – Through Faith – Not of Works**

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

**A believer must simply receive the gift of the Holy Spirit by FAITH**

“...that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” (Galatians 3:14)

## **HOWEVER**

**FAITH IS NEVER A SUBSTITUTE FOR OBEDIENCE. TRUE FAITH IS ALWAYS MANIFESTED IN OBEDIENCE.**

**The apostle Peter focused on the obedience aspect of genuine faith in his defence to the Jewish council.**

“And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.” (Acts 5:32)

## **SIX SCRIPTURAL STEPS OF OBEDIENCE AND FAITH TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT**

### **1) & 2) Repentance and being Baptized**

The first two steps are stated by the Apostle Peter. These are genuine repentance and being water baptized upon becoming a believer.

**“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38)**

### 3) Being Hungry and thirsty for the fullness of the Spirit

**Jesus said**, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” **(John 7:37-38)**

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.” **(Matthew 5:6)**

### 4) Asking our Heavenly Father for the gift of the Holy Spirit

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father *give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!*” **(Luke 11:13)**

### 5) We must receive the Holy Spirit (DRINK)

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

“**Drinking**” represents an active process of receiving. The infilling of the Holy Spirit cannot be received by a negative or passive attitude, just as no one can drink with a closed mouth. The Lord says, “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” **(Psalm 81:10)** *God cannot fill a closed mouth. We must open our mouth to receive the fullness of the Spirit*

### 6) We must “yield” ourselves to God

The apostle Paul speaks to Christians of a two fold surrender to God:

**“But present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”** (Romans 6:13)

- The first surrender is the “surrender of the will and the personality”  
YOURSELVES
- The second surrender involves the surrender of our PHYSICAL MEMBERS

In surrendering our physical members, we can no longer seek to understand intellectually what God asks of us. We must simply hand over unreserved control of our physical members and allow God to use them according to His own will and purpose without demanding to understand what God is doing or why He is doing it.

The particular member He takes full control of is that unruly member which no man can tame – the tongue. Thus the yielding of our tongue to the Spirit represents the ultimate surrender of one’s members and by this we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**The above six Scriptural steps of obedience and faith are not always fulfilled when some believers receive the Holy Spirit, but they are important steps to be taught to those believers desiring to be Baptized in the Holy Spirit.**

# FAITH FOR HEALING

- God is sovereign over all things in this world
- His ways are perfect and just
- God's timing and purposes are always for a reason. God knows what is best for us
- Wrong attitudes and unforgiveness can be a barrier to receiving God's blessings (Exodus 15:26)

**The Lord said to Solomon:**

"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 I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

**Jesus Himself said,**

"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, FORGIVE HIM, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses." (Mark 11:25)

**HAVING RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS  
(LOVING OTHERS) IS IMPORTANT TO GOD.**

- I will now share on what God says in His Word about healing

# 1) FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

**The Apostle Paul wrote, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17)**

**“Jesus said, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32)**

**Jesus said to the leper who was healed, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.” (Luke 17:19)**

**Jesus also said to the two blind men who cried out to Him for mercy, hoping to be healed by Him, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.” Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith let it be to you.” AND THEIR EYES WERE OPENED...” (Matthew 9:28-30)**

**Meditating on God’s Promises in His Word in the area of healing and answered prayers, and speaking out these promises helps to build our faith in the area of divine healing. The Lord said to Joshua before he was about to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land, that “this Book of the Law should not depart from his mouth” and that if he was to meditate on the Book of the Law and observe it, he would prosper and have good success. (Joshua 1:8)**

The book of Hebrews also says much about the importance of every believer having faith in God and in His ability to perform miracles.

*“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6)*

*“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)*

## **2) WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT HEALING**

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits; Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction...” (**Psalm 103:2-4**)

“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we ARE healed.” (**Isaiah 53:5**)

### **The Apostle Peter wrote in His Epistle:**

“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His steps.”

“Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”; (**1 Peter 2:21-22**)

### **The prophet Isaiah wrote in relation to Jesus Christ:**

“who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed.” (**1 Peter 2:24**)

**The Psalmist also wrote**, “Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, And He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word and healed them, And delivered them from their destructions.” (**Psalm 107:19-20**)

**THE BIBLE MAKES IT CLEAR THAT GOD IS THE GOD THE HEALS THE SICK AND SETS AT LIBERTY THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED AND THAT HE ALWAYS HAS AND ALWAYS WILL.**

### **3) THE MIRACLES THAT JESUS DID (Jesus Had great compassion for the sick)**

“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”

“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” (**Matthew 9:35-36**)

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.” (**Matthew 4:23-24**)

## **Jesus**

- **Healed the Paralytic**
- **He Healed Blind Bartimaeus**
- **He healed the lame, the mute and the maimed He made whole**

“...Great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus’ feet, and He healed them. So the multitude marvelled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing, and they glorified the God of Israel.” (**Matthew 15:30**)

## **Jesus also**

- **Made the deaf to hear**
- **He cleansed the lepers, and**
- **Raised the dead**

**JESUS HEALED PEOPLE OF EVERY TYPE OF  
PHYSICAL AILMENT, SICKNESS AND DISEASE**

## **4) JESUS SAID, EVEN GREATER THINGS WILL WE DO AS BELIEVERS THAN HE DID**

### **Jesus said to Philip,**

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.” (John 14:12)

## **5) THE MIRACLES PERFORMED BY THE CHURCH IN THE BOOK OF ACTS**

**The Apostle Peter said to the lame man, who had been lame from his mother’s womb, who laid daily at the gate of the temple called Beautiful:**

“Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: ‘In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’ And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them – walking, leaping, and praising God” (Acts 3:6-8)

### **MIRACLES WERE COMMONPLACE IN THE EARLY CHURCH**

“And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch.” (Acts 5:12)

“And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them.

Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were **ALL HEALED.**” (Acts 5:14-16)

### **WHEN PHILIP PREACHED CHRIST TO THE MULTITUDES IN SAMARIA**

“...Unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed.” (Acts 8:7)

### **GOD EVEN PERFORMED UNUSUAL MIRACLES BY THE HAND OF THE APOSTLE PAUL**

“Now God worked unusual miracle by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.” (Acts 19:11-12)

**Demonic spirits are the cause of many types of sicknesses and infirmities. Jesus loosed the woman who was bound up by a spirit of infirmity for 18 years and she was healed. (Luke 13:10-17) (Jesus’ Heart to see people SET FREE)**

## **6) ALL BELIEVERS CAN LAY HANDS ON THE SICK AND THEY WILL RECOVER**

**Jesus Himself said,**

“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; **they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.**” (Mark 16:17-18)

## **7) GOD ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS**

**Jesus said,**

“And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” (**John 14:13-14**)

**The Apostle John wrote:**

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know the He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” (**1 John 5:14-15**)

## **8) WE MUST SIMPLY BELIEVE FOR OUR HEALING MIRACLE**

**Jesus said,** “Have faith in God.” For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, **believe** that you receive them, and you will have them.” (**Mark 11:22-24**)

## **WE MUST SIMPLY JUST BELIEVE FOR OUR MIRACLE TODAY**

# LETTING GO OF CONTROL IN OUR LIFE

- The hardest thing for many people is to relinquish FULL control of their life OVER TO GOD
- Before becoming a Christian we generally try to be in control or in charge of our own life (hence we experience many pressures)
- When trials come in life, if we are in charge of our own life, circumstance can begin to crush us. (YET GOD WANTS AND IS ABLE TO HELP US WITH ALL OF OUR STRUGGLES)

## ***THERE IS GREAT WISDOM IN GIVING GOD FULL CONTROL OF OUR LIVES***

### **i) HIS WAYS ARE HIGHER THAN OURS**

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8-9)

### **ii) GOD HAS A BIG PLAN FOR OUR LIFE**

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” (1 Corinthians 2:9)

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

**The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah when shut up in prison:**

“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” (Jeremiah 33:3)

### **iii) GOD IS ABLE TO DIG US OUT OF THE DEEPEST PIT**

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits; Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” (Psalm 103:2-5)

### **iv) WE CAN DO FAR MORE IN HIS STRENGTH (WE MUST DEPEND ON THE HOLY SPIRIT)**

#### **Jesus Himself ministered in the power of the Spirit:**

“Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.” (Luke 4:14-15)

“how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.” (Acts 10:38)

#### **The Apostle Paul also depended on the Holy Spirit and wrote in his letter to the Corinthian Church:**

“I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:3-5)

**The Apostle Paul also wrote in relation to God’s enabling power for ALL believers,** “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.” (Ephesians 3:20)

## **v) UNLESS THE LORD BUILDS THE HOUSE WE LABOUR IN VAIN**

“Unless the Lord builds the house, They labour in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.” **(Psalm 127:1)**

**WHATEVER WE DO IN OUR OWN STRENGTH AND ABILITY WILL ULTIMATELY BEAR LITTLE OR NO ETERNAL FRUIT**

**THE BIBLE MAKES THIS VERY CLEAR:**

“Thus says the LORD: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land which is not inhabited.

Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. for he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit.” **(Jeremiah 17:5-8)**

**FOR THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO PLANT CHURCHES, HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO ALLOW THE LORD TO GUIDE AND DIRECT ALL THAT IS DONE TO ESTABLISH AND BUILD THE CHURCH. AS PASTORS ALLOW THE LORD TO UNFOLD HIS PLAN FOR THEIR CHURCH, THEY WILL SEE MUCH FRUIT FROM THEIR ENDEAVOURS.**

## **vi) GOD IS ABLE TO OPEN UP DOORS THAT NO MAN CAN CLOSE**

**Jesus said to the church in Philadelphia,**

“I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.” **(Revelation 3:8)**

## **vii) GOD IS NOT LIMITED BY OUR OWN LIMITED ABILITIES**

*We can do all things through Christ Who strengthens us.*

*God empowers and equips those who the world would say are nobodies to do great and mighty things for Him.*

*God does not depend on our abilities, but only on our AVAILABILITY.*

*The people who Jesus chose to be His disciples, the founding Apostles of the church, were all very ordinary men. Four of these disciples were unlearned fishermen.*

*However as they spent time with Jesus Christ, they became empowered to be world changers*

**“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marvelled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” (Acts 4:13)**

*His strength is made perfect in our weakness.*

**(2 Corinthians 12:7-10)**

***“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength.” (Isaiah 40:28-29)***

## **viii) GOD WANTS US TO LEAD A BLESSED AND FULFILLED LIFE**

**Jesus said**, “... I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (**John 10:10**)

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’... But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (**Matt. 6:31&33**)

**HOWEVER DESPITE THESE PROMISES AND ASSURANCES FROM GOD, MANY PEOPLE STILL TRY TO CONTROL CERTAIN AREAS OF THEIR LIFE**

**SOME PEOPLE FEAR LETTING GO TOTAL CONTROL OF THEIR LIFE TO GOD.**

**HOWEVER GOD’S BEST PLAN FOR OUR LIFE REQUIRES US TO SURRENDER FULL CONTROL OF OUR LIFE OVER TO HIM**

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (**Hebrews 11:6**)

# **HOW THEN DO WE SURRENDER FULL CONTROL OF OUR LIVES TO GOD?**

**1) IT IS A CHOICE TO TRUST AND OBEY HIM.**

(To give Jesus Christ ALL of your heart)

**2) IT IS A CHOICE TO COMMIT ALL YOUR WAYS TO THE LORD, AND**

**3) IT IS A CHOICE TO SIMPLY ALLOW THE LORD TO DIRECT YOU STEPS ON A DAILY BASIS (So that His plan for your life begins to unfold)**

# MOVING ON INTO ALL THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR YOUR LIFE (His destiny for your life)

## INTRODUCTION

- We have all dreamed about what we could do in life as children
- However as we grow up life's circumstances can sometimes deal us cruel blows which can discourage us and for many it has resulted in them resigning themselves to living a life of mediocrity
- We all have made mistakes in the past
- We all have made wrong choices in life
- No one has ever had the perfect upbringing
- We all could have regrets over past failures and disappointments
- However our past failures and bad experiences will never stop God from using our lives in a mighty way
- We all can experience the abundant life that Jesus spoke of no matter what our background or past experiences are like once we have fully surrendered our life to Jesus Christ
- We must simply have faith to believe that God has a great plan for our life. A plan which will give us great purpose in our life

## THE GREAT APOSTLE PAUL KNEW THE IMPORTANCE OF PUTTING THE PAST BEHIND:

- Before he had an encounter with Jesus Christ, Paul (who was then know by the name Saul) was persecuting the early Christian church
- He was present at and consented to the stoning to death of Stephen who was a leader in the early church
- Paul was also responsible for putting many Christians in prison
- Saul made havoc of the early church
- Yet after his encounter with the Lord, Paul faithfully served Jesus all his life
- Paul could easily have had regrets about how he had persecuted the church which he now loved

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• However Paul knew that he could not alter his past. This is why he wrote in his letter to the church in Philippi:</li></ul> |
|---|

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me.”

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, *forgetting* those things which are BEHIND and reaching FORWARD to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12-14)

## WHEN WE COME TO CHRIST WE HAVE A NEW START TO LIFE

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

“Bless the LORD, O my soul; And forget not all His benefits; Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” (Psalm 103:2-5)

## **GOD HAS A UNIQUE PLAN FOR EVERY BELIEVER'S LIFE.**

“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)

## **TO ACHIEVE ALL THAT GOD HAS FOR OUR LIVES AS A BELIEVER WE NEED HOWEVER TO LEAVE BEHIND OUR**

- Past failures and hurts
- Experiences of being rejected and put down
- Even our past successes, and
- Our past wrong mindsets and traditions that we learnt while growing up

## **IN DOING THIS WE CAN THEN MOVE FORWARD INTO ALL THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE.**

## ***WHEN WE PUT OUR FAITH AND TRUST IN JESUS CHRIST WE CAN BE ASSURED THAT***

- Jesus will be with us always
- The Holy Spirit will dwell within us always and will guide us into all truth
- That God has a unique plan for our life
- **That with God all things are possible**

## **TO PUT OUR PAST BEHIND AND TO MOVE ON INTO ALL THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE, THE BIBLE MAKES IT CLEAR THAT WE MUST HAVE OUR MINDS RENEWED**

**The Apostle Paul wrote:**

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

And do not be **conformed** to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:1-2)

**OUR WRONG MINDSETS AND FEARS WHICH WERE DEVELOPED BEFORE WE BECAME A CHRISTIAN MUST BE REPLACED BY WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT US AND WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST**

**AS CHRISTIANS WE NEED TO KNOW:**

- How much God loves us
- That all of our sins are forgiven (past, present and future) when we turn to God and give our life to Jesus Christ
- God's promises for our life
- Our authority in Christ
- Who we are in Christ
- That God has a good plan for our life, and
- That we can depend on God because He is absolutely faithful

**THE BIBLE SAYS MUCH ABOUT WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST**

- i) We are ambassadors of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20)**
- ii) We are citizens of Heaven (Philippians 3:20)**
- iii) We are children of God and joint heirs with Christ (John 1:12-13)  
(Romans 8:16-17) (1 Peter 5:19)**
- iv) We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3)**
- v) We are called to reign with Christ here on earth (Revelation 5:9-10)**
- vi) As Christ's representatives here on earth we have been given power and authority in His name (Mark 16:15-18) (Matt. 28:18-20)  
(Matt. 16:18-19)**
- vii) We have a God who will supply all of our need according to His riches and glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19) (Ephesians 3:20)  
(Jeremiah 33:3) (Isaiah 55:8-9)**
- viii) We are a royal priest (1 Peter 2:9)**
- ix) We are saints (Romans 1:7)**
- x) We are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:37) and**
- xi) No weapon formed against us shall prosper (Isaiah 54:17)**

# FOUR KEYS TO MOVING ON INTO ALL THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE

## 1) WE NEED TO BE PEOPLE OF PRAYER (Who believe in the power of prayer to change lives and situations)

**“NOW FAITH IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN”** (Hebrews 11:1)

**Jesus said,** “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

“And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” **(John 14:12-14)**

**The Apostle John also wrote:** “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” **(1 John 5:14-15)**

**Jesus also said:** “...Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” **(John 16:23-24)**

## 2) WE NEED TO MEDITATE ON GOD’S WORD (So that the truth will set us free)

**Jesus said,** “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” **(John 8:31-32)**

**Psalm one also reads**

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in his law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” **(Psalm 1:1-3)**

**BEFORE LEADING THE ISRAELITES INTO THE PROMISED LAND, THE LORD SPOKE TO JOSHUA AND SAID:**

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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 1:8)**

## **THE BIBLE ALSO SAYS**

**“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)**

## **THE APOSTLE PAUL WROTE IN HIS LETTER TO TIMOTHY**

**“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)**

**IF WE BUILD OUR LIFE ON HEARING AND DOING GOD’S WORD WE WILL BUILD OUR LIFE ON THE ROCK AND NO STORM IN OUR LIFE WILL EVER CAUSE OUR LIFE TO FALL APART**

### **3) WE MUST PUT OUR ENTIRE TRUST IN GOD ALONE (We need to have a childlike dependency on God in EVERY area of our life)**

#### **THE BIBLE SAYS:**

**“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes;**

**But its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, NOR WILL CEASE FROM YIELDING FRUIT.” (Jeremiah 17:7-8) AND**

**“You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.” (Isaiah 26:3-4)**

### **4) WE MUST BE CONTINUALLY LED AND EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

#### **Jesus said to His disciples:**

**“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for he will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears he will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” (John 16:13)**

**WE MUST BE CONTINUALLY LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

## **WE MUST ALSO BE CONTINUALLY FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

### **The Apostle Paul wrote:**

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,...” (**Ephesians 5:15-18**)

**WE MUST DEPEND ON THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AS WE MOVE FORWARD INTO ALL THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIVES**

### **The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus:**

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generation, forever and ever. Amen.” (**Ephesians 3:20**)

### **The Apostle Paul also wrote:**

“I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” (**1 Corinthians 2:3-5**)

**GOD HAS A WONDERFUL PLAN FOR EVERY BELIEVER’S LIFE. HOWEVER WE MUST NOT ALLOW OUR PAST TO PREVENT US FROM MOVING INTO ALL THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE.**

## **IN CONCLUSION,**

### **WHEN WE:**

- 1) Become people of prayer**
- 2) Consistently meditate on God’s Word,**
- 3) Put our entire trust in God alone, and**
- 4) Learn to be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit**

**WE WILL ENTER INTO ALL THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE AND WE WILL EXPERIENCE THE LIFE AND LIFE MORE ABUNDANTLY THAT JESUS PROMISED TO THOSE WHO LOVE AND SERVE HIM.**

# PUTTING THE PAST BEHIND

(Keys to stopping our past failures from ruining our future)

## 1) **WE MUST CHOOSE TO PUT THE PAST BEHIND**

- i) We must REFUSE to dwell on our past failures
- ii) **We must refuse to have pity parties**
- iii) We must stop justifying our present circumstances by blaming our past injustices
- iv) **WE MUST SIMPLY GET UP AND CHOOSE TO MAKE OUR LIVES COUNT FROM NOW ON**

“Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43:18-19)

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:12-14)

## 2) **KNOW THAT JESUS GIVES US A FUTURE**

**God can and will redeem our lives** (Even from the deepest pit)

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.” (Psalm 103:2-5)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17)

**God wants to have a loving relationship with all of us**

### 3) **THE POWER OF RECONCILIATION AND FORGIVENESS**

*To be FREE to move on in life we need to FORGIVE*

- OTHERS who have hurt us, and
- OURSELVES

#### **FORGIVENESS IS:**

- A choice
- Liberating, and leads to
- Reconciliation and healing in our lives

#### **The apostle Paul said to the Corinth Church:**

*“Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.” (2 Corinthians 2:10-11)*

The Bible says much about the damaging consequences of people not forgiving others

“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord; looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;” (Hebrews 12:14-15)

### 4) **WE NEED TO HAVE A VISION FOR LIFE**

“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint;” (Proverbs 29:18)

**“When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild.”**  
(Proverbs 29:18) New Living translation

**The Bible also says,** “There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.” (Proverbs 16:25)

***WE NEED TO HAVE A FOCUS IN LIFE***

## **WE NEED TO KNOW ‘GOD’S PLAN’ FOR OUR LIFE**

**The Lord said to the Prophet Habakkuk, “Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it.” (Habakkuk 2:2a)**

**HAVING A VISION ENABLES US TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE.**

**FOCUS AND COMMITMENT ARE TWO KEYS TO FULFILLING YOUR GOD GIVEN DESTINY**

### **5) CHOOSE YOUR FRIENDS WISELY**

**WE NEED FRIENDS WHO ARE:**

- FAITHFUL (GENUINE) FRIENDS
- GODLY FRIENDS
- ENCOURAGING FRIENDS
- NOT CRITICAL AND NEGATIVE BUT PEOPLE OF VISION

“The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.” (Proverbs 12:26)

“He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.” (Proverbs 13:20)

“Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.”

(Proverbs 22:24-25)

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” (Proverbs 17:17)

**Friendship is at its best, not in prosperity, but in time of trouble**

**CHOOSING RIGHT FRIENDS WILL HELP YOU TO HAVE A FULFILLED FUTURE**

**GENUINE FRIENDS MAKE LIFE MUCH MORE RICHER**

**“A man who has friends must himself be friendly...” (Prov. 18:24)**

## **6) FILL YOUR MIND WITH GOD'S WORD (It's the TRUTH)**

**WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT OUR FUTURE,  
HIS LOVE FOR US AND HIS FAITHFULNESS**

**Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him,** “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” **(John 8:31a-32)**

**GOD HAS THE BEST PLAN FOR OUR LIFE**

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give; you a future and a hope.” **(Jeremiah 29:11)**

**The Lord said to the Prophet Jeremiah when he was in prison,** “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things which you do not know.” **(Jeremiah 33:3)**

**GOD IS ABLE TO MEET ALL OF OUR NEEDS**

**The Apostle Paul wrote,** “And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” **(Philippians 4:19)**

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.” **(Ephesians 3:20)**

**GOD NEVER REJECTS THOSE WHO LOVE HIM**

For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” **(Hebrews 13:5a)**

## 7) **ALLOW THE LORD TO UNFOLD YOUR FUTURE**

### ***GOD KNOWS WHAT IS BEST FOR US***

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8-9)

### **GOD GUIDES US WHEN WE COMMIT OUR PLANS TO HIM**

“Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.” (Proverbs 16:3)

“Commit your way to the Lord, TRUST also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.” (Psalm 37:5)

### ***GOD WILL DIRECT OUR STEPS***

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds him with His hand.” (Psalm 37:23-24)

## 8) **DELIGHT YOURSELF IN THE LORD** (Be a worshipper)

### ***GOD INHABITS THE PRAISES OF OUR WORSHIP***

IN GOD’S PRESENCE:

- i) **We experience fullness of joy** (Psalm 16:11)
- ii) **Our strength is renewed. He gives power to the weak** (Isaiah 40:29-31)
- iii) **We receive emotional healing** (Jesus came to bind up the broken hearted)
- iv) **We receive revelation and guidance from God,** (Psalm 32:8)
- v) **We experience His unconditional love, and**
- vi) **We begin to become more like Jesus** (We have more of His compassion)

“You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for in YAH, the Lord, is everlasting strength. (Isaiah 26:3-4)

## 9) **CONTINUALLY TRUST IN GOD'S FAITHFULNESS**

“Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; **Blessed** is the man who trusts in Him! (Psalm 34:8)

“**Blessed** is the man who **trusts in the Lord**, And whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, **Nor will cease from yielding fruit.**” (Jeremiah 17:7-8)

### **We have a God WHO ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS**

Jesus said, ...“Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.” (Mark 11:22-23)

“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” (Mark 11:24)

“And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” (John 14:13-14)

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” (1 John 5:14-15)

## 10) **INVEST YOUR LIFE FOR OTHERS** (John 12:24-26)

- THE ANSWER FOR DEPRESSION (Taking our eyes off me myself and I)
- IT STOPS US FROM HAVING REGRETS OVER OUR PAST FAILURES
- IT TRULY IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN RECEIVE
- **LIVING FOR GOD AND OTHERS LEADS TO ABUNDANT LIFE**

# The importance of persevering in our Christian walk (and encouraging one another)

In this life we will all at times experience challenges and trials which have the potential to both discourage and distract us from what God has planned for our life. The Bible makes it clear that we are all in a spiritual war in which the enemy of our soul, the devil is constantly trying to prevent people from entering into all that God has planned for their life.

**Jesus said**, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”  
**(John 10:10)**

Jesus made it very clear that the Devil is constantly trying to prevent people from experiencing fullness of life, and will endeavour to steal and destroy the dreams and destinies of as many people as possible. This assault from the enemy intensifies when a person becomes a Believer, because every Christian has the potential to see many others becoming a part of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus also emphasised that He had come to give people a life full of purpose and meaning and wanted all people to have abundant life.

