

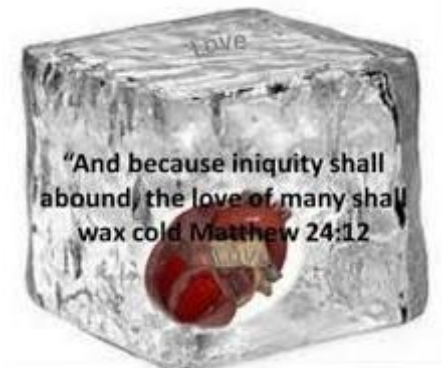
ABIDING IN CHRIST – A KEY TO LIVING A FRUITFUL CHRISTIAN LIFE



- We are now living in increasingly lawless times where we are seeing the love of many growing cold

Jesus Himself said in relation to the times that we are now living in;

“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)



- Jesus emphasised the importance of making our relationship with Him our greatest priority in life.

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)



- Our ability to love others and to realise our full potential in life greatly depends on us maintaining an intimate walk with the Lord
- Jesus continually emphasised the importance of having a genuine love for others

Jesus said,

“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” **(John 15:12-13)**



- How intimate we are in our walk with the Lord is greatly reflected in the degree to which we love others unconditionally

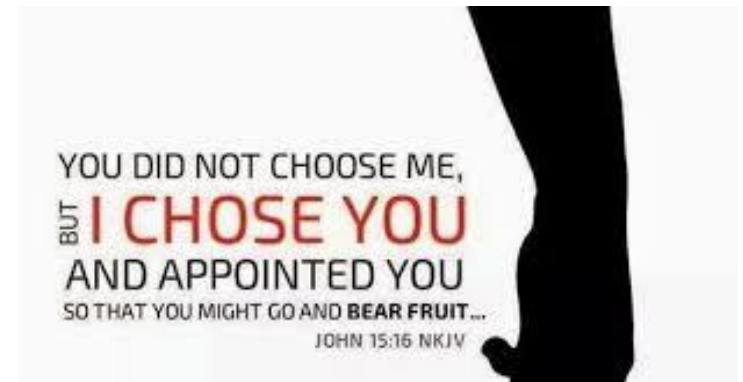


- **The more intimate we are in our walk with the Lord, the more we will instinctively love others**

The Apostle John wrote, “And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.” (1 John 4:16)

- God's desire is that our lives would bear much eternal fruit and that all that He has planned for our life would come to pass in our lives.

Jesus Himself made this very clear when He 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)



- **Developing Christlike character and learning to love others unconditionally comes from maintaining an abiding relationship with Christ**

We see Jesus again emphasising the importance of spending quality time in His presence in the gospel of Luke,



“Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word.” (Luke 10:38-39)

“But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.” And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”
(Luke 10:40-42)



- It is the way that we live our life and love others that will have the greatest impact on other people



Jesus Himself said,

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

(Matthew 5:16)



Jesus also said,

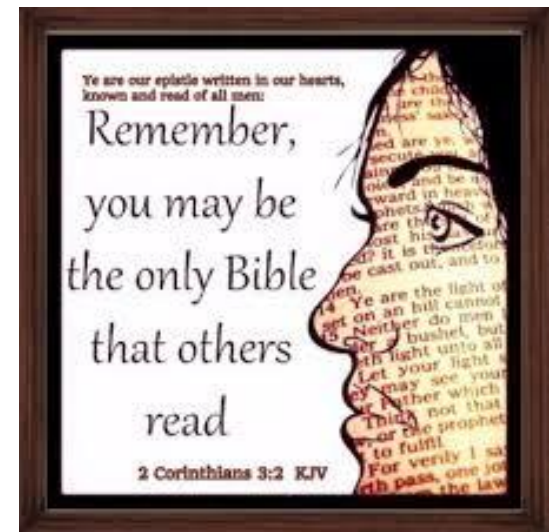
“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)



- If we do not continually spend quality time with God, Who is love, invariably the ways of the world and the people around us will begin to negatively affect the way that we live our life

- For this reason we need to ensure that we continually remain intimate in our walk with the Lord so that our lives will reflect the fruit of the Spirit and make a positive impact on the lives of others

**The Apostle Paul wrote, “You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;”
(2 Corinthians 3:2)**