**The Apostle Peter also commented on the Devil’s desire to destroy as many lives as possible:**

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” **(1 Peter 5:8)**

**The Apostle Paul also wrote about the spiritual war that we are all involved in:**

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”  
**(Ephesians 6:10-13)**

**IN THIS LIFE THERE CAN BE MANY CHALLENGES AND SITUATIONS WHICH CAN CAUSE US TO BECOME DISCOURAGED IN OUR CHRISTIAN WALK. SOME OF THESE INCLUDE:**

- When we may be experiencing extended times of financial hardship or ill health or when we have experienced a temporary setback in life
- When we have been let down or rejected by others who we have helped in the past. This can be particularly hard when it involves either a family member or someone from our church family
- When we see no breakthrough in areas of our life, even though we have been praying for some time for a change to our circumstances
- When others seem to be experiencing great blessings at a time when we are faithfully serving the Lord yet at the same time experiencing many challenges
- Times when our energy levels are low and when we feel flat and physically depleted
- During those times when people are trying to break free from life controlling habits which were learned before they became a Christian such as smoking and gambling
- When the enemy either directly or through people attacks your sense of self worth by trying to make you feel inadequate for what God has called you to do
- During the wilderness seasons of our life when we are waiting for God's direction in our life
- When we are experiencing tensions in significant relationships
- When several urgent and critical tasks all of a sudden have to be attended to. Life can often present us with unexpected challenges, and
- When we are going through those times when the enemy is trying to continually discourage us. This is usually most intense on the point of a spiritual break-through in our life or before a new ministry door opens

## **THE BIBLE MAKES IT CLEAR THAT WE MUST CONTINUE TO PERSEVERE IN OUR CHRISTIAN WALK**

### **The author of the Book of Hebrews wrote:**

“Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.” (**Hebrew 10:35-36**)

### **The Apostle Paul wrote:**

“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (**2 Timothy 3:12**)

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” (**Galatians 6:9**)

### **And to the young Pastor Timothy he wrote,**

“But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.” (**2 Timothy 4:5**)

## **THE APOSTLE PAUL HIMSELF EXPERIENCED MANY TRIALS AND SUFFERINGS DURING HIS LIFE AND MINISTRY HERE ON EARTH**

**The Apostle Paul wrote,** “To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labour, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat...” (**1 Corinthians 4:11-13**)

## **THE APOSTLE PAUL’S GREAT LOVE FOR JESUS GAVE HIM THE ABILITY TO PERSEVERE IN HIS CHRISTIAN WALK**

**The Apostle Paul wrote,** “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” (**Philippians 3:7-8**)

### **James the brother of Jesus wrote:**

“Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord had promised to those who love Him.” **(James 1:12) and**

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete lacking nothing.” **(James 1:2-4)**

### **The Apostle Peter wrote:**

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you...In this you greatly rejoice though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love.

Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith-the salvation of your souls. **(1 Peter 1:3-4, 6-9)**

### **Finally Jesus Himself said,**

“But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” **(Matthew 24:13)**

**The Bible is full of wisdom and encouragement for all Believers, that if we continually put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, we will fulfil our God given destiny and experience the abundant life that Jesus promises to those who follow Him. Like the Apostle Paul we all want to be able to say at the end of our life here on earth,**

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” **(2 Timothy 4:7)**

**GIVEN THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE THAT ALL BELIEVERS EXPERIENCE, IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE LOVE AND SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER IN THE BODY OF CHRIST**

- Now more than ever we need to be looking at every opportunity to encourage one another in the Body of Christ. The author of Hebrews wrote, *“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but **exhort** one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” (Hebrews 3:12-13)*
- It is so important that every believer is part of a loving and caring Christian community. The author of Hebrews also stressed the absolute importance of fellowship among Believers, *“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but **exhorting one another**, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:24-25)*
- As Christians we will grow and thrive when we are connected to and planted in a vibrant bible based local church. Within the context of a local church our spiritual gifts can be developed and used to help encourage and build up other Believers. The Bible says that those who are planted in the house of the Lord will still bear fruit in old age.  
  
*“Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing, to declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.” (Psalm 92:13-15)*
- Having Godly mentors who encourage us in our walk with the Lord is also very important for all Believers. The book of Proverbs says, *“Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.” (Proverbs 11:14)*

AS BELIEVERS WE WILL SHINE BRIGHTLY (**Matthew 5:16**) WHEN WE ARE CONNECTED WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE A PASSION FOR JESUS.

***THE BIBLE MAKES IT CLEAR THAT OUR LOVE FOR OTHERS IS MOST IMPORTANT, AND THAT IN PARTICULAR, WE NEED TO HAVE A GENUINE LOVE AND CONCERN FOR OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE LORD.***

***THIS IS ESPECIALLY THE CASE AT A TIME WHEN MANY BELIEVERS ARE NOW EXPERIENCING GREAT TRIALS AND CHALLENGES AS THEY STAND UP FOR THEIR FAITH IN WORKPLACES AND NATIONS WHERE PEOPLE ARE OPENLY OPPOSED TO THE GOSPEL MESSAGE.***

(Romans 12:9-10) (John 13:34-35) (Philippians 2:3-4)

**The Apostle Paul wrote on the importance of love,**

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.” (**1 Corinthians 13:1-3**)

**and,**

“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us...”

(**Ephesians 4:31-32, 5:1-2**)

**Jesus Himself emphasised the importance of practically loving our brethren and visiting our Christian brothers and sisters who are sick or in prison. (Matthew 25:34-4)**

## ***THE FIRST CHURCH WAS CHARACTERISED BY THE GENUINE LOVE OF ALL BELIEVERS FOR ONE ANOTHER***

- There was genuine love and unity amongst the believers (**Acts 4:32**)
- They regularly fellowshiped together (**Act 2:46**)
- They practically helped those who were in need (**Acts 4:34-35**)
- They encouraged each another (**Acts 11:21-24**)
- They prayed for one another (**Acts 12:5**)
- IN SHORT THERE WAS MUCH LOVE IN THE FIRST CHURCH, and
- Daily new believers were added to the church (**Acts 2:47**)

## **I WILL NOW CONCLUDE WITH SOME KEYS WHICH HELP US TO PERSEVERE IN OUR CHRISTIAN WALK WHEN WE ARE GOING THROUGH TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS**

**1) We must simply just BELIEVE that God is sovereign in our circumstances if He is truly Lord of our life** (Psalm 37:23) (Matthew 6:31-33) Jesus Himself said,

“Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. ... Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”  
(**Matthew 10:29, 31**)

**2) We must simply just accept that NO situation is impossible for God.** (Matthew 19:26) *We must never doubt God’s great love for us as believers.* (Romans 8:38-39) *We must just believe that God is able to guide us through the storms of life and is well able to pull us out of even the deepest pit.* (Mark 9:23)

**3) We need to cultivate a lifestyle of prayer. We must learn to become God dependent. The Bible makes it clear that God answers all of our prayers which are in accordance with His will for our life (1 John 5:14-15) (Mark 11:22-24) (John 16:23-24)**

- We must learn to pray in faith (**Hebrews 11:1**)
- We must not continually talk about the mountains in our life
- We must speak to the mountains in our life, “Be removed in Jesus Name”
- We need to be in continual communion with God (Prayer) to seek His guidance and direction for our life (**1 Peter 4:7**)
- We must simply stand on God’s promises in His Word. We can be assured that God will answer our prayers which are in accordance with His will for our life.

**Jesus said**, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” (**John 14:12-14**)

**The Apostle Paul wrote**, “Be *anxious for nothing*, 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 minds through Christ Jesus.” (**Philippians 4:6-7**)

**4) We must continually have an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. We must learn to abide in His presence**

- We renew our strength when we wait upon the Lord (**Isaiah 40:28-31**)
- In His presence is fullness of joy (Joy helps to sustain us during the trials of life) (**Psalms 16:11**)
- Unless we abide in Him, our lives will bear no fruit (**John 15:4-5**)
- We become more like Christ when we spend time in His presence
- Perfect peace comes as we keep our minds stayed on Jesus (**Isaiah 26:3**)
- Spending time with Jesus also helps us to become bold in sharing our faith with others (**Acts 4:13**)

**5) We must daily put on the armour of God (Ephesians 6:10-17) and plead the Blood of Jesus over all areas of our life (over our mind, our will and emotions, our finances and over our marriage and possessions)**

*We must continually be **PREPARED** for the spiritual warfare that all believers **ARE** involved in. When we become a Christian we immediately enlist in the Army of God and we have a very real adversary, the devil.*

**The Apostle Peter wrote,**

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” **(1 Peter 5:8)**

**6) The importance of building your life on the Word of God**

- Through lack of knowledge people perish **(Hosea 4:6)**
- We get guidance and direction in God’s Word **(Proverbs 119:105)**
- It is important to renew our minds with the promises of God in God’s word **(Romans 12:2)** and to learn God’s Kingdom values.
- Meditating on the Word of God is a key to growing in our faith **(2 Timothy 3:16-17)** and prospering in what God has called us to do **(Joshua 1:8)**

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; *And whatever he does shall prosper.* **(Psalm 1:1-3)**

- Building our life on the Word of God gives us a firm foundation in life, so that we will stand strong during the trials that we experience in life. (**Matthew 7:24-27**)
- True blessings come when we learn both to hear and obey the Word of God. Jesus said, "...blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (**Luke 11:28**)
- As we meditate on the Word of God we become more empowered to become all that God Has planned for our life, and we begin to walk in the ways that help us to experience the abundant life that Jesus spoke of. (**John 10:10**) Jesus said, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (**John 8:31-32**)

## **7) We must be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit in our Christian life and ministry**

As Christians it is imperative that we allow the Holy Spirit to guide and direct our steps in life. No matter what season we are in life, we must continually allow the Holy Spirit to direct our lives, especially when we are having valley experiences or mountain top experiences in our life.

Both of these extremes in life can cause us to become less dependent on the Holy Spirit's leading and direction. When going through valley experiences, when trials and challenges are confronting us, there is often the temptation to try and change our circumstances through self effort, especially if fear begins to influence our thinking. During these times it is even more critical that we learn to wait upon the Lord for His clear directions.

On the other hand, when things are going well in life, we can become more inclined to becoming less disciplined in our spiritual disciplines and also less diligent in pursuing God's direction for our life.

It is crucial that we live a life which is **continually** under the control or influence of the Holy Spirit. This will ensure that we continually stay on track with what God has called us to do in life. Yesterday's decisions will impact today and the decisions that we make today will influence our future.

Every day God has a unique plan for our life which will include the next steps to seeing our God given destiny unfolding in our life, as well as divine opportunities to share our faith with others and to encourage other believers. Today is the only day that we are guaranteed of. We should live every day as though it was our last day. In this way every day of our life will bear much fruit for God's Kingdom. As believers we need to continually seek God's wisdom and direction for our life each and every day.

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”  
**(Romans 8:14)**

**Jesus Himself said,**

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”  
**(John 16:13)**

**Jesus also emphasised the importance of Christians being empowered by the Holy Spirit to be effective witnesses for Him. Before ascending back to Heaven, Jesus told His disciples,**

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. **(Acts 1:8)**

## **THE GREAT APOSTLE PAUL CONTINUALLY DEPENDED ON THE HOLY SPIRIT BOTH FOR DIRECTION AND EMPOWERMENT FOR HIS MINISTRY**

“Now when they (The Apostle Paul and Timothy) had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.

After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”

Now after he had seen the vision we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them. (Acts 16:6-10)

- **When we position ourselves where God wants us to be, we begin to receive God’s Vision and direction for our life**
- **When Paul bypassed Mysia and came to Troas, He received a vision from God of where he was next to minister.**
- **As a result of following the Holy Spirit’s direction much of Europe was evangelised. Hundreds of years later European countries such as Germany and England were still very active in the area of Missions work. The British Empire had a great influence on seeing Christianity coming to many nations.**
- **God knows the best plan for our life. We must simply yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to guide and direct our lives.**

## **THE APOSTLE PAUL WAS EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WHEN HE MINISTERED TO OTHERS**

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:3-5)

## **JESUS HIMSELF MINISTERED IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**The book of Acts in the Bible says,** “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.” (Acts 10:38)

### **8) The importance of being continually filled with the Holy Spirit**

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:18)

**Jude in his letter wrote,**

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keeping yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.  
(Jude 20 & 21)

## **BEING CONTINUALLY FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US TO LOVE OTHERS AND TO DEVELOP MORE OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES**

## 9) We must learn to praise and worship the Lord in every situation

- God inhabits the praises of our worship
- When we magnify God in our praise and worship, our problems begin to appear smaller. **(Psalm 47:1-7)** As Christians we serve a mighty mountain removing God who can do all things. As we worship Him in Spirit and in truth, **(John 4:23)** He begins to fill our hearts with hope and the strength that we need to face the trials that we will all experience in life **(Psalm 95:1-7) (Colossians 3:16)**
- King David gained his strength from worshipping the Lord and spending time in His Presence **(Psalm 57:7-9)**
- Praise is the power that opens the door to the king, the king of all kings. As we worship the Lord we begin to get God's Kingdom perspective on life. **(Matthew 6:33)**
- The Bible says much about the importance of Praise and Worship. When we are going through challenges we need to make a sacrifice of praise. **(Hebrews 13:15)** Even when we don't feel like praising the Lord, because we are in a pit of despair, we must simply just make a choice to worship Him. When we begin to worship the Lord, despite how we may feel, we then begin to see our attitudes and circumstances changing. After being beaten and receiving many stripes, Paul and Silas were thrown into prison.  
***"But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed."*** (Acts 16:25-26)
- God begins to move in our lives when we make a choice to praise and worship Him.

**10) Finally every believer must have a God given vision and plan for their life**

- **Without a vision people cast of restraint. (Proverbs 29:18) A vision gives us a clear focus in life. The Lord said to the prophet Habakkuk,**

“Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it.” **(Habakkuk 2:2)**

- **We need to have a clear purpose and direction in our Christian walk. Having a clear vision for our life helps us to stay focussed when we are going through trials and challenges in life.**

- i) We must continually keep our eyes on Jesus and His plan for our life. When Peter got out of the boat and began walking on water towards Jesus, he did not sink whilst his eyes were on Jesus. The moment he took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the wind and the storms about him, Peter began to sink. **(Matthew 14:27-31)**
- ii) Having a vision for our life keeps us focussed and helps us to make plans to see God’s destiny for our life come to pass.
- iii) Having a clear vision for our life also helps us not to get sidetracked by the cares, temptations and distractions that constantly confront us in this world as the devil tries to take Christians off track so that their lives will bear little or no fruit.

- **We must endeavour not to deviate of course when we are going through times of trials or discouragement**

The Bible makes it clear that if we do not lose heart and keep following God's plan for our life, all that He has planned and purposed for our life will come to pass.

**The Apostle Paul wrote**, “being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;” (**Philippians 1:6**)

**The Lord also said to the prophet Habakkuk,**

“For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.” (**Habakkuk 2:3**)

**IF WE COMMIT TO FOLLOWING GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIFE, WE CAN BE ASSURED THAT ALL THAT GOD HAS PLANNED AND PURPOSED FOR OUR LIFE WILL UNFOLD**

- **When going through the valley experiences in life we must simply continually keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and put our faith and trust in Him alone. As we continue to trust and obey the LORD, we can be assured that He is well able to redeem us out of even the most challenging situations.**

**The Bible says**, “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD.” (**Jeremiah 17:7**)

**The Lord said to Jeremiah when he was locked up in prison,**

“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” (**Jeremiah 33:3**)

**FINDING AND FOLLOWING GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIFE HELPS US TO PERSEVERE IN OUR CHRISTIAN WALK**

## ***IN CONCLUSION***

- God has a unique plan and destiny for every Believer's life, which is full of great purpose and meaning. Jesus wants each and every believer to experience the abundant life that He spoke of.
- God's plan for our life will result in many others coming to Christ and growing in their faith as we continually follow His plan for our life
- For this reason every Believer will continually find themselves in a spiritual war.
- As Christians we have to appropriate our destiny in Christ, as the devil is continually looking for any opportunity to sidetrack us from God's best plan for our life
- As we stay close to the Lord and keep our eyes fixed upon Him, our lives will bear much fruit for all eternity
- May I encourage you to not grow weary while doing good, nor to give up on God's best plan for your life, no matter what obstacles or hindrances you may face, for in due season you shall reap if you do not lose heart
- May you continue to always persevere in your Christian walk and appropriate all that God has planned and destined for your life

# 7 Teachings from Prithi and Shobana Tissainayagam

## Walking in the Wisdom of the Lord

What is Wisdom? Wisdom is how you apply knowledge. As believers, we're not to operate in knowledge as the world does. We don't determine our course purely by human reasoning or the example of others. Our guidance must come from God—the One who instructs us in the way we should go (Psalm 32:8). In the next few weeks we will look at 6 aspects relating to Godly Wisdom (each one starting with the letters from the word WISDOM). Today we start with '*W*'.

### 'W' – Waiting and seeking to do the Will of God

**God says that those who *wait* on Him will be blessed (Isaiah 30:18). We will look at some of the qualities that are necessary to 'Wait' before the Lord.**

- 1) **Exhibit Patience** – God's way of dealing with people and situations can be quite different to what man does! His ways are higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). We see so many instances in the Bible where men and women of God had to wait for God's time before they could do mighty works through Him. Abraham waited patiently several years between the calls of God (Genesis 12, 15, 17). Moses waited until the cloud lifted and moved (Numbers 9:15-23). Jesus waited 30 years before he launched into Ministry. The key for great breakthrough and success is Patience (Galatians 5:22).
- 2) **Exhibit Endurance** – Waiting will also require endurance. In 2 Timothy 2:3 we see that Paul is encouraging Timothy to endure hardship to progress in the Kingdom of God. The 'easiness' that the World offers might not be the way God deals with His people. In Hebrews Chapter 11 we read how the great men and women of faith endured so much hardships that are beyond human understanding. Only through the grace of God that these people were able to endure those adverse circumstances.
- 3) **Exhibit Stillness** – What is stillness? Does it mean do nothing? It means to be quiet before God to listen to His voice clearly and to obey Him. "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). The modern world that we live in is full of voices and noises (at times even in ministry). People are more willing to talk than to listen! We are called to wait quietly and patiently to listen to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit (like Elijah did in 1 Kings 19: 10-13).
- 4) **Exhibit Faith** – Waiting requires strong faith and hope (Hebrews 11:13-14). Without faith we can lose sight of the vision God has given us, and we can begin to follow the ways of the World. Faith is the ingredient that gives us the Patience to go through denials and delays; the strength and courage to Endure in times of pain, difficulty and suffering; and the Stillness required to believe that God is real in the midst of uncertainty, and His voice will truly lead and guide us in the way we should go.

Next week we'll look at the letter '*I*' for Influence!

Prithi and Shobana Tissainayagam

## **Walking in the Wisdom of the Lord** **(The power of *Influence*)**

Last week we had a look at ‘waiting’ with patience as an important aspect of walking in the Wisdom of the Lord. This week we look at the second letter in the word ‘Wisdom’, the letter ‘I’ for Influence.

### **I’ – *Influence through Godly Identity***

The Bible says that in Jesus Christ are all treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3). What does this mean to us and to others with whom we interact? The wisdom that God has revealed to us we must first apply to our own lives and then make it known to others. If we don’t influence others the chances are that other are influencing us! We see that Solomon asked God for Wisdom to govern the affairs of God’s people (not to keep it for himself) and God granted his prayers and also blessed him with riches, honour and favour. We will have a look at some points that make us Godly identities and help us to influence others.

- **Be strong to hold on to your values (Godly beliefs)**

As Christians we are called to stand strong on our Biblical values. Our value system is based on the Word of God, and should not change according to the systems of the world (Rom 12:2). We read in the book of Daniel that no matter what opposition Daniel faced he always stood for his God given values (eg: he would not eat the royal food, Dan 1:8; he would not compromise on his prayer life, Dan 6:10; he refused to pray to the king, Dan 6:13). Because of Daniel’s strong Godly identity he was able to influence even pagan kings whom he served (King Nebuchadnezzar, King Darius, King Cyrus), and these kings recognised the power of God!

- **Be wise to keep your promises**

As believers we are called to keep our promises. We should be people who abide by our word so that we can earn respect from others. Respect must be earned and cannot be demanded. Queen Ester took a stand to hold on to the promises despite being unsure of the outcome. But God honoured her stand and gave her favour in the eyes of the King (Ester 5:1-3). Nehemiah is another example where he stood by the promise he received from God (Nehemiah Chapter 2). He was totally focused to his vision until he completed building the wall despite severe opposition (Nehemiah 6:15, 16). Without a vision people perish (Proverbs 29:18).

- **Be the salt of the earth**

We are called to be the salt of the earth. Salt has many properties such as losing its own identity to give flavour and taste to food, preserving raw food for long periods of time, melting ice, medical applications etc. We are called to exercise these qualities so that we can influence and make a difference to people around us by our words, deeds, motives, attitudes, actions and reactions. *“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men”* (Matthew 5:13).

- **Be the light of the world**

Light is there to be seen by people! A lamp that is kept under the bed is no use to anyone (Math 5:14,15)! Light makes our vision meaningful. Good eyes without no light is as good as being blind! Light helps us to navigate around our environment, clearly see and identify objects, and protects us from stumbling and possible collision! The Word says that we are the light for Christ so that others can see the Godly light in us and identify the difference between the darkness of the world and the true light of Christ (1 John 1:5-7). *“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”* (Matthew 5:16).

Prithi and Shobana Tissainayagam

## **Walking in the Wisdom of the Lord** **(The power of *Self-control*)**

**Last week we had a look at the power of *Influence* for walking in the wisdom of the Lord. Today we look at the third alphabet in the word ‘Wisdom’, the letter ‘S’ for Self-control.**

### **‘S’ – Self-Control by Surrendering your life to Christ**

Self-control is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and is mentioned several times in the Bible. *“Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.”* (Proverbs 25:28). Peter and Paul warned the Churches to have a spirit of Self-control. *“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”* (1 Peter 5:8). *“So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:6). Self-control can be learned by submitting our lives to the will of Christ and by walking in His wisdom. We look at 4 aspects of self-control in today’s message.

- **Learn to be Contented**

A contented person will be thankful to God for meeting all his ‘needs’ and not pay attention to the ‘wants’ that others lust after! The Word says, *“Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.”* (1 Timothy 6:6,7). If you are the only person living in this world, how would you live? There won’t be anyone else to compete with! Unhealthy competition between people brings about a spirit of greed that will eventually ruin us. *“People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”* (1 Timothy 6:9, 10).

- **Learn to know your Limits (Learn to say ‘No’)**

Many find it difficult to gauge their limitations (Romans 12:3)! Learning to say ‘No’ is one of the hardest challenges that people face, particularly giving a negative response to those who are close to us! It is better to express what you honestly believe than to say ‘yes’ and not honour your word! Jesus says, *“Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one”* (Matthew 5:37). Many people fall to financial problems, sexual immorality, relationship issues etc. because they do not know their ‘limits’! If you believe that you might fall into a potential ‘trap’ do not even go there (say ‘No’)!

- **Learn to understand the Bigger Picture (Learn to see the Long-term Blessings)**

Do not fall for short-term satisfaction or temporary happiness. Devil’s deceptive schemes are always to make us believe in short term pleasures while blinding our vision to see lasting blessings. Adam & Eve never thought of the consequences of sin. Had they known the suffering that was to follow they would not have eaten the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:16-19). Samson fell for momentary lust and abused the anointing that was upon him. He did not even realise that the anointing had left him (Jude 16:20, 21). Judas only saw the pleasure of having 30 pieces of silver and was completely blinded towards the everlasting blessings (Matthew 26:14-25, 27:3-5). Always understand that God has a bigger plan and a lasting blessing for you; so don’t settle for temporary relief (like Esau selling his birth right for a bowl of soup)!

- **Learn to be Thankful**

No matter how successful you are there will always be people above and below your level of blessings. We should learn to look at less fortunate people than us and be eternally thankful for what God has done for us (Philippians 4:6, Psalm 100:4, 1 Timothy 4:4). On the contrary, constantly looking at things we don’t have or goals that we haven’t achieved opens doors for the spirit of bitterness, jealousy, and envy to enter our hearts. *“A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones”* (Proverbs 14:30). Jesus also says, *“Out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts,..., greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander,... . All these evils come from inside and make a man unclean.”* (Mark 7:21-23). So be thankful for what the Lord has done for you!

Prithi and Shobana Tissainayagam

## **Walking in the Wisdom of the Lord** (The power of *Discipline*)

**Last week we had a look at the power of *Self-Control* for walking in the wisdom of the Lord. Today we look at the fourth alphabet in the word ‘Wisdom’, the letter ‘D’ for Discipline.**

### **‘D’ – Be Disciplined and Diligent in our walk with Christ**

*“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge”* (Proverbs 12:1). A disciple is a disciplined follower of Christ. Discipline is learned from childhood. One can’t change his life style overnight! Disciplining the body, mind and spirit takes time, effort and commitment (like a sportsman or a soldier preparing for a challenge). Hebrews 12:5-6 say, *“The Lord disciplines and corrects those He loves.”* Therefore let us be serious in our calling to be disciplined vessels in the Master’s hand (Psalm 94:12, Proverbs 1:2). We’ll look at 4 qualities for discipline and diligence.

- **Manage your Time well**

Time lost cannot be regained, therefore redeem the time wisely (Psalm 89:47). Moses says in his prayer in Psalm 90:12: *“Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom”*. As believers we have to be disciplined in making use of our time efficiently. Punctuality is a Godly trait that we must all learn to respect! One must also have the Godly wisdom to discern what can be done in what time frame. Unwisely accepting responsibilities (greedily) and unable to finish the tasks on time can be frustrating to you and to others! Time wasters (idlers) will never be successful in life, *“An idle person will suffer hunger”* (Proverbs 19:15). Therefore use your precious time wisely!

- **Manage your Tasks well**

*“Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will succeed.”* (Proverbs 16:3). We are also called to be diligent in our work. The Bible also says in Colossians 3:17 *“whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.”* Psalm 12:27 says, *“The lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting, but diligence is man’s precious possession”*. Those who are well organised in their work generally prosper in their endeavours. In Genesis 41:53-57 we see that Joseph wisely planned ahead what the Egyptians had to do before the nations experienced the famine! The wise will hear from God and act accordingly without postponing! Such will prosper even in times of trial (see James 1:25). *“Those who fail to plan, plan to fail!”*

- **Manage your Talents well**

God has given each one of us many and varied talents so that by wholeheartedly using them we can bring glory to Him. We see that in Exodus (31:1-11, 35:30-36:8) God gave wisdom and special talents to artisans to construct the tabernacle and to make priestly garments (Exodus 28). We read in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) that the stewards who doubled their ‘gifts’ were commended by their master and were given more responsibilities, but the one who hid his talent was condemned. The little that you have can be multiplied in the Master’s hand for greater purposes (like the boy with the 5 loaves and 2 fish). Therefore make your calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10), so that you can give your best for Christ.

- **Manage your Treasure (money) well**

Each one of us is called to manage the treasures (possessions) that God has entrusted to us well. In fact everything we own belongs to God. In Psalms 50:10 we read, *“The cattle on a thousand hills belong to Him”*. We need to be good stewards for Christ being faithful, reliable and honest in matters concerning money. It is not how much one has that matters, but how well one uses what he has (Proverbs 15:16,17). The prodigal son squandered all the wealth he claimed from his father! On the other hand the poor widow gave all that she had to God (Luke 21:2)! Today many are experiencing financial problems because of foolish spending (greediness) and having no sense of discipline in money management!

## **Walking in the Wisdom of the Lord** **(The power of *Obedience*)**

**Last week we looked at the power of *Discipline*. Today we look at the penultimate alphabet in the word ‘Wisdom’, the letter ‘O’ for Obedience.**

### **‘O’ – Be Obedient to the Omniscient God (All knowing God)**

Those who are attending the ‘Under Cover’ program will understand the significance of submitting to authority. How do we get wisdom by being obedient to our authorities? The answer to this question can be understood by looking at a teacher-student relationship. A rebellious student who disobeys the teacher will not listen, hence will miss out on what is being taught (rebellion also brings about disinterest in the subject!). God has instituted authorities at various levels, so that we receive wisdom at every level (directly or indirectly). Jesus was obedient to His Father even unto death, *“He was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.”* (Hebrews 5:7, 8). Philippians 2:8 says, *“He humbled himself and became obedient to death even death on a cross!”*

- **Submit to your Parents (at Home)**

When a child is under his/her parent’s responsibility the child is expected to obey the parents through whom he/she receives wisdom. God who sees the obedience of the child honours the child with supernatural wisdom. Even Jesus being God was obedient to His parents. *“He went down to Nazareth with them and was **obedient** to them.”* (Luke 2:51). As we see in the NT Jesus always walked with supernatural wisdom. In a Christian family unit the wife is called to submit to her husband, and the husband to love the wife as Christ loved the Church (Ephesians 5:22-24). Those who dishonour the home authority that God has placed bring curses on themselves. *“The eye that mocks a father, that scorns **obedience** to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures.”* (Proverbs 30:17).

- **Submit to your Spiritual Leaders (at Church)**

Spiritual leaders (Pastors, Evangelists etc) are God’s agents to teach and minister His words to us. Those who rebel against Spiritual authorities are in fact rebelling against God Himself! King Saul rebelled against God by disobeying Samuel’s commands and paid the ultimate price for his rebellion: losing the anointing! (1 Samuel 15:22,23). *“The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.”* (1 Timothy 5:17). *“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”* (Romans 13:17). We are indeed obeying God by submitting to Spiritual leaders whom God has appointed.

- **Submit to your Teachers and Bosses (at Schools, at Work)**

How can you submit to a nasty teacher or a heartless boss? Hard, but possible! In Romans 13:3-7 we read, *“Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God’s servant to do you good...Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience...Give everyone what you owe him... if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour.”* Here’s what happens to one who disobeys his teacher: *“I would not obey my teachers or listen to my instructors. I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly.”* (Proverbs 5:13,14).

- **Submit to your Governing Authority (Government)**

*“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 13:1,2). We are called to submit to the laws of the land and bless the land in which we live, so that God’s abundant blessings will come upon us. God honours authority and He often works through His appointed agents (even pagan) whether we like it or not! Romans 13:6, *“This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing.”* Short-circuiting national/state laws can bring about our own down fall.

By submitting to the above levels of authorities we are being obedient to God (by honouring His Word). God who sees your obedience will truly bless you. *“If you are willing and **obedient**, you will eat the best from the land....”* (Isaiah 1:19,20).

Prithi and Shobana Tissainayagam

## **Walking in the Wisdom of the Lord** **(The power of Meekness)**

**Last week we looked at the power of *Obedience*. Today we finish this series of study by looking at the last letter in the word ‘Wisdom’, the letter ‘M’ for *Meekness*.**

### **‘M’ – Walking with Meekness to honour the Master**

One dictionary definition for ‘Meekness’ says: *“Humbly patient or docile, as under provocation from others.”* How many of us can say that we have a Spirit of Meekness? Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount: *“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”* (Matthew 5:5). The same promise is given in the OT, *“But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.”* (Psalm 37:11). So if you want to ‘inherit the land’ learn to walk in meekness! We look at 4 aspects that will help us develop a Spirit of Meekness.

- **Cultivate a Teachable Spirit**

To have a teachable Spirit requires one to be humble. None of us know it all! So there is always room for us to learn more what the Lord is teaching through various people and circumstances. We see great Biblical characters such as Joshua and Elisha were humble understudies to their respective masters (Moses & Elijah). God honoured their humility and their teachable Spirit and made them powerful leaders who did more exploits than their masters (teachers). A person with a teachable Spirit will respect other people’s views and not demean them. *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.”* (Philippians 2:3)

- **Cultivate a Listening Spirit**

A common response to provocation by others is to talk back without much thought! Often we regret later what we said! A Spirit of listening will help us to hear more and speak less! After all God created 2 ears and 1 mouth, therefore let us hear twice as much as we speak! Sometimes silence ‘speaks’ louder than words! The best example of silence was demonstrated when Jesus was interrogated by the Jewish Chief Priest. He was accused of many wrongdoings, but Jesus kept silent! *“Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” But Jesus remained silent.”* (Matthew 26:62). There are times we need to be silent and times we need to speak up. Only the Spirit of Christ can help us to make the right decision at the right time.

- **Cultivate a Sharing Spirit**

Whatever we learn/possess we have a responsibility to share it with others, so that they too may be blessed. A selfless Spirit will always want to share and care. The poor widow of Zarephath was willing to share the little she had with Elijah despite her own hopelessness. She went away and did as Elijah had told her. *“So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah.”* (1 Kings 17:15,16). That sharing/giving attitude of the woman brought about a lifetime of blessing for her! Same for us, as we share with others we too will be blessed abundantly!

- **Cultivate an Excellent Spirit**

The Bible says Daniel possessed a Spirit of excellence. *“Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.”* (Daniel 6:3). A Spirit of Excellence will enable us to give our ‘best shot’ to God (in everything we do). God who is Sovereign of all will move the hearts and minds of those whom we interact with to give us favour, and to bring Him honour. We do not need to manipulate or use ‘carnal forces’ to get our way through! God sees the Spirit of Excellence in us and will reward us at the right time. Be encouraged that God is your ultimate rewarder!

We hope that the 6 studies on ‘Walking in the Wisdom of the Lord’ have blessed you! May God bless and help you to walk in His Wisdom always.

Prithi and Shobana Tissainayagam

# **Overcoming Temptation**

**Scripture Reading: 1 John 2: 15,16; Genesis 3: 1-7; Matthew 4: 1-11; Luke 4: 1-13.**

The devil uses three basic weapons to entice the people of God! Satan's plans are not always 'black and white', but lies in the grey area where people are vulnerable to stumble! The Word of God says in 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. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world”.*** - 1 John 2:15-16

*The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life* are the 3 tools by which men and women fall into the devil's trap. What do these tools really tell us?

## ***The Three Weapons of Temptation***

[1] **The lust of the flesh** - The desires of the physical body and anything that craves to satisfy the flesh belongs to this category. Sexual immorality and impurities, craving for various kinds of food, drinking alcohol, smoking, influence of drugs etc are considered to satisfy the flesh on a temporary basis! These do not give permanent happiness; therefore they are repeated again and again!

[2] **The lust of the eyes** - The lust of covetousness and greed come under this category. Craving for anything that seems good to the eyes! Preoccupied with pornography, getting hooked to TV programs, addiction to movies, craving for any earthly goods (clothes, chocolate, books, certain types of entertainment etc) are considered the lust of the eyes, because the sin originates from looking at these things! Jesus said, “If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better to go to heaven without eyes than to end up in hell with both eyes!”

[3] **The pride of life** - The promotion of 'Self' is the main reason for pride of life. 'I am the boss and no one tells me what to do' attitude is a non-submissive non-teachable spirit that tries to dethrone Christ from our lives and impose self as the object of authority (devil is in fact who is ruling!). Pride of life tries to make people to believe that they are superior to others! This is in contrasts to the command of Jesus, 'Love thy neighbour as thy self'.

## ***The Temptations of Adam and Eve***

These three temptations were at work in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:1-11)

[1] **The tree of the knowledge of good and evil; was good for food (lust of the flesh)** – This suggest to us that the fruit appeared to be desirable to consume, obviously this fruit (food) was the reason behind the temptation despite all other fruits that God had created! The devil was continuously focussing on the forbidden fruit making Eve and Adam forget the command of God.

[2] **Attractive to the eyes (*lust of the eyes*)** – The fruit of the knowledge of good and evil was not rotten, was not half ripe, nor was it poisonous! It had a beautiful appearance that was good enough to entice Eve! The devil uses outward ‘appearance’ of things to trap people. Often behind the scene will be something evil that people do not recognise. In a sense it is like a rattrap! The rat sees the trap as well as the bait, but the bait always seem very attractive that often the rat forgets the trap!

[3] **It could make the man and woman wise without God (*pride of life*)** – The devil’s plan was to make Adam and Eve independent of God! In other words, to dethrone God as the number one person in their lives, thereby making them independent. To achieve that purpose he used ‘wisdom’ as the key to trap Eve! Gaining knowledge to rule others is a self-promotional tool that the devil uses to trap God’s children.

Interestingly these three temptations were at work again when Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into wilderness to be tested (Matt 4, Luke 4). After forty days of fasting. Devil said...

### ***The Temptations of Jesus***

[1] **Command these stones to become bread (*lust of the flesh*)** – This temptation is similar to the fruit that was presented to Eve in the Garden of Eden (food is the focus here again). When Jesus was physically at his weakest (after 40 days of fasting) he was naturally hungry and the devil took advantage of that situation! But Jesus overcame the temptation by the Word of God.

[2] **Showing Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory: you can have it all on one condition – just bow down and worship me (*lust of the eyes*)** – Devil now displays the splendour of his kingdom by asking Jesus to ‘Look’ at them and to possess them in exchange for worship! Again the Lord overcame the temptation by the Word of God.

[3] **Throw yourself down – do something to demonstrate how great you are without the Father (*pride of life*)** – Demonstrating something spectacular to others is to promote oneself in order to be noticed and recognised! Again the Lord was victorious over this temptation using the power of the Word.

We see that Eve had no need to eat the fruit, but she ate it. Jesus needed to eat (being hungry) but refused to eat it. Again, Eve fell for the appearance of a mere fruit, but Jesus declined the offer to take hold of the whole earth. Finally, Eve fell to become wiser, but Jesus refused to become world famous! The comparison of the two scenes reveals that Adam and Eve failed in a perfect environment (Garden of Eden), but Jesus was victorious in an imperfect environment (Wilderness).

## ***Temptation leads to disobey the Word of God***

In the above cases considered we see that Devil starts with a suggestion, he does not force people to do anything but throws a seed of doubt to unsettle the mind. The devil also knows when to choose the time to tempt people. When Jesus was hungry and weak he approached Him! We see that the lust of the flesh is in the Physical realm. Even to us the devil is continuously suggesting how to fulfil physical needs. We find that when we are at a point of physical vulnerability he will dangle the beautiful ‘fruit’ before us! The ‘fruit’ then becomes the focus of our mind, and finally we succumb to the temptation by disobeying God’s Word.

## ***Temptation leads to deny the Word of God***

When Jesus was asked to jump off, the devil was asking Him to do something to get attention from the world! The evil one was presenting a picture to Jesus portraying that He was lonely and no one cared for him, therefore why not take up the offer and be the centre of attention to become popular! It is evident that this test was in the Mind realm. Devil likes to play with our mind and confuse our thinking so that we will follow the thinking and practices of the world. We too can be tempted in a similar way. Comparing ourselves with others and to feel good about our achievements, talents, possessions etc. can eventually lead us to failure and total despair.

## ***Temptation leads to deny the person of God***

Satan’s idea of showing the kingdoms of the earth was to tempt Jesus to own possessions. Devil recognises that Jesus did not own earthly possessions and suggested that He was a poor person without anything of value. The hidden agenda (as we saw before) was to receive worship in exchange of earthly kingdoms! We clearly see that this test was in the Spiritual realm, that is, deny God and worship the devil! The focus of the test is to promote the ‘Self’. Today we see that many dictators around the world will not step down from power. Many governments exploit their own people to promote their welfare. Everyday the devil is suggesting us to become independent so that our dependence will not be on Jesus Christ. This is the final goal of the devil, that is, to separate us from God permanently!

## ***Overcoming Temptations***

The best way for us to learn to overcome temptations is to look at how Jesus responded in each of the three temptations.

**Using the Word of God and be led by the Spirit** – Jesus used the scriptures to overcome every temptation that he faced. You and I also have the same weapon (The Bible) to overcome every temptation that we face. Being sure of the Word helps us to know the will of God for ourselves and also be led by the Spirit to fulfil the plans that He has for us.

**Fasting and Prayer** – Jesus had completed his 40 day fast when the devil confronted Him. Fasting food helps us to feed on the Word and kill the desires of the flesh. Matt 6 tells us that fasting is not an option but is as important as praying and giving. Many miracles happen around the world after a session of fasting and praying.

**Worship the Lord and Serve Him** – Jesus used this phrase to rebuke the devil. Worshipping bring us into the presence of God and fills us with His Spirit. Serving Him tells us that we do not have anyone else to serve but God only.

**Not Tempt the Lord** – Tempting and putting the Lord to test brings a curse on us. In the wilderness the children of the Lord tested God and brought disaster on themselves! Let’s not put the Lord to the test but rather obey Him.

The applications of the above points are the reason why Jesus was victorious. Since Jesus was victorious we too can be over comers by the Power of God and through the blood of Jesus Christ.

**Prithi Tissainayagam (Elder, CLA)**

# TEACHINGS FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

## THE NEED TO SPEAK WORDS OF LIFE

### INTRODUCTION

The words that we speak are very important. With our words we have the potential to either inspire hope in the lives of others or to have a negative impact on others. The words that we speak over our own life also have a powerful effect. In many ways our future can be framed by the words that we speak over our life, especially during those times when we are experiencing challenges or trials in our life.

The company that we keep can also have a great impact on our lives. If we spend a lot of time in a negative or critical environment, we can easily become more influenced by those around us, than we having a positive influence on their lives. The book of Proverbs says, “The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray.” (**Proverbs 12:26**)

We must also not allow the cares of this world to impact our faith. Focussing continually on the problems in this world can also begin to impact our lives in a negative manner, and typically will be reflected in the way we speak about our own life and circumstances. We are more likely to see the glass as being half empty rather than being half full.

*The Book of Proverbs says,*

“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”  
(**Proverbs 4:23**)

*Jesus Himself said,*

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” (**Luke 6:45**)

**Being continually filled with the Holy Spirit is imperative for all believers.**

*The Apostle Paul wrote,*

“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.”  
(**Ephesians 5:17-18**)

## **WE NEED TO YIELD OUR LIFE AND TONGUE TO JESUS CHRIST AND LIVE A LIFE WHICH IS CONTROLLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

Indeed, we put bits in horses’ mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at the ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

For every kind of beast and bird, or reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But **no man** can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison

With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things **ought not to be so.**”

**(James 3:1-10)**

## **LIVING A LIFE CONTROLLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE ONLY WAY THAT WE CAN BE EMPOWERED TO LIVE A LIFE WHERE WE CONSISTANTLY SPEAK *WORDS OF LIFE***

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”  
**(Romans 8:14)**

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust or the flesh.”

**(Galatians 5:16)**

Any person who operates out of their fallen human nature and who does not lead a life controlled by the Holy Spirit, will be more quick to anger, more prone to defending themselves, more likely to speak out when they see faults in others and will have a tendency to be judgemental and condemning when people make mistakes. In short there will generally be an absence of grace in their lives toward others. As Christians it is vitally important that we seek to consistently walk in the Spirit and that we endeavour to always speak the truth in love.

### **TO DO THIS WE MUST CONTINUALLY HAVE INTIMACY WITH THE LORD. (WE MUST ABIDE IN THE VINE)**

Jesus Himself said, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot **bear fruit** of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; **for without Me you can do nothing.**” (John 15:4-5)

**As we spend time in the presence of God we become more like Christ and the fruit of the Spirit becomes more evident in our life.**

**The fruit of the Spirit is, *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*** (See Galatians 5:22-23)

### **WE MUST ALSO CONTINUALLY CHOOSE TO PUT OFF THE OLD MAN AND TO PUT ON THE NEW MAN**

The Apostle Paul wrote, “But now you yourselves are to *put off* all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed **in knowledge** according to the image of Him who created him,” (Colossians 3:8-10)

“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on** tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long suffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.” (Colossians 3:12-14)

## WALKING IN THE SPIRIT IS A MOMENT BY MOMENT CHOICE

The Apostle Paul wrote, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us **not** become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.” (Galatians 5:25-26)

## THERE IS LIFE AND DEATH IN THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.” (Proverbs 18:21)

## WITH OUR WORDS WE CAN EITHER

### i) PULL DOWN OTHERS

The Apostle Paul warned the Christians in Galatia, “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” *But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!*” (Galatians 5:14-15)

### ii) OR BRING LIFE TO OTHERS

Jesus said, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63)

## WE NEED TO LOOK AT CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE OF LOVE IN OUR ENVIRONMENTS (HOMES AND CHURCHES)

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary *edification*, that it may impart grace to the hearers...Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us...” (Ephesians 4:29, 31-32, 5:1-2)

## **WE NEED TO LEARN TO SPEAK WORDS THAT BUILD UP AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS AND NOT WORDS OF CONDEMNATION**

Jesus Himself said, “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” (**John 3:17**)

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” (**Colossians 4:5-6**)

## **WE NEED TO BUILD AN ATMOSPHERE OF FAITH IN OUR HOMES BY SPEAKING WORDS THAT REFLECT THE HOPE THAT WE HAVE IN CHRIST**

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” (**Hebrew 13:15**)

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (**Hebrews 11:1**)

King David wrote, “For You will light my lamp; The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness. For by You I can run against a troop, By my God I can leap over a wall. As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.” (**Psalms 18:28-30**)

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (**Philippians 4:13**)

## **FAITH COMES BY HEARING AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD (WE MUST MAKE A HABIT OF SPEAKING GOD’S PROMISES OVER OUR LIFE)**

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (**Romans 10:17**)

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (**Romans 12:2**)

**IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE GUARD OUR HEARTS WITH ALL DILIGENCE. The following are some keys to maintaining a right heart**

**We must focus on the future**

**We must not dwell on our past mistakes and failures**

**We must not continually rehearse our past hurts**

**We must continually choose to walk in love and forgiveness**

**We must keep our eyes on Jesus and meditate on good things**

**We must simply put our faith and trust in Christ alone and build our life on the Word of God**

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-meditate on these things.” **(Philippians 4:8)**

The Lord said to Joshua before he led the Israelites into the Promised Land, “This Book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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 1:8)**

**MEDITATING ON GOD’S WORD AND SPEAKING OUT THE WORD OF GOD IS CRUCIAL FOR EVERY BELIEVER. OUR DESTINY WILL BE GREATLY INFLUENCED BY THE WORDS THAT WE SPEAK IN LIFE. IF WE SPEAK WORDS OF LIFE BASED ON GOD’S PROMISES IN HIS WORD, WE WILL LEARN TO WALK IN VICTORY AND HELP TO SEE GOD’S KINGDOM ESTABLISHED HERE ON EARTH.**

# THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

(To bring life or death to relationships)

**The book of Proverbs says:**

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.” (Proverbs 18:21)

**The book of James also comments on the tongue:**

“For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by man. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.” (James 3:7-10)

**THE WORDS THAT WE SPEAK HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO ENCOURAGE AND BUILD UP MANY OTHER PEOPLE. HOWEVER, IF WE CHOOSE TO USE WORDS THAT ARE DISCOURAGING OR CRITICAL, WE ALSO HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO MAKE A VERY NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF MANY OTHER PEOPLE AND OUR OWN LIFE.**

It is so important that we make a practice of speaking words of life in all of our everyday situations and in all of our relationships. As believers we are meant to be the salt and light of the earth (Matthew 5:13-16) and our words need to be continually full of grace and truth. The Apostle Paul wrote:

“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” (Colossians 4:6)

**AS BELIEVERS WE SHOULD MAKE A HABIT OF**

- i) speaking words which are uplifting and life giving
- ii) guarding against (stopping) any negative self talk,
- iii) consistently speaking out the promises in God’s Word (Isaiah 55:11) (Romans 10:17), AND
- iv) Learning to listen more than we speak (Proverbs 10:19)

## **THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH SPEAKING WORDS OF LIFE**

- i) WE WILL ENCOURAGE OTHERS (**Hebrews 10:24-25**)  
(**1 Corinthians 14:3**) (**1 Thessalonians 5:11**) (**Proverbs 25:11**)
- ii) WE WILL ATTRACT FRIENDS AND FAVOUR  
(**Proverbs 16:13**) (**1 Kings 10:24-25**)
- iii) WE CAN INSPIRE HOPE IN OTHERS (**John 3:16**)
- iv) WE WILL HELP TO SEE LOVE AND UNITY IN OUR FAMILIES, OUR FRIENDSHIPS AND IN OUR CHURCH MEETINGS (**Ephesians 4:31-32**)
- v) OUR WORDS WILL HELP TO PROMOTE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH IN OUR LIFE AND THE LIVES OF OTHERS (**Proverbs 16:24**) (**Proverbs 12:25**) (**Proverbs 15:30**)
- vi) OUR WORDS CAN BRING SPIRITUAL LIFE TO OTHERS AS WE PREACH AND SHARE THE GOSPEL(**John 6:63**) (**Romans 1:16**)

## **WE MUST DAILY CHOOSE TO BE MESSENGERS OF HOPE (GOOD NEWS).**

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (**Jeremiah 29:11**)

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news. Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, “Your God reigns!” (**Isaiah 52:7**)

“As cold water to a weary soul, So is good news from a far country.” (**Proverbs 25:25**)

**Jesus said**, “...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (**John 10:10**)

***GOD HAS A PLAN FOR EVERY PERSON'S LIFE. WE HAVE A GOD OF THE IMPOSSIBLE WHO IS ABLE TO REDEEM LIVES FROM DESTRUCTION.***

HOW DO WE BECOME PEOPLE WHO CONTINUALLY SPEAK WORDS OF LIFE

**IT BEGINS BY HAVING OUR HEARTS CHANGED.**

“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” (Matthew 12:34b)

**BEFORE WE BECOME CHRISTIANS OUR HEARTS ARE FULL OF DECEIT AND DESPERATELY WICKED. WHEN WE ARE BORN AGAIN THIS FACT BECOMES MORE OBVIOUS TO US, AS THE HOLY SPIRIT BEGINS TO ADDRESS AREAS IN OUR LIFE WHICH ARE UNGODLY. (Romans 2:9-18) (Romans 6:23) (Isaiah 64:6)**

**THE BIBLE SAYS:**

“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.” (Jeremiah 17:9-10)

**WHEN WE BECOME A CHRISTIAN WE GET A NEW HEART AND THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES TO DWELL ON THE INSIDE OF US AND WE ARE BORN AGAIN (John 3:3 & 5)**

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

**AS BELIEVERS WE NEED TO DO TWO IMPORTANT THINGS ON AN ONGOING BASIS, TO HELP US TO WALK IN VICTORY AND TO ENABLE US TO BECOME MORE CHRISTLIKE AS WE PURSUE GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIFE**

- i) We need to renew our minds and guard our thought life (what we listen to and look at),**

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

**(Romans 12:1-2)**

## **ii) We need to guard our hearts with all diligence**

**The book of proverbs says,**

“Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”  
(Proverbs 4:23)

“The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways, But a good man will be satisfied from above.” (Proverbs 14:14)

**Jesus Himself said,**

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.” (Matthew 12:35)

**HOW CAN WE BECOME MORE CHRISTLIKE AND KEEP OUR HEARTS FROM BEING AFFECTED BY THE SPIRIT OF THIS WORLD AND OFFENSES. AS CHRISTIANS WE NEED TO BE:**

### **1) Intimate with the Lord (John 15:4-5) (Isaiah 26:3) (Philippians 4:6-7)**

“Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.”  
(Psalm 37:3-4)

### **2) Meditating on God’s Word (Joshua 1:8) and only those things which have virtue and are of good report**

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are or good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.” (Philippians 4:8)

### **3) Having a heart which loves to worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth (John 4:23-23)**

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:16)

**4) Making a continual CHOICE to walk in the Spirit**  
(Galatians 5:22-26) (Colossians 3:8-16) (Romans 12:10)

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”  
(Galatians 5:14-16)

**5) We need to be living a life which is focused on loving and serving others** (Galatians 2:20) (Philippians 2:3)

**Jesus said,**

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” (John 12:24-25)

“Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:26-28) **AND**

**6) THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**  
(John 7:37-39) (Luke 24:49) (Acts 1:5 & 8) (Acts 2:1-4)

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.”  
(Ephesians 5:17-18) **AND**

“I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. (1 Corinthians 2:3-5)

# **GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN**

In this world it is very easy to be caught up with the pressures and pulls of this world and miss out on God's best for our life. In a world that is typically influenced by fear and peer group pressure, people can often make wrong or poor choices in life. In this world fashion and music often have an influence on the friendship choices that people make. Out of a fear of being rejected or being alone, many people also make poor choices in life and end up suffering much pain and abuse in their life, or drift into a lifestyle of drugs and alcohol as they seek to gain the affirmation of their peers.

Most advertising is also designed to influence the minds of people to buy things that they often do not even need and to make people get their identity in what they wear, what car they drive, what area they live in, or what vocation or even ministry calling they have in life. This has the real potential for some people to live all of their life striving to live a life which would make them accepted by others.

Particularly in the western world it is so easy for the things of this world to influence the way we live in a far greater way than our life having a positive impact on this world. As Christians we are called to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth and that our love for others should be so pronounced that the world would see that we are truly disciples of Jesus Christ.

Maintaining our first love for Jesus Christ is the key to true contentment. As we delight ourselves in the Lord He gives us the desires of our heart, His compassion for others, His love for the lost and a desire to give to and encourage others in this world. Being content with what we have in life, being satisfied with God's plan for our life and keeping a good attitude in life, even during those times when others are succeeding in life when we are not, only comes when we continually make knowing Jesus Christ our highest priority in life.

The apostle Paul wrote on the importance of being godly and content in our lives when he wrote to the young Pastor Timothy.

**“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.**

**For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.” (1 Timothy 6:6-11)**

**LIVING A GODLY AND CONTENT LIFE IS THE KEY TO *EXPERIENCING THE ABUNDANT LIFE THAT JESUS CHRIST SPOKE OF AND SEEING REVIVAL IN OUR OWN LIVES.* (Psalm 119:29-40) THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS WHICH COME FROM LIVING A LIFE OF GODLINESS AND CONTENTMENT**

- 1) We will follow God’s best plan for our life** (Ephesians 2:10)  
(Isaiah 55:8-9) (Ephesians 3:20) (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- 2) We will know God’s peace and joy as we serve Him**  
(Matthew 25:14-30) (Isaiah 26:3) (Psalm 16:7-11)
- 3) All Believers have eternal life and an eternal home with the Lord** (Luke 9:23-25) (John 14:1-3) (John 11:25-26)
- 4) We will be satisfied from above. In His presence is fullness of joy**  
(Philippians 4:10-13) (Acts 2:28) (Proverbs 14:14) (Philippians 3:7-8)
- 5) As we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness we will receive from God all that we need in this life** (Matthew 6:33)  
(Philippians 4:19)
- 6) We will remain strong during times of temptation**  
(1 Corinthians 10:13-14) (James 1:12-16) (James 3:13-16)

- 7) **We will not complicate our lives by**
- *Accruing unnecessary debt (Credit Cards)*
  - *Allowing envy to spoil our friendships* (James 3:16)
  - *Compromising our values for personal gain* (Proverbs 16:8) (Proverbs 15:6) (Proverbs 13:11)
  - *Making ungodly choices in life because of peer group pressure,* (Proverbs 12:26) (1 Cor. 15:33) *and*
  - *Suffering the guilt, depression and shame which comes from living a life which is full of ungodly choices* (Proverbs 11:18-20)
- 8) **We will have good healthy and loving relationships with others** (James 4:1-2) (Mark 12:31) (Ephesians 4:31-32) (Ephesians 5:1-2)
- 9) **Our lives will not be controlled by the spirit of this world and fear as we patiently put our trust in Jesus to meet our every need** (Isaiah 26:3-4) (Coloss. 3:1-3) (Matthew 6:19-21) (1 John 2:15-17)
- 10) **We will know the freedom of living one day at a time as we allow the Lord to unfold His plan for our life** (Matthew 6:34) (Psalm 37:23-24)
- 11) **We will live a life which is characterised by good emotional and physical health,** (Proverbs 14:30) (Proverbs 17:22) (John 16:22-24) (John 17:13) (Isaiah 53:5) (Psalm 103:2-5) **and**
- 12) **Our life will bear much fruit for all eternity** (John 15:4-5) (Psalm 1:1-3) (John 12:24-26) (Matthew 6:19-21)

**Jesus Himself said,** “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” **(Matthew 6:24)**

**It is not money but the love of money which is a root of all kinds of evil. Money however in the hands of a godly person can bless many people in this world.**

# Finishing our Christian walk strongly

God has the best plan for every believer's life. His plan for our life will give us great purpose and meaning in our life here on earth. The bible also says that God honours those who serve Him.

**Jesus said:** "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour." (**John 12:26**)

**The Apostle Paul also wrote:** "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (**1 Corinthians 15:58**)

***AS CHRISTIANS WE HAVE A FAITHFUL GOD WHO PROMISES THAT HE WILL NEVER LEAVE NOR FORSAKE US*** (**Hebrews 13:5**)

**The Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the church in Rome:**

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (**Romans 8:38-39**)

**Jesus Himself said,** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (**John 3:16**)

**ETERNAL LIFE IS A FREE GIFT WHICH WE RECEIVE WHEN WE TURN TO GOD (*REPENT*) AND PUT OUR FAITH AND TRUST IN CHRIST ALONE FOR OUR SALVATION (BELIEVE)** (**ACTS 3:19**)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (**Romans 6:23**)

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (**Ephesians 2:8-9**)

"knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified." (**Galatians 2:16**)

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law." (**Romans 3:27-28**)

## **OUR CHRISTIAN WALK IS ONE OF BEING IN AN ONGOING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST.**

**Jesus said**, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand...” (John 10:27-29)

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name; 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)

## **GOD HAS A UNIQUE PLAN AND PURPOSE FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN’S LIFE**

“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)

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:11-13)

## **AS CHRISTIANS IT IS IMPORTANT TO STAY CLOSE TO JESUS AND TO ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT TO GUIDE AND DIRECT OUR STEPS IN LIFE**

**Jesus said to His disciples**, “If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. (John 14:15-17)

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” (John 14:26)

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you all things to come.” (John 16:13)

## **GOD LOVES US WITH A PASSION AND DESIRES THAT EVERY CHRISTIAN’S LIFE WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT FOR ALL ETERNITY. AS WE ABIDE IN CHRIST OUR LIVES WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT**

**Jesus said**, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine and you are the branches. **He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit**; for without Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:4-5)

**WHILST GOD WANTS US TO HAVE A BLESSED LIFE WHICH IS FULL OF MEANING AND PURPOSE, THE DEVIL ALSO WANTS TO DESTROY EVERY GOOD THING THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE**

**Jesus made this very clear:**

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” **(John 10:10)** AND

“that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” **(John 3:15)**

**The Apostle Peter wrote:** “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” **(1 Peter 5:8-9)**

**THE APOSTLE PAUL EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF ALWAYS MAINTAINING A STRONG WALK OF FAITH**

“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” **(1 Corinthians 9:27)**

**Towards the end of his life the Apostle Paul wrote:**

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, **I have kept the faith**. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” **(2 Timothy 4:7-8)**

**EVERY CHRISTIAN, LIKE THE APOSTLE PAUL, SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON FULFILLING GOD’S DESTINY FOR THEIR LIFE AND FINISHING THEIR CHRISTIAN WALK HERE ON EARTH STRONGLY, FULL OF FAITH**

**JESUS LOVES US WITH A PASSION AND DIED ON THE CROSS TO PAY THE PENALTY FOR OUR SINS. WE MUST NOT ALLOW ANYTHING TO IMPACT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST. THE BIBLE STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF CLINGING TO OUR FAITH AS WE WALK IN A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.**

**The writer of the book of Hebrews wrote:**

“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an **evil heart of unbelief** in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.” **(Hebrews 3:12-14)**

## **The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Colosse:**

“For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

**Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words...**As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and **established in the faith**, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Beware lest anyone cheat you **through philosophy and empty deceit**, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. (Colossians 2:1-4, 6-8)

## **AND TO TIMOTHY**

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,...” (1 Timothy 4:1-2)

**Jesus Himself said**, “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” (Matthew 24:12-13)

## **AS BELIEVERS, OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST MUST ALWAYS BE THE MOST IMPORTANT FOCUS IN OUR LIFE.**

(1 PETER 1:3-9)

The book of Hebrews also gives a solemn warning of the consequences for those who have experienced the saving grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives, if they decide to make a deliberate and decisive decision to abandon their Christian faith. These are **not just backsliders** but apostates. (Hebrews 6:4-6)

## **PRACTICAL KEYS (AND SCRIPTURE REFERENCES) TO HELP CHRISTIANS TO FINISH THEIR CHRISTIAN WALK STRONGLY AND TO FULFIL THEIR GOD GIVEN DESTINY**

1) Spending quality time with the Lord (Psalm 37:4) (Psalm 46:10) (Isaiah 40:28-31) (Psalm 16:11) (Acts 2:28) (Acts 4:13) (John 15:4-5)

(Jeremiah 33:2-3 > Isaiah 55:8-9 {His ways are higher than ours})

- 2) Having a lifestyle of worship (**John 4:23-24**) (**Acts 16:25-26**) (**Colossians 3:16**) (**Ephesians 5:19**) (**PSALM 95**) (**PSALM 150**)
- 3) Meditating on God's Word (**Psalm 1:1-3**) (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**) (**Joshua 1:8**) (**Romans 12:2**) (**John 8:31-32**) (**Hosea 4:6**) (**Matthew 7:24-25**) (**Psalms 119:105**)
- 4) Being filled with the Holy Spirit (**1 Thessalonians 1:5**) (**Ephesians 4:18**) (**Acts 1:8**)
- 5) **The importance of prayer.** Seeking God's help during times of trials and temptations. (**Matthew 26:41**) (**1 Peter 4:7**) (**James 5:16**) (**Ephesians 6:18**) (**Jude 20**)
- 6) Walking in obedience to God's plan (Will) for our life (**Ephesians 4:15-17**)
- 7) Choosing every day to live for the Lord (**Proverbs 16:3**) (**Luke 9:23-26**) (**Romans 12:1-8**) (**Matthew 6:9-11**)
- 8) Choosing your friends wisely (**1 Corinthians 15:33**) (**Proverbs 12:26**) (**Proverbs 13:20**) (**Psalms 1:1**)
- 9) Walking in Humility (**1 Corinthians 1:18-31**) (**1 Peter 5:5-6**) (**1 Corinthians 10:31**) (**Philippians 2:5-8**) (**Romans 12:3**) (**Psalms 149:4**) (**Psalms 147:5-6**) (**Psalms 34:1-4**) (**James 4:4-10**) (**Proverbs 16:18**) (**Matthew 23:11-12**) (**2 Corinthians 8:9**) (**Luke 18:9-14**) (**Luke 14:7-11**)
- 10) Having a teachable spirit (**Proverbs 15:22**) (**Proverbs 12:1**) (**Proverbs 11:14**)
- 11) Having a healthy fear of the Lord (**Proverbs 2:5-8**) (**Proverbs 1:7**) (**Proverbs 3:7**) (**Proverbs 9:10**) (**Luke 12:4-5**)
- 12) Being wise and fleeing all forms of sexual temptation (**Proverbs 6:32**) (**1 Corinthians 6:18**) (**1 Corinthians 10:13**) (**Proverbs 7:1-27**)

- 13) Having a servant's heart (**Matthew 20:20-28**) (**John 13:3-15**) (**Luke 16:10-12**)
- 14) Being accountable to others. (**1 Peter 5:5**) (**Proverbs 18:1**)
- 15) The importance of fellowship (**Hebrews 10:23-25**)
- 16) **Being planted in a local church** (*Psalm 92:13-14*)
- 17) Choosing to walk continually in love and forgiveness (**Mark 11:25-26**) (**Galatians 5:13-14**) (**1 Corinthians 13:4-8**) (**Philippians 2:3**) (**Romans 14:10-13 & 19**) (**Ephesians 4:31-32**) (**Ephesians 5:1-2**)
- 18) Being content with what God gives us. Having an attitude of gratitude and being thankful for all the blessings that we receive in life. (**1 Timothy 6:6-11**) (**Hebrews 13:5**) (**Ephesians 5:20**) (**James 3:14-16**)
- 19) Being careful about what we meditate on. (We must be careful to guard our eyes and ears from those things which could ensnare us) (**Philippians 4:8**)
- 20) Knowing the joy that comes from finding and following God's plan for our life (**Matthew 25:14-23**)
- 21) Developing a disciplined thought life where you take captive wrong thoughts and replace them with God's Word. (**2 Corinthians 10:3-5**)
- 22) Daily putting on the full armour of God (**Ephesians 6:10-17**)
- 23) Keeping a soft heart by keeping short accounts with God (**1 John 1:9**) A life of obedience is a key to experiencing God's peace and joy on an ongoing basis (**John 15:9-11**) and to receiving God's blessings. (**Matthew 6:31-33**) (**Isaiah 1:19**) (**Deuteronomy 28:1-14**)
- 24) **Having a clear understanding that we have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ** and that our salvation was a free gift and has nothing to do with our good works. (That when we repented and gave our life to Jesus Christ, all of our sins were washed away by the sinless Blood that He shed on the cross at Calvary and that His righteousness was imputed to us.) (**Isaiah 1:18**) (**Ephesians 1:7**) (**2 Corinthians 5:21**) (**Ephesians 2:8-9**) (**Romans 5:6-11**) (**Romans 8:1**) (**Philippians 3:9**)

- 25)** Putting all of our past mistakes, disappointments and hurts behind us. We need to refuse to dwell on our past failures and continually look to the future that God has planned for our life. **(Philippians 3:12-14) (Psalm 103:2-5) (2 Corinthians 5:17) (Isaiah 43:18-19) (Luke 9:62)**
- 26)** Knowing God's incredible love for us **(Romans 8:38-39) (Jude 21) (Ephesians 3:17-19)**
- 27)** Having a clear God given vision for our life. **(Habakkuk 2:2) (Proverbs 29:18)**
- 28)** Dying to self and living for Christ. (Living a crucified life) **(John 12:23-26) (Luke 14:26-27) (Luke 14:33) (Galatians 2:20) (John 15:9-17) (1 Corinthians 10:31) (Philippians 1:21) (Philippians 3:7-8) (1 Corinthians 2:9)**
- 29)** KNOWING that God is in control of our life IF we have fully yielded our life to Him. **(Psalm 24:1) (Psalm 91) (Psalm 37:23-24) (Matthew 6:25-34) (Proverbs 3:5-6) (Psalm 62:8) (Hebrews 11:6) (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) (Psalm 23) (Psalm 27) (Isaiah 54:17) (Deuteronomy 8:18) (Deuteronomy 28:1-14)**
- 30)** Learning to live a life controlled by the Holy Spirit. *(Walking in the Spirit)* STARTING THE DAY IN THE LORD'S PRESENCE IS THE KEY. **(Galatians 5:16) (Galatians 5:25)**
- 31)** Not allowing the cares of this world or the desires for other things to undermine our faith. **(Mark 4:18-19)**

Focusing on the cares and pleasures of this world will negatively impact the faith of a believer and cause their life to become less fruitful.

Meditating on God's promises in the Bible rather than the cares of this world helps to keep the faith of a believer strong. **(Romans 10:17)** Being preoccupied with the things of this world however, can cause a believer's love for Jesus to grow cold. **(1 John 2:15) (Revelation 3:15-17)**

When experiencing trials or challenges we need to be able to commit our cares to the Lord **(1 Peter 5:7) (Matthew 12:28)** and learn to keep ourselves in His love. **(Jude 21)** As we do this we will find rest for our souls **(Matthew 12:29-30)** and we will receive wisdom and direction for our life as we commit our ways to the Lord. **(Proverbs 16:3) (Proverbs 3:5-6)** God is well able to redeem anyone out of even the most hopeless situation. We serve a mighty miracle working God. **(Psalm 103:2-5)**

**32) Finally, we must simply just continue to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 12:1-2) (*Colossians 3:1-2*) (*Psalms 34:5*) (*Isaiah 26:3*)** When we look to others and even to Christian leaders for help, rather than to Christ, we can sometimes be disappointed. No Christian will ever be perfect until they enter heaven. Whilst God uses people to help us when we are in need, we must continually look to the Lord to meet our every need. (**Philippians 4:19**)

All of us have the ability to disappoint others from time to time. The devil will always try and bring up offenses to separate believers. But Jesus said that where two or three are gathered together in His Name He is in the midst of them (**Matthew 18:20**) and that where brethren dwell together in unity, God commands a blessing. (**Psalms 133:1-3**)

**Maintaining Christian fellowship is always a key to walking victoriously as a believer.** We must simply refuse to take on offenses. If we continually make Jesus Christ our first love, we will also be able to love and forgive others more easily.

#### **HOW WISE IT IS ALSO TO HEED THE APOSTLE PAUL'S ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE CHURCH IN PHILIPPI:**

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;” (**Philippians 2:12**)

#### **THE BIBLE ALSO SAYS IN PROVERBS:**

“Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be **health to your flesh and strength to your bones.**” (**Proverbs 3:7-8**)

Having a reverential respect of Who God is (A healthy fear of the Lord) and knowing His incredible love for us, helps us to keep on that narrow path which leads to life and life more abundantly.

Keeping our eyes on Jesus and His plan for our life will help to ensure that we finish our Christian walk strongly and complete what God has planned for us.

**JESUS HIMSELF PROMISES ALL BELIEVERS THAT HIS LOVE IS UNCONDITIONAL AND THAT HE WILL NEVER LEAVE NOR FORSAKE THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.** (Hebrews 13:5a)

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the Lord.” (**Jeremiah 17:7**)

# THE LIFE OF KING JEHOSEPHAT

## (2 CHRONICLES 17:1 TO 20:37)

There is much that we can learn from this man's life. In this study we will see how God blessed King Jehoshaphat because of his love and commitment to the Lord. However at the end of his life he also made some wrong associations which caused much destruction in his life. In studying this man's life, many keys can be seen as to how to lead a God glorifying life which is full of purpose and great blessings. Several Godly principles and traits can be learnt as we look at the life of King Jehoshaphat in the above passage of Scripture.

### 1) JEHOSEPHAT EXPERIENCED THE FAVOUR OF GOD AS HE CONTINUALLY PUT GOD FIRST PLACE IN HIS LIFE (Matthew 6:33) (Hebrews 11:6) (Jeremiah 17:7-8)

"Now the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David; he did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father, and walked in His commandments and not according to the acts of Israel. Therefore the LORD established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah gave presents to Jehoshaphat, and he had riches and honour in abundance." (2 Chronicles 17:3-5)

### 2) JEHOSEPHAT HAD AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD AND DELIGHTED HIMSELF IN THE THINGS OF GOD (Psalm 16:11) (Psalm 37:4) (Psalm 27)

"And his heart took delight in the ways of the LORD; moreover he removed the high places and wooden images from Judah." (2 Chronicles 17:6)

### 3) JEHOSEPHAT WAS ALSO ACTIVE IN MAKING THE WAYS OF GOD KNOWN TO OTHERS (RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTS A NATION) (Psalm 14:34) (Proverbs 11:30) (Mark 16:15) (Romans 10:14-15) (Matthew 28:18-20) (2 Timothy 2:2) (Daniel 12:3)

"Also in the third year of his reign he sent his leaders, Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. And with them he sent Levites: Shemaiah, Netaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah-the Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, the priests.

So they taught in Judah, and had the Book of the Law of the Lord with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people. And the fear of the LORD fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat."

**A Nation is blessed when it has Godly leaders. As Christians we should be actively sharing our faith with the unsaved and helping to disciple new believers.**

**4) AS JEHOSHAPHAT WALKED WITH THE LORD HE BECAME INCREASINGLY SUCCESSFUL (Matthew 25:14-23) (1 Peter 5:6)**

“Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and silver as tribute; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand seven hundred rams and seven thousand seven hundred male goats. So Jehoshaphat become increasingly powerful, and he built fortresses and storage cities in Judah.” He had much property in the cities of Judah; and the men of war, mighty men of valour, were in Jerusalem.” **(2 Chronicles 17:11-13)**

**5) JEHOSHAPHAT ALWAYS SOUGHT TO KNOW GOD’S WILL (Proverbs 3:5-6) (Proverbs 16:3) (Isaiah 55:7-8)**

After forming an alliance with King Ahab through marriage into his family, King Jehoshaphat was asked by Ahab if Judah would also join Israel and come against Ramoth Gilead. King Jehoshaphat said, “...I am as you are, and my people as your people; we will be with you in war.” **(2 Chronicles 18:3)**

**HOWEVER JEHOSHAPHAT ALSO SAID TO KING AHAB**

“Please inquire for the word of the LORD today.”  
**(2 Chronicles 18:4)**

**AFTER 400 PROPHETS WHO WERE GATHERED BY KING AHAB SAID THAT GOD WOULD DELIVER RAMOTH GILEAD INTO THE KINGS HANDS, JEHOSHAPHAT SAID,**

“Is there not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?” **(2 Chronicles 18:6)**

“So the King of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “There is still one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil. He is Micaiah the son of Imla.” And Jehoshaphat said, “Let not the king say such things!”  
**(2 Chronicles 18:7)**

**MICAIAH PROPHESED THE DEATH OF KING AHAB IF THEY WERE TO GO TO WAR AGAINST RAMOTH GILEAD**

**(2 Chronicles 18:16-22)**

**6) THERE ARE ALWAYS SEVERE CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTING THE COUNSEL OF THE LORD.**

KING AHAB DESPISED THE WORD FROM THE PROPHET MICAIAH, WHO PROPHESED HIS DEATH AND DESTRUCTION IF HE WENT OUT TO WAR AGAINST RAMOTH GILEAD. KING AHAB SCORNED THE PROPHET'S COUNSEL AND WOULD DIE IN THE ENSUING BATTLE

**AFTER RECEIVING THE PROPHETIC WORD FROM MICAIAH, KING AHAB SAID:**

...“Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king’s son; “and say, “Thus says the king: “Put this fellow in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction, until I return in peace.”””

But Micaiah said, “If you ever return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me.” And he said, “Take heed, all you people!” (2 Chronicles 18:25-27)

**7) GOD DELIVERS THOSE WHO TRUST IN HIM. GOD SPARED JEHOSHAPHAT BUT AHAB DIED IN BATTLE (Acts 5:17-21) (Acts 5:29-34, 38-39) (Acts 12:1-12) (Acts 26:15-18)**

**Despite being set up as a target, God saved King Jehoshaphat’s life:**

“So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes.” So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle. Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots who were with him, saying, “Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Israel.”

“So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, “It is the king of Israel!” Therefore they surrounded him to attack; but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him, and God diverted them from him. For so it was, when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.” (2 Chronicles 18:28-32)

**King Ahab in his disguise however, died as Micaiah had prophesied**

“Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armour. So he said to the driver of his chariot, “Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded. The battle increased that day, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Syrians until evening; and about the time of sunset he died.” (2 Chronicles 18:33-34)

**“Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned safely to his house in Jerusalem.” (2 Chronicles 19:1)**

**8) JEHOSHAPHAT HAD A HEALTHY FEAR OF THE LORD AND ENCOURAGED THAT TRAIT IN THE JUDGES THAT HE APPOINTED (Proverbs 1:7) (Proverbs 14:27)**

“Then he set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, and said to the judges, “**Take heed to what you are doing**, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. “Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes.”

“And he commanded them, saying, “Thus you shall act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with a loyal heart.” (2 Chronicles 19:5-7 &9)

**9) JEHOSHAPHAT KNEW HIS STRENGTH AND HELP WOULD COME FROM GOD ALONE**

*When King Jehoshaphat was told that a great multitude of people from Moab, Ammon and others were coming from Syria to do battle with him, he immediately sought the Lord. Jehoshaphat humbled himself before the Lord.* (2 Chronicles 20:1-2)

“And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. (2 Chronicles 20:3)

**10) JEHOSHAPHAT KNEW THE ABSOLUTE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYING TO GOD**

“So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD, and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.” (2 Chronicles 20:4)

**11) JEHOSHAPHAT KNEW HIS GOD AND THAT HE COULD RELY ON GOD FOR HELP (Hebrews 13:5-6)**

“Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, and said, “O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? (2 Chronicles 20:5-6)

**JEHOSHAPHAT ALSO RECOUNTED GOD’S FAITHFULNESS TO ISRAEL IN THE PAST**

“Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever.” (2 Chronicles 20:7)

**GOD PROTECTS AND RAISES UP THOSE WHO CONTINUALLY PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM (Daniel 3:8-30) (Daniel 6:10-28)**

**12) JEHOSEPHAT KNEW THAT GOD INHABITS THE PRAISES OF HIS PEOPLE WHEN WE CHOOSE TO PRAISE GOD IN TIMES OF DIFFICULTY WE BEGIN TO SEE IMPOSSIBLE SITUATIONS BEING TURNED AROUND (Acts 16:25-26)**

“And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying:

“Praise the LORD,  
For His mercy endures forever.”

Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.” (2 Chronicles 20:21-22)

**13) BECAUSE OF HIS DEPENDENCE ON GOD JEHOSEPHAT SAW GOD DESTROYING ALL OF THE PLANS OF THE ENEMY**

“For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.” (2 Chronicles 20:23-24)

**14) TOWARDS THE END OF HIS LIFE HOWEVER, JEHOSEPHAT ALLIED HIMSELF WITH A WICKED KING FROM ISRAEL AND ALL HIS WORKS WERE DESTROYED.  
(2 CHRONICLES 20:35-37)**

**HOW IMPORTANT IT IS THAT WE FINISH OUR CHRISTIAN WALK STRONGLY (2 Timothy 4:6-8)**

# The importance of loving and serving others

There is a common saying that people do not care how much you know but they want to know how much you care. In a world which is full of self-centredness and superficial relationships, our ability to love and care for the people in our lives and community will have a great impact in helping to see our friends, colleagues, villages, cities and nations coming to Christ.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “...Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.” **(1 Corinthians 8:1)**

Jesus Himself said, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” **(John 12:35)**

Jesus also said, “...whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” **(Matthew 20:26-28)**

**THOSE WHO ARE COMMITTED TO LAYING DOWN THEIR LIVES FOR JESUS CHRIST AND LOVING AND SERVING OTHERS, WILL MAKE A GREAT IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF MANY OTHERS.**

Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” **(Matthew 5:16)**

**PEOPLE LIKE MOTHER THERESE WHO HAVE LAID DOWN THEIR LIFE FOR OTHERS HAVE HAD AN INCREDIBLE IMPACT NOT ONLY ON COMMUNITIES BUT NATIONS.**

**EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US HAS ONE LIFE IN WHICH WE CAN STORE UP TREASURES FOR ETERNITY.**

Jesus Himself said, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” **(Matthew 6:19-21)**

**AT THE END OF EVERY PERSONS LIFE THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS IS “WHERE WILL THEY SPEND ETERNITY”**

***IF WE DON'T MAKE A DELIBERATE DAILY CHOICE TO LIVE FOR CHRIST AND TO SHARE OUR FAITH WITH OTHERS AS WE LOVE AND SERVE THEM, THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD WILL SO EASILY DISTRACT US FROM THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN LIFE, HELPING TO SEE OTHERS COME TO CHRIST AND THEN BECOMING MATURE BELIEVERS***

The book of Proverbs says, “...And he who wins souls is wise.” (**Proverbs 11:30**)

The bible also says, “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn **many to righteousness like the stars forever** and ever.” (**Daniel 12:3**)

## **THE BIBLE SAYS MUCH ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVING AND SERVING OTHERS**

- **LOVE FULFILLS THE LAW** (Galatians 5:13-15)
- **THE GREATEST GIFT IS LOVE** (1 Corinthians 13)
- **THE IMPERATIVE OF LOVE** (1 John 3:10-15)
- **THE OUTWORKING OF LOVE** (1 John 3:16-23)
- **JESUS DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED BUT TO SERVE** (Matthew 20:20-28)
- **LOVE IS ALSO PRACTICAL AND IS DEMONSTRATED WHEN WE CHOOSE TO HELP AND SERVE OTHERS.** (Acts 4:32-35)
- **LOVE IS TRULY MANIFESTED WHEN WE LEARN TO LAY DOWN OUR LIVES TO ENCOURAGE AND SERVE OTHERS** (John 15:13) (John 12:24-26) (Galatians 2:20)

ONE OF THE GREATEST BATTLES IN LIFE INVOLVES THE ENEMY TARGETING OUR MINDS AND THOUGHT LIFE. FOR CHRISTIANS, THIS BATTLE INTENSIFIES THE MOMENT WE BECOME A CHRISTIAN AND PARTICULARLY WHEN WE BEGIN TO SHARE OUR FAITH WITH OTHERS.

When we become a Christian, the Devil no longer has dominion (control) over our life. We have been set free and become a part of God's family, and have a God ordained destiny and plan for our life. (**Ephesians 2:10**)

However the Devil will try and distract us from fulfilling our God given destiny, as every Believer has the potential to help see many others coming to Christ as they share the Gospel in love with others throughout their life.

Our love for others is the key to seeing unbelievers coming to Christ. This is why the devil will try and cause Christians to develop strongholds in their mind such as unforgiveness towards certain people, which when not dealt with, will ultimately develop into negative and critical heart ATTITUDES towards others. The Bible makes it clear that what is in our heart has a great impact on what we say (**Matthew 12:34**) and how we relate to others and what we become in life. During trials we can become either better or bitter.

The Book of Proverbs says, “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” (**Proverbs 4:23**) The devil knows the best way of sidetracking Christians and stopping them from laying down their lives fully for the cause of Christ. Typically the devil will target certain areas in the life of a Christian to try and prevent them from wholeheartedly living for Christ and from loving others with the unconditional love of Christ.

TYPICALLY THE DEVIL WILL TARGET THE MINDS OF CHRISTIANS TO TRY AND PREVENT THEM FROM LOVING OTHERS WITH THE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE OF CHRIST AS WELL AS TRYING TO STOP THEM FROM SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH OTHERS BY:

- **Making the things (pleasures) of this world look attractive**
- **Trying to make people envious or jealous of others**
- **By filling people with pride**
- **Creating a barrier between people through unforgiveness**
- **Using fear to prevent people from reaching out to others**
- **Magnifying the cares of this world to preoccupy the minds of Christians, or**
- **By filling a Christian’s life with ceaseless activity which prevents them from spending enough time with God to get His heart and love for the lost.**

**THERE ARE SEVERAL KEYS AND DISCIPLINES WHICH CAN HELP US TO LOVE AND SERVE OTHERS**

**FIRSTLY, THE BIBLE MAKES IT CLEAR THAT FOR CHRISTIANS, HIS (GOD’S) LOVE IS SHED ABROAD IN OUR HEARTS (Romans 5:5)**

**HOW THEN CAN WE ENSURE THAT THIS LOVE CONTINUES TO FLOW THROUGH OUR LIVES TO ENCOURAGE AND BUILD UP OTHERS:**

**1) WE MUST CONTINUALLY CHOOSE TO WALK IN THE SPIRIT**  
(Galatians 5:16) (Galatians 5:25)

**2) WE MUST BE CONTINUALLY FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT** (Galatians 5:22-23) (Ephesians 1:17-18)

**It is the key to having the grace and love to bear with the faults and differences in others**

**3) WE NEED TO RENEW OUR MINDS WITH THE WORD OF GOD**  
(Romans 12:2) (Joshua 1:8)

**4) THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A WORSHIPPER** (John 4:23-24)  
(Acts 16:19-22 & Acts 16:25-26)

**5) THE IMPORTANCE OF ESTEEMING OTHERS BETTER THAN YOURSELF** (Philippians 2:2-4) (James 3:13-16) (Matthew 16:24-25)

**6) OUR LOVE AND AFFECTION FOR JESUS MUST ALWAYS BE OUR GREATEST PRIORITY** (Mark 12:30) (Psalm 37:4) (John 15:4-5)  
(Proverbs 3:5-6)

**7) WE MUST CHOOSE DAILY TO DIE TO SELF AND TO LIVE FOR CHRIST** (Luke 9:23)

**8) THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER (SEEKING GOD'S HELP TO CHANGE)** (Ephesians 3:14-19) (Ephesians 1:15-23) (Colossians 1:9-11)

**9) THE IMPORTANCE OF PUTTING ON THE ARMOUR OF GOD**  
(Ephesians 6:10-17, 19-20)

**10) THE IMPORTANCE OF PLEADING THE BLOOD OF JESUS  
OVER OUR FINANCES, EMOTIONS, MIND, WILL AND BODY**

**11) THE IMPORTANCE OF CHOOSING OUR FRIENDS WISELY**  
(Proverbs 12:26) (Proverbs 16:28) (Proverbs 22:24-25) (1 Corinthians 15:33)

- The importance of spending time with people who have good fruit in their life and Godly character. The book of proverbs says, “The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom...” (**Proverbs 10:31**)
- We must guard against allowing ungodly associations or influences into our life. We must not spend too much time with people who are gossips, (**Proverbs 16:28**) who are constantly angry and contentious (**Proverbs 17:1**) or who are prone to being constantly judgmental of others. (**Proverbs 10:18**) (**Matthew 7:1-5**)
- The importance of having Godly partnerships, especially when choosing a marriage partner as a Believer. (**2 Corinthians 6:14**)

# THE IMPORTANCE OF WALKING IN UNITY

- ONE WILL PUT A THOUSAND TO FLIGHT
- **TWO WILL PUT TEN THOUSAND TO FLIGHT**
- THE BODY OF CHRIST IS MADE UP OF MANY MEMBERS. WE ALL NEED ONE ANOTHER
- **WORKING AS A TEAM WE ACHIEVE MUCH**
- JESUS SAID:

**“Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls.” (Luke 11:17)**

- **THE FIRST CHURCH EXPERIENCED GREAT UNITY AND GREW RAPIDLY**

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:46-47)

- **THE FIRST CHURCH DEMONSTRATED GREAT POWER AS BELIEVERS WALKED IN UNITY**

“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.” (Acts 4:32-33)

“And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch.” (Acts 5:12)

THE APOSTLE PAUL EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF ALL BELIEVERS STRIVING TO KEEP THE “UNITY OF THE SPIRIT”

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in LOVE, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of PEACE. (Ephesians 4:1-3)

**THIS PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE CONTAINS A NUMBER OF KEY CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES WHICH HELP BELIEVERS TO MAINTAIN UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.**

THESE CHARACTER TRAITS ARE PARTICULARLY CRUCIAL FOR ALL CHURCH LEADERS TO DESIRE, AS THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING UNITY IN THEIR CHURCHES

- 1) Humility (With all lowliness)
- 2) Compassion (With all gentleness)
- 3) Longsuffering
- 4) Bearing with one another (Not fault finding)
- 5) Walking in love, and
- 6) Being a peace maker

**THE BIBLE MAKES IT CLEAR THAT IF WE DON'T DO THINGS MOTIVATED BY LOVE WE ARE LIKE “CLANGING CYBOLS”**

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.” (1 Corinthians 13:1-2)

**JESUS MADE IT CLEAR WHAT MATTERED IN LIFE  
(Our love for one another)**

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this ALL will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

## **JESUS REBUKED THE “LOVELESS CHURCH” IN EPHESUS**

“I know your works, your labour, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil...and you have persevered and have patience, and have laboured for My name’s sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works.” (**Revelation 2:2-5**)

**THIS REBUKE FROM JESUS GIVES THE FIRST KEY TO HOW OUR LIVES CAN ENCOURAGE UNITY WITHIN THE CHURCH**

### **1) JESUS MUST ALWAYS BE OUR FIRST LOVE (NOT MINISTRY OR ANY OTHER THING OR PERSON)**

**The Apostle Paul said,**

“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” (**Philippians 3:8**)

**Jesus said,**

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.” (**John 4:23**)

**King David wrote,**

“Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (**Psalms 37:4**)

**OUR LOVE FOR JESUS HELPS US TO LOVE EVEN OUR ENEMIES.** (...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us) (**Roman 5:5**)

## **2) WE MUST CONTINUALLY CHOOSE TO LOVE ALL PEOPLE AND TO *WALK IN THE SPIRIT***

**The Apostle Paul said,** “For you brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbour as your self.” But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”  
(Galatians 5:13-16)

## **3) PRAYING TOGETHER HELPS TO BUILD UNITY OF THE SPIRIT**

**After Jesus ascended into Heaven, the disciples prayed together with one accord. (Acts 1:14) The first church continued to pray together (Acts 2:42) and where of one accord. (Acts 2:46) Because of this unity many were added to the church daily. (Acts 2:47) After Peter had preached his first message after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, three thousand souls were added to the church.**

“...those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:41-42)

# GOD'S INCREDIBLE LOVE FOR US (Gospel Message)

**Jesus Christ shared several parables during His time here on earth: I will now share two of these with you. In one of them Jesus said,**

“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing.

And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which is lost!’ I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. **(Luke 15:4-7)**

## **THEN JESUS SAID**

“A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

“But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods the swine ate, **and no one gave him anything**. But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, **and I perish with hunger**.

‘I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.”’

“And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him **and had compassion**, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

“And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. ‘And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; ‘for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry. **(Luke 15:11-24)**

## **THESE TWO PARABLES ACTUALLY REFLECT THE HEART OF GOD FOR YOU AND ME.**

- 1) **GOD HAS A GREAT LOVE FOR ALL PEOPLE. EVERY SINGLE PERSON IS IMPORTANT TO GOD. *YOU ARE IMPORTANT TO GOD***
- 2) **GOD HAS GREAT COMPASSION FOR THE LONELY AND REJECTED**
- 3) **JESUS CAME TO HEAL THE BROKEN HEARTED**
- 4) **JESUS CAME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THE LOST. HIS DESIRE IS THAT NO ONE WOULD PERISH. Jesus shared often on the reality of both Heaven and Hell. He came to seek and to save lost sinners**
- 5) **THAT NO MATTER HOW FAR YOU MAY HAVE STRAYED AWAY, NO MATTER HOW MANY MISTAKES YOU HAVE MADE IN LIFE, GOD TODAY WANTS TO BE IN A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU**
- 6) **THAT ALL THOSE WHO COME TO JESUS CHRIST WILL NOT BE REJECTED**

**Tonight Jesus wants to come into your life. He loves you with a passion and only has plans to prosper you and not to harm you.**

**Jesus left Heaven to lay down His life FOR you and for me, because all of us have made mistakes in life and sinned against God.**

“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that whilst we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” **(Romans 5:6-8)**

**THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NO NOT ONE. (Romans 3:10)  
WE ALL NEED A SAVIOUR**

**TODAY IF YOU WERE TO GIVE YOUR LIFE TO JESUS YOU WOULD  
HAVE A NEW START TO LIFE. YOU WOULD BECOME A CHILD OF  
GOD. The bible says:**

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

**(1 Corinthians 5:17)**

**EVERY PERSON WHO GIVES THEIR LIFE TO JESUS CHRIST  
TODAY WILL IMMEDIATELY RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING  
PROMISES:**

- 1) ALL your sins will be forgiven. All shame and guilt tonight will be dissolved in the Blood of Jesus (Isaiah 1:18) (1 John 1:9) (Psalm 103:3) (Ephesians 1:7)**
- 2) You will have a continual Hope for the future. God has a unique plan for your life and will be with you ALWAYS (Jeremiah 29:11) (Ephesians 2:10)**
- 3) Jesus will never leave nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5a)**
- 4) You will have a future which will give you great purpose and meaning (John 10:10) (Ephesians 3:20)**
- 5) You will receive the gift of eternal life (Ephesians 2:8-9)**

**Jesus said,** “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. “And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die...”  
**(John 11:25-26)**

**Jesus also said,** “Do not be afraid; ‘I am the First and the Last.

“I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.” **(Revelation 1:17-18)**

6) **AND FINALLY, God Himself will give you guidance in your life from today on** (Psalm 37:23) (Proverbs 3:5-6) (Proverbs 16:3) (John 16:13) (John 14:26) (Psalm 119:105)

- **No greater love has anyone that he lay down his life for another**
- *Though we all deserve to go to hell for our sins and rebellion, God wants us to spend eternity with Him*
- **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”** (John 3:16)
- *Today Jesus is reaching out to you. He loves you and gave His life for you to pay the penalty for our sins. He took upon Himself God’s wrath for our sins. But death could not hold Him down and three days later He arose from the dead triumphantly with the keys to death and hell. Today He is reaching out to you. He has only thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

**Jesus Christ said**, “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” **(John 10:9-10)**

**Jesus said**, “Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give your rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” **(Matthew 11:28-30)**

**TODAY JESUS CHRIST STANDS KNOCKING AT THE DOOR OF YOUR HEART.**

**TODAY WILL YOU ACCEPT HIS OFFER OF ETERNAL LIFE?**

# **THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A RIGHT HEART**

The bible says much about the importance of having a right heart and maintaining right attitudes in our heart.

*“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.* “Eat and drink!” he says to you, But his heart is not with you.” **(Proverbs 23:7)**

“Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.” **(Proverbs 4:23)**

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” **(Luke 6:45)**

“You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” **(James 5:8)**

“‘And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.” **(Mark 12:30)**

## **HAVING A RIGHT HEART IS A KEY TO:**

- i) Having intimacy with God
- ii) Having good relationships with others, and
- iii) Anointed preaching

## ***REVIVAL BEGINS IN THE HEART***

(Psalm 119:1-2) (Psalm 119:9-11) (Psalm 119:34-40)

Unconfessed sin in our lives and hearts will always be a barrier to experiencing intimacy with God, whilst unforgiveness and ungodly attitudes will always have a negative impact on our friendships with others.

What comes out of our mouth is generally a good indication of the state of our heart and how close we are in our relationship with Jesus. Those who love the LORD and have an intimate walk with Him will invariably speak words which are encouraging and uplifting. The Book of Proverbs states:

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.” **(Proverbs 18:21)**

**The Bible also has many accounts of the Kings in Israel and Judah who during their reign deviated from their walk with the Lord as their hearts were taken away to follow after other idols.** King Solomon (1 Kings 11:1-4) and King Joash (2 Chronicles 24:1-2 & 2 Chronicles 24:15-22) were two such Kings.

## HOW CAN WE MAINTAIN A RIGHT HEART WHICH IS FULL OF FAITH AND A LOVE FOR GOD AND OTHERS

### 1) We need to meditate on God's Word (The Bible)

**The Lord said to Joshua**, “This Book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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 1:8**)

(**Psalm 1:1-3**) (**Colossians 3:16**) (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**) (**Psalm 119:105**)

### 2) We need to continually cast our cares to Jesus and put our faith and trust in Him. (**Matthew 6:25-34**) We must always ensure that we do not allow the cares and pleasures of this world to choke the word in our lives.

**Jesus said**, “Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.” (**Matthew 13:22**)

JESUS ALSO STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF STORING UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN RATHER THAN BEING PREOCCUPIED WITH THE TEMPORAL THINGS HERE ON EARTH. (**Matthew 6:19-21**) (**Matthew 6:24**)

### 3) We must continue to focus on those things which are good and virtuous

**The apostle Paul wrote**, “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-meditate on these things.” (**Philippians 4:8**)

AFTER GAZING UPON BATHSHEBA, KING DAVID FELL INTO ADULTERY WITH HER BEFORE HAVING HER HUSBAND KILLED AS WELL. FROM THEN ON KING DAVID HAD ONGOING STRIFE IN HIS LIFE. (**2 Samuel 11:1-17**)

### 4) We need to maintain a heart of worship. A key to having peace and joy

**The apostle wrote**, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (**Colossians 3:16**)

(**John 4:23-24**) (**Psalm 95:1-2**) (**Ephesians 5:19**)

- 5) We must choose our friends wisely. The company we keep can determine our destiny in life

“The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.” **(Proverbs 12:26)**

**The apostle Paul wrote**, “Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits.” **(1 Corinthians 15:33)**

- 6) Having intimacy with God must be our first priority. When we spend time in His presence He is able to highlight *attitudes* in our heart which need to be addressed. **(Proverbs 14:10) (Proverbs 14:14)**

- We need to be in close communion with the Lord (Prayer) **(Matthew 26:41)**
- As we draw near to God He changes our hearts **(Psalm 37:4)**
- As we spend time with Jesus we get His compassion for the lost
- Jesus rebuked the church at Ephesus which had left its first love **(Revelation 2:1-5)**
- The more time that we spend with the Lord, the more we become like Him.

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marvelled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” **(Acts 4:13)**

- 7) Having a clear God given vision and focus for our life

**The book of Proverbs states**, “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” **(Proverbs 29:18) KJV**

TRUE CONTENTMENT IN LIFE ONLY COMES WHEN WE CONTINUALLY SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

**The Apostle Paul wrote**, “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” **(Colossians 3:2)**

- 8) Being continually filled with the Holy Spirit and being led or controlled by the Holy Spirit are keys to maintaining a strong spiritual walk and being empowered for ministry **(Jude 20 & 21) (Romans 8:14) (Ephesians 5:15-19)**

## 9) Having an obedient heart which desires to please the LORD

**The apostle Paul wrote**, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (**Galatians 2:20**)

**Having a surrendered heart enables God to guide and direct our lives to fulfil His plan and destiny for our life.** (Proverbs 3:5-6)

GODS WAYS ARE ALWAYS HIGHER THAN OUR WAYS (**Isaiah 55:7-8**) AND FAR GREATER THAN WE COULD COMPREHEND (**Ephesians 3:20**)

**Jesus said**, “...blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” (**Luke 11:28**)

## 10) CHOOSING to be a person of faith who stands uncompromisingly on the promises of God in His Word (**Psalm 1:1-3**)

**The Psalmist wrote**, “Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, And I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.” (**Psalm 119:33-34**)

**The author of the book of Hebrews wrote**, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (**Hebrews 11:6**)

(SEE ALSO **Hebrews 11:1, Jeremiah 17:7-8, Matthew 6:33**)

### ***A BELIEVER WHO CHOOSES TO STAND ON GOD’S WORD***

- i) Rejects all irrational fears from his past
- ii) Chooses to ignore the negativity and scepticism of others
- iii) Refuses to accept the doubts and lies which come from the enemy, but
- iv) Continues to place their trust in the Lord and to build their life on the wisdom and promises contained in God’s Word. **The apostle Paul wrote**,  
“*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (**Romans 10:17**)

### ***CONCLUSION***

If we have a heart which is fully surrendered to Jesus Christ and which is full of faith in His promises, we will continually speak words of life and encouragement to others. As we continually choose to yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit, our preaching and witnessing will also help to bring spiritual life to many others. **Jesus Himself said**, “*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*” (**John 6:63**)

(SEE ALSO **Luke 4:32 and 1 Corinthians 2:3-5**)

# **PRACTICAL KEYS TO ABUNDANT LIFE**

## **BEING FAITHFUL TO OUR MINISTRY CALL**

The apostle Paul wrote at the end of his life,

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

**There are several key disciplines that we must have in our life, to help us to complete our ministry calling and to fulfil all that God has planned for our lives and churches. I will now mention some of the more important disciplines.**

### **1) Being a person of prayer**

**Jesus said to his disciples,** “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” **(Mark 14:38)**

**The apostle John wrote,** “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” **(1 John 5:14-15)**

**Jesus Himself said,** “You did not choose Me, But I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever *you ask the Father in My name* He may give you.” **(John 15:16) and**

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” **(Mark 11:24)**

## **2) Having a Humble and Teachable Spirit**

**Jesus said,** “But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (**Matthew 23:11-12**)

(1 Peter 5:6) (James 4:10)

**The book of Proverbs says,** “Listen to counsel and receive instruction, That you may be wise in your latter days.” (**Proverbs 19:20**)

(Proverbs 12:1) (Proverbs 15:5)

## **3) That Jesus is always our first love**

- **Jesus rebuked the church at Ephesus because it had left its first love.** (Revelation 2:1-5)
- **For our lives to bear fruit we must continually abide in the love of Christ.** (John 15:4-5)
- **We must continually delight ourselves in the Lord** (Psalm 37:4)

## **4) Having a healthy fear of the Lord (It is the beginning of all wisdom)**

**The book of Proverbs says,** “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction. (**Proverbs 1:7**)

**Jesus Himself said,** “And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear. Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!” (**Luke 12:4-5**)

## **5) Being a person who perseveres and never gives up**

- i) Joseph never gave up his dream (**Genesis Chapters 37-46**)
- ii) The importance of waiting upon the Lord (**Isaiah 40:28-31**)
- iii) The need to meditate on God's Word (**Psalms 1:1-3**)
- iv) Having a continual trust in the Lord (**Jeremiah 17:7-8**)
- v) Intimacy with God (**Psalms 37:4**) (**Proverbs 3:5-6**)
- vi) We must not lose heart nor grow weary while doing good (**Galatians 6:9**)
- vii) If we are faithful, God promises to complete all that He has planned for our life (**Philippians 1:6**)

## **6) That we have laid down our lives for the cause of Christ**

(**Luke 14:25-26**) (**Luke 14:33**) (**Matthew 16:24-27**)

**Jesus said**, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain."  
(**John 12:24**)

"If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour."  
(**John 12:26**)

## **7) That we are faithful in the little things** (**Matthew 25:14-23**)

**Jesus said**, "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much." (**Luke 16:10**)

## **8) That we have a spirit of excellence** (**Daniel 6:3**)

**The apostle Paul wrote**, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (**2 Timothy 2:15**)

**9) That we have a genuine love for all people.**  
**(That we allow His love to flow through our life to encourage others to live for Christ) (*1 Corinthians Chapter 13*)**

**10) That we have a commitment to raising up the next generation of leaders and in developing good quality disciples** (*Matthew 28:19-20*)

**The apostle Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy,** “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”  
**(2 Timothy 2:2)**

**11) That we are committed to a life of obedience to God’s plan and call for our life**

**The apostle Paul said,** “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” **(Ephesians 5:15-17)**

“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)**

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” **(Galatians 2:20)**

**We must be led by the Holy Spirit. We must yield control of our life to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to guide and direct our steps in life** (*Romans 8:14*) (*John 14:16*) (*John 14:26*) (*John 16:13*)

## **12) That we build our life on the eternal Word of God**

**Jesus said**, “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.”

“But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. AND GREAT WAS ITS FALL.” (**Matthew 7:24-27**)

(**Joshua 1:8**) (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**) (**Psalms 1:1-3**)

## **13) The importance of being empowered by the Holy Spirit for ministry**

**The Apostle Paul wrote**, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” (**Ephesians 5:18**)

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.” (**Jude 20**)

**Jesus Himself said to His disciples**, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (**Acts 1:8**)

**The apostle Paul wrote**, “I was with in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. (**1 Corinthians 2:3-5**)

**The word of the LORD came to Zerubbabel**: “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord of hosts.” (**Zechariah 4:6**)

## **14) That evangelism is always a priority in our lives and ministries**

**Jesus said,** “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” **(Mark 16:15)**

**The apostle Paul wrote,** “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!” **(Romans 10:14-15)**

“...He who wins souls is wise” **(Proverbs 11:30)**

“Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.” **(Daniel 12:3)**

## **15) That we have Godly influences in our life. We must choose our friends wisely**

**The apostle Paul wrote,** “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-meditate on these things.” **(Philippians 4:8)**

**The book of James says,** “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.” **(James 1:12-16)**

**The book of proverbs says,** “The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.” **(Proverbs 12:26)**

**The apostle Paul wrote,** “Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits.” **(1 Corinthians 15:33)**

## **16) That we are a servant to others. That we look for ways to serve and encourage others**

**Jesus Himself said**, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (**Matthew 20:25-28**)

“But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.” (**Matthew 23:11**)

**The apostle Paul wrote**, “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more...I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” (**1 Corinthians 9:19 &22**)

## **17) The importance of being connected and accountable to others (1 Peter 5:5)**

**Jesus lived a life of submission to His Father in heaven**

(John 17:4) (John 12:49-50)

**There is wisdom in a multitude of counsellors**

“Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.” (**Proverbs 11:14**)

“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise.” (**Proverbs 12:15**)

“A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment.” (**Proverbs 18:1**)

- 18) We need to seek God for His plan and vision for our lives. This will help us to stay focused when we are going through challenging times**

**The Lord said to the Prophet Habakkuk,**

“Write the vision And make it plain on tablets that he may run who reads it.” (**Habakkuk 2:2**)

**HAVING A CLEAR VISION FOR OUR LIFE HELPS TO KEEP US FOCUSED IN LIFE, PARTICULARLY WHEN WE ARE GOING THROUGH TRIALS AND TIMES OF DISCOURAGEMENT IN OUR LIFE**

**The book of Proverbs also says,**

“Where there is no revelation, the people *cast of restraint*; But happy is he who keeps the law.” (**Proverbs 29:18**)

- 19) That we endeavour to be a good example to those that we have been called to shepherd in our church**

**The apostle Peter wrote to the elders in the church,**

“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, nor for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.” (**1 Peter 5:4**)

- 20) We must use our time wisely**

# GOD HAS A GOOD PLAN FOR OUR LIFE

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.  
(Jeremiah 29:11-13)

- **GOD HAS A UNIQUE PLAN FOR EVERY BELIEVER’S LIFE.**
- **WHEN WE COME TO FAITH WE MUST CONTINUE TO STAY STRONG IN OUR FAITH.**
- **IN DOING SO OUR LIFE WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT AND OUR LIVES WILL MAKE A GREAT IMPACT ON THIS WORLD**

“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)

- **GOD USES PEOPLE OF LITTLE REPUTATION TO DO GREAT THINGS FOR HIM**
- **GOD DOES NOT LOOK AT OUR ABILITIES BUT OUR AVAILABILITY**
- **GOD WANTS EVERY BELIEVER’S LIFE TO BEAR MUCH FRUIT AND THAT EVERY BELIEVER WILL REACH THIER FULL POTENTIAL IN CHRIST.**

Jesus Himself said, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that you fruit should remain, **that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.**” (John 15:16)

- **OUR PAST EXPERIENCES WILL NOT PREVENT GOD FROM USING US IN THE FUTURE TO DO GREAT THINGS FOR HIM**
- **WE MUST NOT ALLOW OUR PAST TO STOP US FROM STEPPING INTO THE FUTURE THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE**

## ➤ **WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE**

**King David wrote**, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems you life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s”  
**(Psalm 103:2-5)**

**The Lord said to the Prophet Jeremiah when he was in prison**, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”  
**(Jeremiah 33:3)**

➤ **I was once myself in a prison of depression**

➤ **I was once bound up by fear**

➤ **But Jesus set me free.**

**TODAY I AM GOING TO BE SHARING QUICKLY A NUMBER OF KEYS FOR ENTERING INTO ALL THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE AS BELIEVERS**

**But first we will read the following passages of Scripture.** (Mark 4:2-9)  
and (Mark 4:13-20)

“Then He (Jesus) taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching:

“Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it.

Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.

But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!””

**(Mark 4:2-9)**

“And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word’s sake, immediately they stumble.

Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, “and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

**(Mark 4:13-20)**

#### **JESUS INTERPRETED THIS PARABLE AS FOLLOW**

- i) Those by the wayside are those who hear the word of God but the devil immediately takes away the word that was sown in their heart and they DO NOT BELIEVE (Mark 4:15)**
- ii) Those sown on the stony ground are those who immediately and gladly receive the word of God, but they have no root in themselves and they only endure for a time, and when tribulation or persecution arises for the word’s sake, they immediately stumble. (Mark 4:16-17)**
- iii) Now those sown among the thorns are those who hear the word and the cares of this world and the desires for OTHER things choke the word and it becomes unfruitful in their lives and they bear little or no fruit in their life.**
- iv) But those sown on good ground are those who hear the word and ACCEPT it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred. THESE ARE CHRISTIANS WHO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD AND WHO RECEIVE IT INTO THIER HEARTS AND WHO CONTINUALLY APPLY THE WORD OF GOD TO THIER LIVES AS THEY WALK WITH THE LORD. (These are Christians who build their life on the rock)**

*FROM THIS PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE WE CAN SEE SEVERAL KEYS THAT WOULD HELP US TO FULFILL OUR DESTINY IN GOD*

1) We need to give our cares and problems to Jesus in prayer

*The Apostle Paul wrote*, “Be anxious for nothing, 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 minds through Christ Jesus. **(Philippians 4:6-7)**

2) We need to be careful about what we listen to and look at (*We need to avoid feeding our minds with the negativity and ungodly distractions that are in this world*)

*The Apostle Paul also wrote*, “Finally, Brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-meditate on these things.” **(Philippians 4:8)**

3) We need to continually meditate on God’s Word

“Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; **And whatever he does shall prosper.**” (Psalm 1:1-3)

4) We need to speak out and hear the promises contained in God’s Word (*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*)

**The Apostle Paul wrote**, “For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.” **(2 Corinthians 1:20)** And “...faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” **(Romans 10:17)**

5) We need to accept and apply God’s Word to our life (*We must not only be hearers of the Word but also doers of the Word*)

**Jesus said**, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.” **(Luke 11:28)**

- 6) We need to simply just put our faith and trust in all the promises contained in God's Word, as we step out and follow God's plan for our life

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will **not fear when heat comes**; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.” (**Jeremiah 17:7-8**)

- 7) We must not limit God (***Because of our circumstances today***)

Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (**John 10:10**)

#### **WHEN WE COME TO CHRIST WE BECOME A NEW CREATION IN CHRIST**

**The Apostle Paul wrote**, “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.” (**Ephesians 3:20**)

**BY DOING THESE THINGS OUR LIVES WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT: SOME THIRTYFOLD, SOME SIXTY, AND SOME A HUNDRED. GOD HAS A GOOD PLAN FOR OUR LIFE.**

# **AN OVERVIEW OF WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR ALL CHURCH LEADERS**

## **1) Having a vision to reach the lost**

**Jesus said**, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for the harvest.

“And he who **reaps** receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that **both** he who sows and he who reaps may **rejoice together**. For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps’” (**John 4:35-37**)

**WE ALL HAVE A PART TO PLAY IN THE HARVESTING OF LOST SOULS**

**Every soul is precious to God. Every church should have a clear vision and plan for reaching the lost**

*The LORD said to the prophet Habakkuk*, “Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it.” (**Habakkuk 2:2**)

## **2) Having a vision for equipping leaders**

(Building the Kingdom of God focus)

**Every leader must invest time in helping to develop the next group of leaders. Mentoring and discipling future leaders will ensure the ongoing expansion of God’s Kingdom**

*The apostle Paul said to the young pastor Timothy*, “You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” (**2 Timothy 2:1-2**)

## **3) Mobilising all Christians in their ministry gifts**

*Every Believer has a ministry and mission field.* (**Ephesians 2:10**)

“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.” (**Romans 12:4-8**)

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:” (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

### **THE BOOK OF PROVERBS SAYS**

“And he who wins souls is wise.” (Proverbs 11:30)

**It is important that all Christians are equipped and encouraged to use their ministry gifts and shown how to effectively share their faith with unbelievers.**

**The Apostle Paul wrote,** “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.” (Ephesians 4:11-13)

- 4) We need to start with what we have. We must not despise the day of small beginnings. If we are faithful with the little He will entrust to us greater responsibilities and resources**

“He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.” (Luke 16:10)

**SEE ALSO MATTHEW 25:14-29**

- 5) We need to have a firm belief in the POWER of the Gospel to SAVE and CHANGE lives**

**The apostle Paul wrote,** “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” (Romans 1:16)

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits; Who **forgives** all your iniquities, Who heals all your **diseases**, Who **redeems your life from destruction**, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who **satisfies your mouth with good things**, So that your youth is **renewed** like the eagle’s. (Psalm 103:2-5)

**SEE ALSO ACTS 8:4-8**

## 6) The importance of PERSEVERENCE

**The LORD said to the prophet Habakkuk**, “For the vision is yet for an **appointed** time; But at the end it **will** speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, **wait for it**; Because it will **surely come**, It will not tarry.” (**Habakkuk 2:3**)

**Any God given vision will come to pass if we do not grow weary while doing good and if we do not lose heart.** (Galatians 6:9) (Philippians 1:6)

## 7) The importance of making disciples (Feeding the sheep)

All Pastors have a responsibility for looking after those whom the Holy Spirit has entrusted to them. (**Acts 20:28**)

As part of this responsibility, pastors should be teaching and shepherding their flock to ensure that all the members in the church are given the opportunity to grow strong in their faith.

Every pastor should also be aware of the importance of their own Lives being a role model to those who have been entrusted to their care.

**The apostle Peter wrote**, “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.” (**1 Peter 5:2-5**)

**Jesus Himself said**, “Go there and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (**Matthew 28:19-20**)

**Jesus gave the apostle Peter a threefold commission for him to be a shepherd to His sheep when He restored Peter.**

“Feed My lambs”,

“Tend My sheep”, and

“Feed My sheep” (**John 21:15-17**)

## **8) WE NEED TO HAVE GOD’S HEART FOR LOST SOULS (The compassion of Jesus)**

As Christians it is so important that we seek to have the same compassion for the lost that Jesus had. It is our compassion for the lost which will give us the passion to preach the gospel to the lost and to witness to others. As we read the gospels we can see the great love of Jesus for the lost and broken.

**“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.**

**But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.**

**Then he said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send our labourers into His harvest” (Matthew 9:35-38)**

## **JESUS REBUKED THE LOVELESS CHURCH AT EPHESUS**

**Despite all their good works Jesus said, “Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.” (Revelation 2:4)**

**WE MUST CONTINUALLY ABIDE IN HIS PRESENCE IF WE ARE TO HAVE THE SAME COMPASSION THAT JESUS HAD FOR THE LOST. JESUS SAID,**

**“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:4-5)**

## **9) Having a knowledge that God’s plan for our life is far bigger than we could imagine**

**The LORD said to the Prophet Jeremiah whilst he was in jail,**

**“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” (Jeremiah 33:3)**

**GOD’S WAYS ARE ALWAYS HIGHER THAN OUR WAYS.**

## **THE LORD SPOKE THROUGH THE PROPHET ISAIAH TO ISRAEL,**

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.” **(Isaiah 55:8-9)**

## **The apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the church at Ephesus,**

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,” **(Ephesians 3:20)**

- **We must not allow our past traditions or current comfort zones to prevent us from moving into the new things of God**
- **We must not allow our fears to stop us from getting out of the boat and becoming a water walking disciple**
- **We need to learn to walk in obedience to God’s blue print for our life as we allow the Holy Spirit to direct our lives, and**
- **We must have a simple childlike trust in God’s faithfulness**

## **KNOWING THAT WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE**

### **10) We must continue to live in the FAITH REALM and be continually LED by the Holy Spirit**

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” **(Hebrews 11:1)**

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” **(Hebrews 11:6)**

## **THE OLD TESTAMENT IS FULL OF ACCOUNTS OF GOD’S FAITHFULNESS IN THE PAST**

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after Joshua and his men of war and seven priests encircled them. On the seventh day the ark of the LORD also encircled the city prior to the walls of Jericho falling down flat. **(Joshua 6:1-20)**

By faith Moses forsook Egypt and by faith he led Israel through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians attempting to do so were drowned. (**Exodus 2:15, Exodus 14:19-30**)

### **JESUS HIMSELF SHARED MUCH ABOUT THE FAITH FILLED LIFE**

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” (**John 14:12-14**)

“...for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.” (**Matthew 17:20**)

### **OTHER FAITH STATEMENTS (Matthew 6:33) (Mark 11:22-24)**

## **11) The importance of leaders having a servant’s heart (Leading by example and being prepared to go the extra mile)**

### **- Living for others**

*Jesus said*, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies it produces much grain.” (**John 12:24**)

### **- Helping others to fulfil God’s destiny for their lives (MARK 10:35-45)**

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (**Mark 10:45**)

## **12) The absolute importance of maintaining unity in the church (Building the Kingdom of God together)**

- A key to experiencing God’s blessings (**Psalms 133:1-3**)

- Helps in building a strong church (**Acts 2:46-47**)

- A key to experiencing God’s power (**Acts 4:24 & 31**)

- Helps to bring God’s presence in our meetings (**Acts 1:14**), and

- Helps in creating an atmosphere of love in the church in which people can be saved, healed and encouraged to grow in their Christian walk

### 13) The importance of Prayer (Having a lifestyle of Prayer)

THERE ARE MANY PROMISES OF ANSWERED PRAYER IN GOD'S WORD.  
(Mark 11:24) (James 5:14-18) (John 16:23-24)

As leaders pastors need to have a lifestyle of prayer in which they continually seek the Lord for His direction for their lives and church. Unless the Lord builds the house they labour in vain who build it. (Psalm 127:1)

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask **anything** according to His will, He **hears us**. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” (1 John 5:14-15)

**Jesus said**, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the *Father in My name* He may give you. (John 15:16)

### 14) Continually maintaining a heart of worship and intimacy with Jesus Christ. Jesus must continually be our first love

**Jesus said**, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:23-24)

**The apostle Paul wrote**, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (Colossians 3:16)

### 15) All great leaders live a crucified life

- A life of obedience to God's plan for their life (Luke 14:26-27, 33)

- IT IS THE KEY TO AVOIDING THE MANY DISTRACTIONS IN THIS LIFE THAT CAN STEER CHRISTIANS OFF TRACK AND ROB THEM OF GOD'S BEST

- Abundant life can only be experienced by Believers when they deny themselves and follow Jesus' plan for their life. (Matthew 16:24-27)

### **Jesus Himself said,**

“Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” (Mark 8:34-38)

### **The apostle Paul wrote**

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

## **16) We must depend on the Holy Spirit to empower us for ministry**

### **- The importance of praying in the Spirit**

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.” (Jude 20)

### **- Preaching and witnessing in the power of the Holy Spirit**

**The apostle Paul wrote**, “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:2-5) *and*

“For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.” (1 Thessalonians 1:5)

**Jesus said to His disciples before ascending back to Heaven,**

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

- **The Holy Spirit makes our prayers effective**

**The apostle Paul wrote,** “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Romans 8:26)

- **We need to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit**

**The apostle Paul wrote,** “Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:17-18)

- **Jesus Himself ministered through the power of the Holy Spirit**

“how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.” (Acts 10:38)

- **Jesus went about teaching and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. People brought to Him all the sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. (Matthew 4:23-24)**

**Jesus said to His disciples,** “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name I will do it.” (John 14:12-14)

**“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel:**

**‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the Lord of hosts.”**  
(Zechariah 4:6)

**17) The importance of connecting with and being accountable to other mature Christians and Leaders**

“Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.” (Proverbs 11:14)

**(Hebrews 10:23-25)**

# LIVING ONE DAY AT A TIME

- **Jesus Himself**, told his disciples not to worry about the next day (tomorrow) (Matthew 6:34)
- The Lord's prayer includes: "Give us this day our daily bread..." (Matthew 6:11)

## I WILL BEGIN WITH A VERY ENCOURAGING PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE BIBLE:

### Jesus said,

"Therefore I say to you, *do not worry about your life*, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

"Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap *nor gather into barns*; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither **toil** nor spin;

"and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith."

"Therefore *do not worry*, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after **all these things the Gentiles seek**. "For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But **seek first the kingdom of God** and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

**"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."** (Matthew 6:25-34)

## THE LAST VERSE OF THIS PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING ONE DAY AT A TIME

- WE ALL NEED A VISION AND FOCUS FOR LIFE
- HOWEVER WE CAN ONLY LIVE TODAY. TODAY IS THE ONLY DAY GUARANTEED TO US
- LIVING “ONE DAY AT A TIME” IS A KEY TO LIVING AN ABUNDANT LIFE.
- THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS WHY WE MUST LEARN TO LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME

## I WILL NOW LOOK AT FIVE OF THESE REASONS:

### LIVING ONE DAY AT A TIME:

#### 1) HELPS US NOT TO BE OVERWELMED BY

##### a) BIG TASKS THAT WE FACE IN LIFE,

“Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established.”  
(Proverbs 16:3) OR

##### b) BY CHALLENGES OR TRIALS THAT WE MAY BE GOING THROUGH IN LIFE

“You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, For in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength.” (Isaiah 26:3-4)

#### 2) HELPS US TO STAY FOCUSED

(We make the most out of every day in our life)

- We don’t allow future potential problems to stop us from living a fruitful life today
- We don’t allow future possible problems from distracting us today
- We are able to make the most of our life each day as we allow the Lord to direct each day of our life

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10)*

### 3) **IS THE KEY TO GOD'S BEST PLAN UNFOLDING IN OUR LIFE**

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way.”  
(Psalm 37:23)

***THERE WILL BE DIFFERENT SEASONS IN OUR LIFE*** (Ecclesiastes 3:2-8)

“To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

***THERE WILL BE VALLEY EXPERIENCES IN OUR LIFE*** (*Living one day at a time helps us to get through the valley experiences*)

***THERE WILL BE SEASONS OF PREPARATION IN OUR LIFE***  
(When God develops character in our life) **Moses was in the wilderness (tending sheep) for 40 years as God prepared him for greatness.**

***GOD IS CONTINUALLY MOULDING AND SHAPING OUR LIVES AS HIS PLAN UNFOLDS IN OUR LIFE*** (*He is the Potter, we are the clay*)

<b><i>We must allow the Lord to CONTINUALLY guide and direct our steps day by day.</i></b>
--

**BUT IF WE LOOK AHEAD AND WORRY ABOUT FUTURE THINGS “AHEAD OF TIME” WE CAN BEGIN TO MAKE WRONG CHOICES AS A RESULT OF FEAR.**

### 4) **IT IS A KEY TO BUILDING OUR LIFE ON A FIRM FOUNDATION** (As we allow God “one day at a time” to FULLY prepare us for all that He has for our life)

**James in his epistle wrote:**

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. BUT let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” (James 1:2-4)

**IF WE DO NOT RUN FROM DIFFICULT SITUATIONS GOD IS ABLE TO FORM CHARACTER IN OUR LIVES AND PREPARE US TO DO GREAT AND MIGHTY THINGS FOR HIM**

“He has made everything beautiful in its time...” (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

5) **FINALLY, WE ARE ABLE TO *LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME* BECAUSE WE HAVE A GOD WHO IS ABLE TO WORK THINGS OUT FOR US TOMORROW**

This is the key to living a **stress free** abundant life in Christ, FREE FROM WORRY.

- We must choose to **refuse to worry** about those things that relate to the future, **which we can do nothing about TODAY.**
- God will always make a way where there seems no way, **if we allow Him to guide our lives day by day.**

**“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)**

**“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us.” (Ephesians 3:20)**

**Jesus said,**

**“...seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**

**Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matthew 6:33-34)**

# FAITH THE CURRENCY OF HEAVEN

## 1) We need to know our identity in Christ

- xii) **We are ambassadors of Christ** (2 Corinthians 5:20)
- xiii) **We are citizens of Heaven** (Philippians 3:20)
- xiv) **We are children of God and joint heirs with Christ**  
(John 1:12-13) (Romans 8:16-17)
- xv) **We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ** (Ephesians 1:3)
- xvi) **We are called to reign with Christ here on earth**  
(Revelation 5:9-10)
- xvii) **As Christ's representatives here on earth we have been given power and authority in His name**  
(Mark 16:15-18) (Matthew 28:18-20) (Matthew 16:18-19)
- xviii) **We have a God who will supply all of our need according to His riches and glory by Christ Jesus** (Philippians 4:19)  
(Ephesians 3:20) (Jeremiah 33:3) (Isaiah 55:8-9)
- xix) **We are a royal priest** (1 Peter 2:9)
- xx) **We are saints** (Romans 1:7)
- xxi) **We are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus**  
(Romans 8:37) **and**
- xxii) **No weapon formed against us shall prosper**  
(Isaiah 54:17)

## **2) We need to live a lifestyle of prayer and continually prayer in FAITH**

- i) We must be persistent in prayer** (Luke 18:1-8) (Luke 11:5-9)
- ii) Our prayers need however to be in accordance with God's will for our life** (1 John 5:14-15)
- iii) We need to believe in God's ability and desire to answer our prayers** (John 14:12-14) (John 16:23-24)
- iv) WE MUST ALWAYS PRAY IN FAITH** (Mark 11:22-24)

## **3) We need to walk the life of FAITH**

- i) We must step out by faith into all that God has for our life and church** (Hebrews 11:1)
- ii) We need to learn to trust the Lord in all areas of our life** (Hebrews 11:6) (Matthew 21:21-22)
- iii) We must be committed to a life of obedience, and**
- iv) We need to overcome our fears by having a childlike trust in God** (Isaiah 26:3)

# 7 KEYS TO HELP FIND YOUR FIT IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

## **GOD HAS A UNIQUE PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE.**

The Bible makes it clear that all people have a hope and a future (**Jeremiah 29:11**) and that God is able to restore even the most broken of lives. (**Psalms 103:2-5**) Jesus made it clear that there were two different paths that we can take in life, the narrow path, which leads to eternal life, or the broad path, which leads to destruction.

Jesus also said, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (**John 10:10**)

**As believers we all have a particular destiny and purpose in life as we follow God’s plan for our life.**

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.” (**John 15:16**)

“But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.” (**1 Corinthians 12:18**) “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it.” (**1 Corinthians 12:26**)

## **WE ALL NEED EACH OTHER IN THE BODY OF CHRIST**

The key to experiencing the abundant life that Jesus spoke of is for every Believer to find and follow God’s plan for their life. (**Ephesians 2:10**)

How can we find and follow God’s plan for our life? How can we know that we are in the centre of God’s will for our life? How can we make our lives count, so that we will bear fruit that will remain? The following seven keys will help you to become more clear about what God has for your life, and help you to find and follow His best plan for your Life.

### **1) GENUINLY COMMIT YOUR WAYS TO THE LORD**

God will guide and direct our life if we give Him control over our life. God wants our life to have a meaning and purpose. He wants us to have an abundant life.

“Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.”  
(**Proverbs 16:3**)

Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.  
(**Psalms 37:5**)

## 2) **SEEK GOD FOR A VISION FOR YOUR LIFE**

We all need to have a vision for our life and Christian walk. We all need to seek God for His vision for our life. Once we have a vision for our Christian walk, we can begin to pray for direction in seeing the vision come to pass. Having a focus will enable us to meet people who share the vision. Once we have a vision for life, we can prayerfully seek God each day for His guidance in making plans and commitments to realise the vision.

Having a vision and focus also helps us to overcome and avoid the temptations and snares that would try and destroy God's best plan for our life. Without a vision people perish, plans go astray, and people begin to become discouraged as they deal with the challenges of this life without a focus for their life.

"Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint;" (**Proverbs 29:18a**)

"Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry." (**Habakkuk 2:2-3**)

## 3) **WHAT YOU LIKE DOING IS GENERALLY GOD'S DIRECTION**

As we spend time in God's presence, He will begin to place desires on our heart, who to ring, what to do, and desires to do things to serve Him. When we get desires to do things to glorify God and to help others, these desires are generally from God to help guide and direct our lives.

**"Delight yourself in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4)**

For a person who loves sharing his faith, a desire to commence an open- air outreach in the City to see the streets touched with the gospel and love of Jesus Christ is most likely God's next step for their life. For a person with a teaching and pastoral gift, a desire to start a small group to build up new Christians, is most likely God's next step for their life.

Or if a Christian, who loves working in the corporate world, has a burning desire to start up his own business to fund Christian ministries, and an opportunity is presented to him to pursue a new business venture, and he has a great peace about pursuing this business, it is quite likely that this is God's next step for his life.

God gives visions and dreams and births them in the Spirit. It is God who puts on our heart things to do for His Kingdom. God will often direct us by putting a strong desire in our heart to do something for Him. We must be careful not to overanalyse every situation, but rather, to be more led by the Godly desires that He places on our hearts.

**"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)**

#### 4) **BE PLANTED IN THE HOUSE OF GOD**

It is very important that a believer is planted in a local church. It is within a local church setting that Christians can grow in their faith, and have a support network to help see their God given destiny come to pass.

Having mentors and other mature Christians in our life, gives us checks and balances to ensure that we do not deviate of track in our Christian walk. The Bible says a lot about the importance of church fellowship.

“Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing.” **(Psalm 92:13-14)**

“For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, And in a multitude of counsellors there is safety.” **(Proverbs 24:6)**

“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.” **(Hebrews 13:17)**

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much more as you see the Day approaching.” **(Hebrews 10:24-25)**

**IT IS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A LOCAL CHURCH THAT A PERSON’S MINISTRY GIFTS CAN BE RECOGNISED AND THAT CHRISTIANS CAN BE ENCOURAGED TO DEVELOP AND USE THEIR MINISTRY GIFTS.**

#### 5) **KEEP CLOSE TO JESUS (*KNOW HIS VOICE*)**

Intimacy with God is the key to following God’s plan for your life. We must allow the Holy Spirit to guide and direct our lives. It is crucial to spend time with Jesus and to know His voice. God’s best plan for your life will unfold as you walk in relationship with Him.

We must be careful that we never become like the church at Ephesus where they became so busy in doing ministry, that they left their first love, and lost their intimacy with Jesus. We must allow the Lord to unfold His plan for our life, our church and for our businesses, as we continue to seek His face each and every step of the way.

**The word of the Lord to Zerubbabel was, “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.”** (Zechariah 4:6) We too, must allow the Holy Spirit to guide and direct our steps in life, as we just do what Jesus tells us to do. **“Unless the Lord builds the house, They labour in vain who build it;...”** (Psalm 127:1)

#### 6) **TRUST GOD (*PUT YOUR FAITH IN GOD ALONE*)**

It is so important to put all of your faith in God and to trust in His faithfulness. Jesus will never leave nor forsake you. God has the best plan for our life, and His ways are higher than our ways.

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.” **(Isaiah 55:8-9)**

**We must always ensure that we place our trust in God and not in men. God will and does use people to help us, but ultimately our help comes from above.**

Thus says the Lord, “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the Lord, For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited.” **(Jeremiah 17:5-6)**

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, And whose hope is the Lord, For He shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green and will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit. **(Jeremiah 17:7-8)**

**7) OBEDIENCE (LET YOUR LIFE BE ONE OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD)**

**(Isaiah 1:19)**

As we obediently follow God’s plan for our life He will begin to open up doors that no man can close, and we will experience His blessings in every area of our life. As we walk in obedience, God will make us the head and not the tail and we shall be above only, and not be beneath. **(Deuteronomy 28:1-13)**

**WE CAN BE ASSURED THAT IF WE TRUST AND OBEY GOD, OUR LIFE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THIS WORLD AND BEAR MUCH FRUIT WHICH WILL LAST FOR ETERNITY.**

Jesus said, apart from me you can do nothing, but with God, all things are possible for those who believe. If we continue to walk in obedience as we put our trust in Him, we will fully complete His plan for our life.

**“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way.”**  
**(Psalm 37:23)**

**“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;”** **(Philippians 1:6)**

**WE MUST HOWEVER NEVER FORGET THAT WE ARE CALLED TO SERVE OTHERS**

# **SOME KEYS TO ANSWERED PRAYER**

**(The “ASK formula” based on a message by John Hagee)**

Jesus Himself said much about the importance of prayer and for the need to ask for those things that are needed in life. Asking God for His direction in our life and His help in meeting our needs demonstrates our dependence on and trust in Him. The Prophet Jeremiah wrote: “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD.” **(Jeremiah 17:7)**

Jesus said to His disciples, “And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” **(John 16:23-24)**

Jesus also said, “And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” **(John 14:13-14)**

The book of James also says, “You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.” **(James 4:2)**

As Christians we need to have a childlike dependency on God, with prayer being an integral part of our everyday life. I will now look at nine keys which are mentioned in the bible in relation to prayer.

## **NINE BIBLICAL KEYS THAT RELATE TO PRAYER AND WHICH HELP TO SEE OUR PRAYERS BEING ANSWERED:**

### **1) Pray to the Father in the Name of Jesus**

**(John 16:23-24) (John 15:16)**

As Believers we have power and authority when using the Name of Jesus. **(Mark 16:17-18) (Mark 14:14)**

### **2) Pray with praise and thanksgiving**

**(Psalm 100:4) (Matthew 21:15-16) (Philippians 4:6) (Psalm 34:1)**

### **3) Pray without any known sin in your life (1 Timothy 2:8)**

**4) We must pray BELIEVING that God will answer our prayers  
(Mark 11:23-24) (Matthew 21:21-22)**

- **Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God**  
(Romans 10:17)
- **The importance of meditating on and speaking out God's promises in His Word** (Joshua 1:8)
- **Not allowing the negative things of this world to undermine our faith** (Psalm 1:1-3) (Philippians 4:8) (Colossians 3:16)

**5) Pray with the right motive (For God's glory) That the Father may be glorified in the Son (John 14:13)  
(2 Corinthians 1:20)**

**6) Right relationships (walking in forgiveness towards others (Mark 11:25) (1 Peter 3:7) and seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33)) Jesus emphasised the importance of continually walking in love. (John 13:34)**

**7) Our prayers should be directed by the Holy Spirit  
(Romans 8:26-27)**

**8) Praying according to God's Word and will for our life  
(Isaiah 55:11) (Luke 1:38) (1 John 1:14)**

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” **(1 John 5:14-15)**

**9) The Prayer of agreement (Matthew 18:19)**

# ATTRIBUTES OF A HEALTHY CHURCH

## - UNITY

“BEHOLD, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the Lord commanded the blessing-Life forevermore.” (Psalm 133)

**“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”** (Acts 2:1-4)

“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.” (Acts 4:32-33)

**“But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.”** (Titus 3:9)

**The Apostle Paul said to the church in Corinth,** “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1 Corinthians 1:10)

## - A CHURCH WHICH KNOWS GOD’S GRACE

“Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But **after faith has come**, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:24-26)

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; **it is the gift of God**, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law **but by faith in Jesus Christ**, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be **justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law**; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.” (Galatians 2:16)

## - **A CHURCH WHICH PREACHES AND ACKNOWLEDGES THE POWER OF REPENTANCE**

TRUE REPENTANCE IS THE DOORWAY TO GOD'S GRACE (Repentance is the foundation of, and *precedes faith*) JESUS MUST BE BOTH OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR

TRUE REPENTANCE (which involves a choice of the *will* to turn from all those things which are wrong and to follow God's ways and plan for our life) LIBERATES a new believer from all of the shame, guilt and regrets from the past. This then enables them to experience the joy and peace, which comes from following God's plan for their life, even during the storms of life.

**A TRUE BELIEVER (WHO HAS REPENTED) WILL DEMONSTRATE THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN THEIR LIFE.** Love, Joy, peace, kindness and self-control will become more and more evident in the life of a true believer as they begin to grow in their faith.

## **GOD CALLS ALL OF US TO REPENT:**

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30)

**Jesus said to the Jews (Who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices),**

*"Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:2-3)*

Peter when preaching to the Jews said,

**"REPENT THEREFORE AND BE CONVERTED, THAT YOUR SINS MAY BE BLOTTED OUT, SO THAT TIMES OF REFRESHING MAY COME FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD."** (Acts 3:19)

**The Apostle Paul said,** "...I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, *repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* (Acts 20:20-21)

## - A CHURCH WHICH WALKS IN LOVE

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

“If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself,’ you do well;” (James 2:8)

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...” (1 Corinthians 13:1-8)

The Apostle John also wrote, “**And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave commandment.**” (1 John 3:23)

## - A CHURCH WHICH PREACHES THE WORD

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged word, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:105)

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in season, whose leaf also shall not wither and whatever he does shall prosper.” (Psalm 1:1-3)

## - A WORSHIPPING CHURCH

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:23-24)

**“PRAISE the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.** (Psalm 147:1)

“PRAISE the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise in the assembly of saints.” (Psalm 149:1)

**“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.”** (Psalm 150:6)

## - A PLACE WHERE THE HOLY SPIRIT IS FREE TO MOVE IN THE MEETINGS

- WE MUST ALWAYS MINISTER THE TRUTH IN LOVE
- GOD’S WORD MUST ALWAYS BE MINISTERED IN A LIFE GIVING WAY
- THE HOLY SPIRIT IS BOTH THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH (1 John 4:6, John 16:13) AND THE SPIRIT OF LIFE (Romans 8:2)

Jesus said, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63)

“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (2 Corinthians 3:5-6)

*“Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”* (2 Corinthians 3:17)

**“...This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts.** (Zechariah 4:6)

“You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” (Psalm 16:11)

**OUR CHURCH BELIEVES IN THE FULL OPERATION OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS (1 Corinthians 12:1-11)**

## **- A CHURCH THAT ACKNOWLEDGES THE IMPORTANCE OF ALL CHRISTIANS MEETING WITH OTHER BELIEVERS ON A REGULAR BASIS**

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:24-25)

“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” (Hebrews 4:12-13)

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)

“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” (Acts 5:42)

## **- A CHURCH THAT EMPHASISES THE IMPORTANCE OF ALL BELIEVERS REACHING OUT TO THE LOST WITH THE GOSPEL MESSAGE NOW**

**Jesus said**, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.” (John 4:35-36)

**“And he who wins souls is wise.”** (Proverbs 11:30a)

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:15a)

**Jesus said to His disciples,**

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15) “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;” (Matthew 28:19-20a)

**We all have a mission field and a part to play in reaping the Harvest.**

## **- A CHURCH THAT ENCOURAGES ALL CHRISTIANS TO FOLLOW GOD'S PLAN FOR THEIR LIFE**

This is the key to abundant life: **It is only in obeying the voice of the Lord, and following God's plan for our life, that we will experience the great joy and fulfilment that comes from doing His will, as we share in His sufferings.** (Philippians 3:7-10, James 1:2-3)

God wants all believers to have an intimate and loving relationship with Him. If we truly LOVE the Lord we will want to obey His will for our life.

**God wants our lives to be full of meaning and purpose, and for our lives to bear much fruit, which will last for all eternity.**

**God also wants to use our lives to impact this hurting and sinful world with the truth of the gospel message:**

"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)**

## **TRUE DISCIPLESHIP ALWAYS INVOLVES GIVING ONE'S LIFE AWAY AND LIVING FOR JESUS CHRIST**

**Jesus said,**

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. ***If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour.***" (John 12:24-26)

"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matthew 16:24-25)

"So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. **(Luke 14:33)**

**The apostle Paul said,**

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

# THE GOSPEL OF GRACE

Our salvation and right standing with God comes through repentance and Faith in Jesus Christ. The Ten Commandments simply reveal that none of us are righteous and that we all need to come to Jesus Christ to receive His righteousness and the gift of eternal life.

“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the **Law** and the **Prophets**, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” **(Romans 3:21-23)**

“For what does the **Scripture** say? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” **(Romans 4:3)**

“just as **David** also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ‘Blessed are those ***whose lawless deeds are forgiven***, and whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the Lord ***shall not impute sin***.’” **(Romans 4:6-8)**

**The apostle Paul said**, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.**” (Romans 10:1-4)

“Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith, but after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. **(Galatians 3:24-25)**

“**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.**” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

## **AS CHRISTIANS WE ARE TO WALK IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” **(Romans 8:14)**

“But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” **(Galatians 5:18)**

**The person who is led by the Spirit (A TRUE BELIEVER) will do what is right freely, not by the compulsion of the law. Thus he is not under the law’s bondage and condemnation. A true believer, who loves Jesus, will freely want to obey His commands and His plan for their life.**

## ***OUR CHRISTIAN WALK IS AN ONGOING LIFE OF FAITH (Walking in the Spirit)***

“...The just shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:17b)

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

**“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”** (Galatians 5:13-14)

“I say then: *Walk in the Spirit*, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16)

## **THE LORDS DAY (SABBATH DAY)**

Sabbath means rest. God gave the Sabbath day for our benefit. He made the Sabbath for man and not man for the Sabbath. We all need to spend one day a week resting with the Lord. **(This day should be our best day)**

The bible refers to three rests:

### **1) CREATION REST (Genesis 2:1-3)**

**God rested on the seventh day after finishing his work of creation. However His rest was interrupted by sin. This is why Jesus healed many on the Sabbath Day. Death and sickness resulted from sin entering the world.**

After healing a man on the Sabbath, Jesus answered the Jews who were seeking to kill Him, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.” (John 5:17)

**Jesus also said**, “I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.” (John 9:4)

### **2) COVENANT REST (Exodus 31:13, 16)**

**The Old Testament Sabbath was for the Jews only. It was given to them to bless them and to give them rest, however they made many other laws in relation to the Sabbath that it became more of a burden than a blessing.**

“Speak also to the children of Israel, saying ‘Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between ME and YOU throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.” (Exodus 31:13)

“Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.” (Exodus 31:16)

### 3) CALVARY REST (For all new testament believers)

**Jesus finished His work of redemption on the cross and entered His rest on the third day when He arose from the dead with the keys to Death and Hades. All believers enter into this Calvary rest when they are born again.**

**Jesus said,** “Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:28-29)

#### **JESUS IS OUR FINISHED REST**

**Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the first day of the week (A Sunday) and entered His rest.**

Unlike the Jews, the New Testament Church celebrated the day of the Lord on a Sunday, (Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:2, John 20:19-22, Acts 2:1, Rev. 1:10, Mark 16:9-11) but met regularly (even daily for some) (Acts 5:42) to have fellowship with one another. The Lord’s Day (Sabbath Day) is to **ble<sup>s</sup>s us** and to enable us to renew our strength (Spiritual and Physical) for the coming week’s work.

**For the Lord’s Day to be our best day, we should endeavour to make it a:**

- 1) HOLY DAY** (Our focus is on the Lord. We make a habit of being in fellowship with the Lord and other believers). Children will grow up in the ways of the Lord if they see their parents making the Lord’s Day a special day.
- 2) HEALTHY DAY** (We need to rest on this day. Sabbath means rest). We need to slow down and teach our children to experience tranquillity.
- 3) HAPPY DAY** (Love / Not Legalism) We need to laugh / love / converse with our families. The Lord’s Day needs to be a day of liberty to do His thing. Some may ask what should I do and not do on this day. **SIMPLY ASK THE LORD.** He loves intimacy with you. **IT’S HIS DAY** (“**So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.**” (Colossians 2:16-17)

**HOWEVER, WE MUST NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THREE THINGS:**

- i) **To walk in obedience and to be in a close relationship with the Lord.** We need to be ready to meet with Him today, should he come to rapture His church.
- ii) **To raise up and build up the next generation of Christians, to ensure that the church continues to grow, and**
- iii) **THAT WE HAVE AN URGENCY TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH THOSE WHO ARE LOST**

*May we all continue to love Jesus with all of our heart, soul and strength and to love each other as He loved us.*

# OVERCOMING FEAR

## 1) WHY DO WE FEAR

- i) Because we do not love others perfectly (**1 John 4:18**)
- ii) We are trying to control our own lives without the help of God
- iii) We are placing our trust in people rather than trusting in the goodness and faithfulness of God (**Jeremiah 17:5**) (**Isaiah 26:3-4**)
- iv) We perceive either people or situations as being threatening to us
- v) We are fearful because of our past failures (Relationships, work, studies and social situations)
- vi) We have received a lot of negative put downs in our life and as a result have developed a low self esteem and self image
- vii) We do not fully appreciate our position and security in Christ. (We are not fully aware of the promises of God which are contained in the Bible)
- viii) We have allowed the negativity of the world (News, violent films and computer games) to enter our minds and emotions and to fill us with fear and worry. The Bible says that we should only meditate on good things (**Philippians 4:8**)
- ix) We have been raised in an environment where people have been worriers and fearful
- x) We are not walking in a right relationship with God

## 2) FEAR IS THE OPPOSITE OF FAITH

- i) Without faith we cannot please God (**Hebrew 11:6**)
- ii) As a Believer God will never leave nor forsake us
- iii) Fear is doubting the trustworthiness and faithfulness of God
- iv) Fear is carrying a burden which God does not want us to carry
- v) God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (**2 Timothy 1:7**)
- vi) God has however given us a natural fear to help protect us when we are getting in danger. (i.e. Too close to a cliff)

### 3) WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF FEAR

- i) It diminishes the joy and fulfilment in our relationships  
(It robs us from experiencing intimacy in our relationships)
- ii) It limits what we can achieve in life
- iii) It prevents some people from entering into relationships
- iv) It stops many people from taking on new challenges
- v) It keeps some people in a state of mediocrity
- vi) It binds up many people into becoming people pleasers
- vii) It can activate a control spirit in our lives which prevents us from having healthy and enriching relationships
- viii) It increases the stress and anxiety levels in our life
- ix) It can cause physical and emotional sickness
- x) It restricts our growth in our Christian walk
- xi) It prevents us from experiencing the abundant life that Jesus spoke of
- xii) IT CAN ROB US OF OUR GOD GIVEN DESTINY

### 4) HOW DO WE OVERCOME FEAR

- i) We must put our past mistakes and failures behind us  
**(Philippians 3:12-14)**
- ii) We must only look at our past failures in terms of how to do things better in the future
- iii) A person is not a failure if he fails, but only if he fails and then gives up
- iv) We need to develop a childlike dependence on God in EVERY area of our life
- v) We need to place our trust in God and God alone. **(Jeremiah 17:7-8)**  
(Man will at times fail and disappoint us as we are all human) We must learn to build our life on the rock (The teachings of Jesus Christ)  
**(Matthew 7:24-25)**
- vi) We need to establish in our hearts that Jesus will never leave nor forsake us **(Hebrews 13:5a) (Romans 8:38-39)**

- vii) We need to choose to love (and forgive) and accept others (**Perfect** love casts out **all** fear)
- viii) We need to accept our own value and uniqueness to God (**Ephesians 2:10**) (**Psalm 139:13-18**) and be content with the way God has made us. (**1 Timothy 6:6**) God has a special and unique plan for each and every Believer's life
- ix) We need to meditate on God's promises in the Bible (**Joshua 1:8**) (**2 Corinthians 1:20**) so that they go from our head into our heart. Some of the many promises for Believers include:
- We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us
  - No weapon formed against us shall prosper
  - Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world
  - Our God shall supply all of our need according to His riches and glory in Christ Jesus
- x) We need to be people of FAITH. (**Hebrews 11:1**) We need to be prepared to move out of our comfort zone as we TRUST God every step of the way (**Psalm 37:23**) (**Proverbs 16:3**)
- xi) We must learn to continually cast all of our cares upon the Lord (**Matthew 11:28**) (**1Peter 5:6-7**)
- xii) We need to spend time in the presence of the Lord. There is safety and fullness of joy in His presence. (**Psalm 16:11**) (**Psalm 91**) As we spend time with Him we also become more bolder in our faith (**Acts 4:13**)
- xiii) As a Christian there should be no fear even of death, for to die is to be in the presence of the Lord for evermore. HALLELUJAH
- xiv) THERE IS NO SAFER AND MORE FULFILLING PLACE THAN BEING IN THE CENTRE OF GOD'S WILL (PLAN) FOR OUR LIFE

# **SOME KEYS TO OVERCOMING ANGER**

The Bible says much about the importance of having self control, speaking words of life and being content with what God gives us. The Bible also says much about the damaging consequences of allowing anger into our life.

**The Apostle Paul wrote**, “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!” (**Galatians 5:14-15**)

**The Book of Proverbs also makes many references to the area of anger and the importance of not allowing it into our lives.**

“Better is a dry morsel with quietness than a house full of feasting with strife” (**Proverbs 17:1**)

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (**Proverbs 15:1**)

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.” (**Proverbs 18:21**)

“Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, Lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.” (**Proverbs 22:24-25**)

“The beginning of strife is like releasing water; Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts.” (**Proverbs 17:14**)

“Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman.” (**Proverbs 21:9**)

**The Bible also makes many references to the importance of being content and the benefits of being a peace maker who speaks words of life**

“Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.” (**Proverbs 16:24**)

“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.” (**Proverbs 16:32**)

“Now godliness with contentment is great gain.” (**1 Timothy 6:6**)

## 1) Why is anger so destructive

- i) It damages friendships and creates strife in families
- ii) It robs us from having peace in our lives
- iii) Suppressed anger often leads to depression
- iv) It negatively affects our health and emotions
- v) It is a barrier to us experiencing abundant life (**John 10:10**)
- vi) It hinders our walk with God (We need to be led by the Spirit) (**Romans 8:14**)
- vii) Our anger can be a barrier to others coming to know Jesus

## 2) Some causes of anger

- i) Past put downs (REJECTION)
- ii) *Unfair* (even perceived) *treatment* in our lives (Injustices in our life)
- iii) **Broken relationships** (The ten commandments relate to our relationship with God and with others) God is a God of relationships and family
- iv) Betrayal by friends (*Putting your trust in man and not God*) (**Psalms 84:5**)
- v) Being involved in co-dependent or controlling relationships (We are all unique)
- vi) Having poor boundaries in your life. Allowing people to take advantage of you
- vii) **INABILITY TO PUT THE PAST BEHIND** (Our Past Mistakes still trouble us) (**Philippians 3:12-14**)
- viii) Unforgiveness
- ix) Internalising problems (We need to verbalise our struggles with people who we can trust and give our problems to Jesus) (**1 Peter 5:7**)
- x) Unrealistic expectations in life and about others. (We are all human)
- xi) A failure to develop good friendships. He who is friendly has many friends
- xii) Not walking in the ways of God. (Pain is eventually inevitable when we continually disobey God) (Betrayal and sexual abuse is now common in this world)
- xiii) Constantly comparing yourself with others

### 3) How can we deal with anger and lead a healthy life

- i) Forgive others and yourself quickly. (**Mark 11:25**) (Face to Face is always the best if possible)
- ii) For long term hurts and offenses, where maybe even the person involved has died, write down the names and offenses. Then forgive the people concerned and speak / pray a blessing over their lives. Then destroy the paper
- iii) Be yourself. Do not try and be someone you are not. BE REAL
- iv) God has made you uniquely different to every other person who has ever lived (**Psalm 139:13-18**) (**Ephesians 2:10**) (**Jeremiah 29:11**)
- v) Don't compare yourself with others. There will always be others that are more gifted in certain areas than we are or more well off than us
- vi) Give generously of yourself. Love and build up others (**John 15:12-13**)
- vii) Live one day at a time. (**Matthew 6:25-34**) Let God be in control of your life and do not worry about the future. Commit your future to the Lord (**Proverbs 16:3**)
- viii) Smell the roses and enjoy the simple things in life (Never get too busy)
- ix) **PUT YOUR PAST FAILURES AND MISTAKES BEHIND YOU ONCE AND FOR ALL** (**Isaiah 43:18**)
- x) Look to develop and invest time in making friendships with others (**Ecclesiastes 4:7-12**)
- xi) Having **good** friendships is one key to leading a fulfilled life
- xii) Don't set unrealistic expectations on others. (Give people the freedom to grow and to be themselves)
- xiii) Be thankful for what you have. Find contentment in the simple things in life
- xiv) **Cast your cares upon the Lord. (Trust God in every situation)**
- xv) Seek God's affirmation. Make loving Jesus Christ always your first priority. (**Psalm 37:4**) (**Matthew 6:33**) He will never leave nor forsake you. (**Hebrews 13:5a**)
- xvi) Look always for the good points in others
- xvii) Seek to build up and encourage others whenever possible (**Philippians 2:3-4**)
- xviii) We need to be careful not to be critical and judgemental of others
- xix)** Set goals in your life. (Without a vision people perish) (**Proverbs 29:18**)

**4) SEEK TO FIND, FOLLOW AND COMPLETE “GOD’S” PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE. GOD HAS A UNIQUE PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE. GOD’S WAYS ARE HIGHER THAN OUR WAYS. (Isaiah 55:8-9)**

For Christians, true fulfilment and the abundant life that Jesus spoke of, (still with challenges), only comes as we seek to be in the Centre of God’s will or plan for our life.

King Solomon was the richest man in the world and had over 1000 wives and concubines, but as he grew older in life, his wives began to influence him to worship other idols so that his heart began to depart from loving the Lord (1 Kings 11:4)

At the end of his life, after realising the futility of a life pursuing the things of this world, King Solomon came back to the Lord and said these words,

“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, I have no pleasure in them.” (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

A LIFE PURSUING THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD WITHOUT HAVING A CLOSE AND INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST, WILL ULTIMATELY LEAD TO A LIFE OF FRUSTRATION, STRESS AND AT TIMES AGITATION AND ANGER.

**5) DELIGHT YOURSELF ALSO IN THE LORD (Be filled with His love) AND HE SHALL GIVE YOU THE DESIRES OF YOUR HEART (PSALM 37:4)**

God is able to replace our hearts of stone with a heart of flesh. Jesus came to heal the broken hearted. When we confess our sins and repent and turn to Jesus Christ and give Him all of our life, we receive the Holy Spirit and become a new creation in Christ. God’s love is now shed abroad in our heart.

AS WE TURN OUR EYES UPON JESUS, THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD WILL GROW STRANGELY DIM IN THE LIGHT OF HIS GLORY AND GRACE

*The closer we get to Jesus, the more we abide in Him, (John 15:4-5) the more we delight in being in His presence, the more His love begins to flow through our lives. It is His love flowing through us as Believers, which enables us to continually forgive others and to overcome any anger problem that we may have. We must continually be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)*

# THE IMPORTANCE OF WALKING IN FORGIVENESS

## 1) Why is it so important?

- i) It releases us to love others properly (again)
- ii) It is a key step to bringing healing into our lives
- iii) It helps us to move on in life when we have been hurt and rejected by others
- iv) It helps to restore broken relationships
- v) It is the key to maintaining and keeping healthy relationships

**LIFE IS ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS (Work, family, clubs)**

## 2) Jesus stressed the importance of forgiveness. The heart of God is love and reconciliation. (John 3:16) **Walking in unforgiveness has the following consequences:**

- i) It hinders our prayer life (**Mark 11:22-26**) and blocks the flow of Kingdom Power in our lives
- ii) It opens people up to torment. (Lack of peace in their lives) (**Matthew 18:21-35**) *If God is prepared to forgive us totally*, how can we then be justified in holding unforgiveness to others
- iii) It will impact our health (Both emotionally and physically)
- iv) It can become a barrier to us and others entering heaven (Bitterness prevents many from turning to God and a root of bitterness defiles many) (**Mark 11:25-26**) (**Hebrew 12:15**)

### 3) How do we forgive others?

- i) It is a choice to love and forgive others. We must simply choose to love people as Jesus commanded us to. **(John 13:34)** The Apostle Paul also emphasised the importance of loving others. **(1 Corinthians Chapter 13)**
- ii) We need to humble ourselves (Even if we were in the right) God knew that we were sinners but He sent His Son Jesus into this world to reconcile us back to Himself. “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” **(Romans 5:8)** When we were still sinners Christ died for us. God is our example of what forgiveness is. He initiated the reconciliation process.
- iii) If possible we need to communicate with the person who has hurt or offended us
- iv) If a person who has hurt us is no longer alive, we can write a letter expressing our forgiveness to that person and then thank God for their life before destroying the letter. This process helps us to forgive and release those people who have hurt us in the past but who are no longer alive.
- v) We choose to no longer bring up and talk about past offences. “*He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends*” **(Proverbs 17:9)**
- vi) We need God’s help to forgive others. We need to continually walk in the Spirit. **(Romans 8:14)** We need to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. **(Ephesians 5:18) (Galatians 5:22-23)**

4) Sometimes the hardest person to forgive is our self. We must not look back at our past failures with regrets, but only as a point of reference to help us to improve our future choices and decisions. (Philippians 3:12-14)

5) God’s love and forgiveness is complete. God forgives totally. **(Psalm 103:3, 12)** Forgiveness and salvation is a free gift from God. **(Romans 6:23) (Ephesians 2:8-9)**

# TOUCHING HEAVEN, CHANGING EARTH

**Jesus said**, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (*John 4:23-24*)

## **THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF OUR HEART IS MOST IMPORTANT**

In this world many people are struggling in life in many ways. The gospel is good news for all those who hear it. As Christians it is imperative that our hearts are always prepared to share a word in season and out of season. This final teaching contains many points which relate to the subject of revival and seeing the gospel message transforming our cities and nation.

In a world full of temptations, cares and distractions, as Christians we must set our mind on things above (*Colossians 3:1-2*) and on storing up for ourselves treasures in Heaven. (*Matthew 6:19-21*) The Psalmist who wrote Psalm 119 gives us some keys to experiencing revival in our life,

“Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it.

Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and **not to covetousness**. Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way. Establish Your word to Your servant, who is devoted to fearing You.” (*Psalms 119:33-38*)

**HAVING A WHOLE HEARTED DESIRE FOR THE THINGS OF GOD AND A HEALTHY FEAR OF THE LORD WILL HELP US NOT TO BE SIDETRACKED BY THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD. CONTINUALLY SETTING OUR AFFECTIONS ON THINGS ABOVE AND MEDITATING ON THE WORD OF GOD WILL HELP US TO EXPERIENCE REVIVAL IN OUR OWN HEARTS AND LIVES.**

## **I WILL NOW CONCLUDE THIS DISCIPLESHIP MANUEL WITH SOME THOUGHTS ON HOW WE CAN BECOME THE TYPE OF BELIEVER THROUGH WHOM GOD COULD BRING REVIVAL TO OUR FAMILIES, WORKPLACE, CITIES AND NATION**

- Revival begins in the hearts of Christians
- Jesus must always be our first love (**Mark 12:30**) (**Matthew 6:33**)
- Our love for Jesus will change the way we see the lost (**John 4:35**) (**Luke 10:2**)
- We will see the lost with His compassion (**Matthew 9:36**)
- Ministry must never become works or program based (**Revelation 2:1-5**)
- Our lives must be balanced (naturally spiritual and spiritually natural) In short we must have a genuine love for all people (**1 Corinthians 13:1-8**)
- As we seek the Lord with all our heart He will give us the desires of our heart (**Psalms 37:4**)
- We must always abide in the vine. (**John 15:4-5**) All effective ministry only comes out of an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. Apart from Him we can do nothing, but with Him all things are possible.
- Unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it; ...” (**Psalms 127:1**)
- We must continually minister in the power of the Holy Spirit (**Zechariah 4:6**) (**1 Corinthians 2:3-5**) (**1 Thessalonians 1:5**)
- The Holy Spirit is the evangelist and we are just the vessels through whom He minister to others. Jesus Himself said, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” (**John 6:63**)
- Jesus ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit. (**Luke 4:14-15**) (**Acts 10:38**)
- God births in us a desire to reach the lost when we spend time with Him
- God is looking for those who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth. (**True worshipers**)

## **THE THREE OBSTACLES TO REVIVAL**

- Pride** (Spiritual Pride) All the glory must always go to God
- Legalism** (Ministering out of a spirit of condemnation)
- Witchcraft** (Control)

## **THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF OUR PREPARATION FOR PREACHING IS PREPARING OUR HEART**

- i) How we worship and pray in private is how we worship in public
- ii) A good anointed preacher will always point people to Jesus (**John 15:26**)
- iii) We must always preach the gospel with Grace and truth (**John 1:14-17**)
- iv) We must always ensure that we never preach in a condemning way (**John 3:17**) (**2 Corinthians 3:4-8**) The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life
- v) It is the goodness of God which leads people to repentance (**Romans 2:4**)
- vi) Only the Holy Spirit can convict a person of their need of a Saviour (**John 16:7-11**)
- vii) The Apostle Paul said to the young pastor Timothy, “You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” (**2 Timothy 2:1**)
- viii) Jesus was full of grace and truth (**John 1:14**) and always ministered Spirit filled words of life (**John 6:63**)
- ix) Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (**2 Corinthians 3:17**)
- x) We must never quench the Spirit. The Apostle Paul wrote, “Do not quench the Spirit.” (**1 Thessalonians 5:19**)

***INTELLECTUAL DEBATES WILL NEVER SEE ANYONE COME TO CHRIST. IT IS ONLY AS WE SHARE THE GOSPEL IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THAT HEARTS BECOME OPEN TO RECIEVING CHRIST. THE APOSTLE PAUL WROTE,***

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” (**Romans 1:16**)

**WE MUST SIMPLY CONSISTENTLY PREACH CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED (1 Corinthians 1:18-25) (1 Corinthians 2:1-2) IN DOING THIS MANY WILL COME TO KNOW CHRIST**

“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (**Galatians 6:14**)

**In conclusion, my prayer is simply this, that God will anoint and empower every believer to win many souls for Christ**

The Bible says that “He who wins souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30)

# THE GREATEST IS LOVE

**The Apostle Paul wrote**, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.” **(1 Cor. 13:1-3)**

**“Pursue love**, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.” **(1 Corinthians 14:1)**

**Jesus said**, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **By this** all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” **(John 13:34-35)**

## **GENUINE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER IS THE KEY TO UNITY AND KINGDOM POWER**

- *God loves every person in the world (John 3:16)*
- *Jesus has compassion for the lost, the afflicted and sick*

“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” **(Matthew 9:35-36)**

<b>WE ALSO NEED TO HAVE A GENUINE LOVE FOR OTHERS</b>
---

## **UNITY BRINGS GOD’S BLESSINGS**

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! ... It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing – Life forevermore.” **(Psalm 133:1 &3)**

## **THE FIRST CHURCH WAS UNIFIED AND MOVED IN GREAT POWER**

“And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch.” (Acts 5:12)

### **JESUS HIMSELF SAID THAT A DIVIDED HOUSE WOULD FALL. (Unity is a key to establishing strong churches)**

**Jesus said**, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls.” (Luke 11:17)

## **TRUE AGAPE LOVE HAS THE FOLLOWING ATTRIBUTES:**

### **1) IT IS ALSO PRACTICAL**

“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.

And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked, for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles’ feet; and they **distributed to each as anyone had need.**” (Acts 4:32-35)

### **2) IT IS GENUINE**

“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...”  
(1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

### **3) IT DEMONSTRATES FORGIVENESS**

“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:31-32)

#### **4) IT IS OTHERS FOCUSED**

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” **(Philippians 2:3-4) AND**

#### **5) IT IS SACRIFICIAL (Like Jesus we must choose to lay down our life for others)**

**Jesus said**, “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” **(Matthew 20:26-28)**

**IT IS ONLY IN LAYING DOWN OUR LIFE FOR OTHERS (BEING A GENUINE DISCIPLE) THAT OUR LIVES WILL BEAR MUCH ETERNAL FRUIT.**

**If we do not make a committed choice each day of our life to follow God’s plan for our life, we will be more easily sidetracked by the cares, riches, temptations and pleasures of this life, and bring no or little fruit to maturity in our life here on earth.** (Luke 8:14)

**Jesus said**, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.” **(John 12:24)**

<p><b>ANY CHRISTIAN WHO IS <u>DEVOTED</u> TO SERVING GOD AND <u>COMMITTED TO LOVING OTHERS</u> WILL DO GREAT AND MIGHTY THINGS FOR GOD’S KINGDOM</b></p>
--

**WE ALL HAVE THE ABILITY AS BELIEVERS TO LOVE OTHERS UNCONDITIONALLY**

“Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” **(Romans 5:5)**

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control...” **(Galatians 5:22-23)**

## WHAT CAN STOP THIS LOVE FROM FLOWING OUT OF BELIEVERS

### 1) *A LACK OF INTIMACY WITH JESUS*

- i) We must continually abide in His love. (*John 15:4-5*)
- ii) We need to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit (*Ephesians 5:17-18*)
- iii) We need to lead a lifestyle of worship (*John 4:23-24*) and prayer (involving God in all areas of our life)

### 2) *OUR ATTITUDES (Walking in the flesh)*

- i) Being critical or judgemental of others (*Matthew 7:1-5*)
- ii) Being envious or jealous of others (*James 3:14-16*)
- iii) Having selfish ambition (*Philippians 2:3*)
- iv) Having pride in our life (*Colossians 3:12 & 4:6*)

### 3) *HAVING A FEAR OF MAN (A fear of being rejected)*

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.”  
(1 John 4:18)

## CONCLUSION

- Where there is love and unity God's power can be seen (*Acts 4:32-33*)
- We all need to choose to love others (*1 John 4:7 & 11*)
- Jesus commanded us to love one another (*John 13:34*)
- If we do not abide in Christ, our lives will bear no fruit (*John 15:4-5*)
- When we have intimacy with Jesus, we begin to have His compassion for the lost and hurting in this world (*Psalms 37:4*)
- **If we have His compassion and love for others, our lives will make a great difference in this world and help many to come to Christ to receive the gift of eternal life. Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.” (John 14:12)**
- **FILLED WITH CHRIST'S LOVE AND COMPASSION, OUR LIVES HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO MAKE A GREAT DIFFERENCE IN THIS WORLD AS WE BRING A MESSAGE OF HOPE TO A LOST AND DYING WORLD**

# APPENDIX (DOCTRINAL BELIEFS)

- i) **THE BIBLE:** We believe that the Holy Bible, and only the Bible, is 100% the Word of God. It, alone, is the final authority in determining all doctrinal truths.

**“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

(Proverbs 30:5), (Psalm 1), (Psalm 119:105)

- ii) **(THE TRINITY (The Eternal Godhead):** WE BELIEVE in the unity of the true and living God who is the ETERNAL, self-existent one, who has revealed himself as ONE BEING in THREE PERSONS – *THE FATHER, THE SON (Jesus) AND THE HOLY SPIRIT*, and Who is the Creator and preserver of things visible and invisible. **(Deuteronomy 6:4, Mark 12:29, Matthew 28:19, Genesis 1:1, Psalm 86:9-10, Isaiah 43:10-11, John 1:1-3)**

- iii) **THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:** WE BELIEVE in the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity (Triune Godhead), who was and is the eternal Son of God; that he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary. (Jesus Christ was conceived by God the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary’s womb) On earth He was 100% God and 100% man. **(Isaiah 7:14), (Matthew 1:23)**

WE BELIEVE in His sinless life (He was the only man to ever live a sinless life) **(Heb. 7:26, 1 Peter 2:22, 2 Corinthians 5:21)**, *miraculous ministry (Acts 2:22, Acts 10:38)*, substitutionary atoning death **(Hebrews 9:12)**, *bodily resurrection (Luke 24:39, 1 Corinthians 15:4)*, glorious ascension **(Acts 1:9)** and *abiding intercession (Hebrews 7:25)*.

- iv) **THE HOLY SPIRIT:** WE BELIEVE in the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity (Triune Godhead), who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is ever present and active in the work of convicting **(John 16:7-11)** and regenerating the sinner, and sanctifying and guiding **(Romans 8:14)** the believer into all truth **(John 14:26, John 16:13)**. **(Sanctification is the ongoing process of yielding to God in order to become more and more like Christ) (Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Romans 8:29, 1 Thessalonians 5:23)**

- v) **THE ATONEMENT:** WE BELIEVE that God's answer to man's sinful state is in the death of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, whose sufferings and shed blood have made full atonement for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual, and that *there is no other ground for salvation*. (2 Cor. 5:18-21, Galatians 1:4, Colossians 1:20, Romans 5:9, Ephesians 1:7, Coloss. 1:14, Heb. 9:25-28, 1 Peter 1:18-20, 1 John 1:7)

The blood that Jesus Christ shed on the cross of Calvary was sinless and is 100% sufficient to forgive man of all sins. Jesus allowed Himself to be punished for the sins we had committed, giving all mankind the opportunity of being free from the penalty of sin, (which is death). Each person after reaching an age of reasoning must however make a response of repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ to receive God's forgiveness and gift of eternal life. (John 1:29, Rev. 1:5 & 5:9)

- vi) **SALVATION OF MAN:** WE BELIEVE salvation is received through **repentance** toward God and **faith** in the Lord Jesus Christ. This experience is also known as the new birth {Being Born Again} (Jn 3:3) and is an *instantaneous* and complete operation of the Holy Spirit, whereupon the *believing* sinner is regenerated, justified, and *adopted* into the family of God, and becomes a *new creation* in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17) and *an heir of eternal life*. (Titus 2:11, Titus 3:5-7, 1 Peter 1:23)

*REPENTANCE is a commitment to turn from sin in every area of our lives and to follow Christ. (Acts 2:38, Acts 3:19)*

*SALVATION is a gift from God and cannot be earned. It is not based on our good works or human efforts. "For by grace you have been saved through faith (in Jesus Christ and His death burial and resurrection), and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

- vii) **THE DEVIL:** WE BELIEVE in the personality of the devil, who, by his influence, brought about the downfall of man, and now seeks to destroy the faith of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Gen 3:1-15, Matt. 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13, James 4:7, John 13:2, 2 Peter 5:8, John 13:2)
- viii) **THE FALL OF MAN:** WE BELIEVE that man was created by God by a specific immediate act and in His image and likeness, morally upright and perfect, *but fell by voluntary transgression*. Consequently, all men are separated from original righteousness, being depraved and without spiritual life. (Genesis 1:26-28, Genesis 3:1-7, Rom. 5:12-21)

ix) **THE CHURCH:** The church is the *body of Christ*, the habitation of God, through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfilment of her great commission. *Each believer*, born of the Spirit, is an *integral part* of the *general assembly and church* of the first-born, which are written in heaven. (**Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 2:19-22, Hebrews 12:23**)

x) **WATER BAPTISM:** WE BELIEVE that baptism, by single *immersion*, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is required of all who have repented and believed in Christ as *Saviour* and *Lord*, and that it is symbolic of our identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. Following believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, the new convert is commanded by the Word of God to be water baptized by full immersion.

The Christian Water Baptism is an outward act of obedience by which a *believer* confesses and confirms, the *inward righteousness* he already enjoys in his heart through faith in Christ's atoning death and resurrection, by openly acknowledging their allegiance to Christ. (**Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 10:47-48, Acts 2:38-39, Romans 6:4-5, Coloss. 2:12, Mark 16:16**)

xi) **THE LORD'S SUPPER:** WE BELIEVE the Lord's supper, consisting of the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine, is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (**2 Peter 1:4**), and a memorial of His sufferings and death (**1 Corinthians 11:26**), and is enjoined upon all believers "until He comes". (**Luke 22:14-20, Matthew 26:26-28, Acts 20:7**)

The Lord's Supper is a unique time of communion in the presence of God when the elements of bread and wine (representing the broken body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ), are taken in remembrance of His sacrifice on the cross for us. (**1 Corinthians 11:23-25**)

xii) **SANCTIFICATION:** Sanctification is an act of *separation* from that which is *evil*, and of *dedication unto God*. WE BELIEVE it is the glorious provision for *every* believer in Christ to be made *pure in heart* and wholly sanctified, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, by the Blood of Jesus and the Word of God. (**1 Thessalonians 5:23-24**)

(**John 17:15-19, Acts 15:8-9, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, Hebrews 2:11, Hebrews 10:16-19, Romans 12:1-2**)

- xiii) **THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT:** WE BELIEVE that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the bestowing of the believer with power *to be an effective witness for Christ*. This experience is **distinct** from, and **subsequent** to, the new birth; *is received by faith*, and is accompanied by the manifestation of *speaking in tongues* as the spirit gives utterance, as the initial evidence. (**Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4-5, Acts 1:8, Joel 2:28-29, Acts 2:1-4, Acts 2:17-18, Mark 16:17 Acts 8:15-19, Acts 11:14-17, Acts 19:1-7, Matthew 3:11**)

Given at Pentecost, it was the promise of the Father, sent by Jesus after His ascension, to empower the Church to preach the gospel throughout the whole earth, to edify believers (**1 Corinthians 14:4**), to enhance the prayer life of believers and as a sign to unbelievers. (**1 Cor. 14:22**)

- xiv) **GIFTS:** WE BELIEVE in the **present day** operation of the **nine** *supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit*, as recorded in 1 Corinthians 12. (*The word of wisdom, The word of knowledge, The gift of faith, Gifts of healing, The working of miracles, Prophecy, Discerning of spirits, Different kinds of tongues and Interpretation of tongues*). We also believe in the **five** ministry gifts of Christ, as recorded in Ephesians 4:11-13. (*Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers*)

OTHER GIFTS FROM THE FATHER INCLUDE: Prophecy, Exhortation, Giving, Leadership, Mercy, Ministry and the gift of Teaching (Regardless of Public Office) (**Romans 12:3-8**) Helps and Administrations are two other gifts. (**1 Corinthians 12:28**) WE MUST HOWEVER NEVER FORGET THAT WHATEVER WE DO IN LIFE MUST BE DONE IN LOVE. (**The Apostle Paul emphasised this in chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians**) (See also Romans 12:9-21)

- xv) **DIVINE HEALING:** In accordance with the teachings of the Scriptures, we trust our heavenly Father to protect and heal our bodies from sickness and disease. (**Isaiah 53:5**) WE BELIEVE that divine healing for the body, as with all *redemptive blessings of God*, has been provided for us by the *atoning death and victorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ*; it is the privilege of *all* believers and it is appropriated by faith in our heavenly Father's unfailing promises. (**Exodus 15:26, Matthew 8:16-17, Psalm 103:3, 1 Peter 2:24, James 5:14-15, Mark 16:17-18, John 14:12-14**)

- xvi) **THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST:** WE BELIEVE in the premillennial, imminent and personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ to gather his people unto Himself. Having this glorious hope and earnest expectation, we purify ourselves, even as He is pure, so that we may be ready to meet Him when He comes. (**1 Thessalonians 4:15-18**) *Jesus Christ will physically and visibly return to earth a second time to establish His Kingdom. This will occur at a date undisclosed by the Scriptures.* (**Matthew 24:36**)

**THE RAPTURE (PROPHECY):** There are several different theological views on the timing of the rapture of true believers.

**The Premillennial midtribulation view:** sees all believers being “raptured” after 42 months (1,260 days) of the 7-year Great Tribulation, with the Rapture and Second Coming being separate events.

**The Premillennial Prewrath Rapture View:** sees all believers being “raptured” during the Great Tribulation, but prior to the “day of God’s wrath” (**Revelation 6:17**), with the Rapture and Second Coming being separate events. This view states that true believers will be raptured prior to the “day of God’s wrath”, as believers have not been appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, (**1 Thessalonians 5:9**)

If Chapter 24 of Matthew is to be interpreted in light of Chapter six of Revelations, the rapture could take place Mid-Tribulation (**Matthew 24:31**) after the cosmic disturbances mentioned both in **Rev. 6:12** and **Matt. 24:29**, just prior to the great day of His wrath. (**Revelation 6:17**)

**The Dispensational Interpretation, (Pre-Tribulation),** sees the rapture of all true believers (**Revelation 4:1**) taking place prior to the Anti-Christ rising to power. *This interpretation* sees him as the Conqueror in the First Seal, and the Great Tribulation commencing with the first seal. (**Revelation 6:1**)

**The Premillennial Pretribulation Partial Rapture View:** sees only some believers being “Raptured” before the Great Tribulation. Those who are “unready” must be martyred to verify their faith, with the Rapture and the Second Coming being separate events.

**The Premillennial Posttribulation View:** sees all believers being “Raptured” at the end of the Great Tribulation and that the Rapture and the Second coming are the same event.

There are also other theological views on the timing of the rapture and which deal with the “last things” (Eschatology)

*HOWEVER, for those who are faithful in their Christian walk, the Bible promises that they will be kept from the hour of trial, which shall come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth.* (**Revelation 3:10**)

**WE MUST SIMPLY BE READY TO MEET THE LORD AT ANY TIME.**

xvii) **THE MILLENNIUM:** WE BELIEVE in the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to set up His millennial reign on this earth. (**Zechariah 14:5, Daniel 7:22, Revelation 5:9-10, Ps. 96:10-13, Revelation 20:1-10**)

xviii) **THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED:** WE BELIEVE in the everlasting punishment of the wicked (in the sense of eternal torment) who wilfully reject and despise the love of God, manifested in the great sacrifice of his only Son upon the cross for their salvation. (**Romans 6:23, Matthew 25:46, Matthew 13:49-50, Luke 12:47-48, 2 Thess. 1:8-9, Revelation 20:11-15**). We believe that the devil and his angels and whosoever is not found written in the book of life shall be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake, which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (**Revelation 19:20, Revelation 20:10-15**)

xix) **THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH:** “We according to His promise look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness” (**2 Peter 3:13, Revelation Chapters 21 and 22**.)

xx) **RESURRECTION:** WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ was physically resurrected from the dead in a glorified body three days after His death on the cross. One day all believers who have died in Christ, will also be physically resurrected in their glorified bodies and will be judged to determine their eternal rewards in heaven, where they will dwell with God forever. (**Luke 24:36-40, John 21:4, 1 Corinthians 15:42, 44, John 20:26-28, Luke 24:15-18**)

The final resurrection at the close of the millennium will be mainly for those who have rejected Christ, and they will be judged for what they did while in the body. Following this judgment, those who rejected Christ will be consigned to the lake of fire (spirit, soul and body). (**Revelation 20:13-14**)

Two categories of people in the final resurrection, who will come forth to the resurrection of life and not condemnation, are people such as the queen of the South (Sheba) and the men of Nineveh referred to by Jesus, who were not granted a revelation of Christ’s atoning sacrifice in which they could trust for salvation, (Luke 11:31-32) and the righteous who died during Christ’s millennial reign on earth. (One of the purposes of Christ’s return is for the national salvation of Israel.)

xxi) **CREATION:** WE BELIEVE that the heavens and earth and all original life forms, including man, were made by the specific immediate creative acts of God as described in the account of origins presented in Genesis, and that all biological changes which have occurred since creation are limited to variation within each species.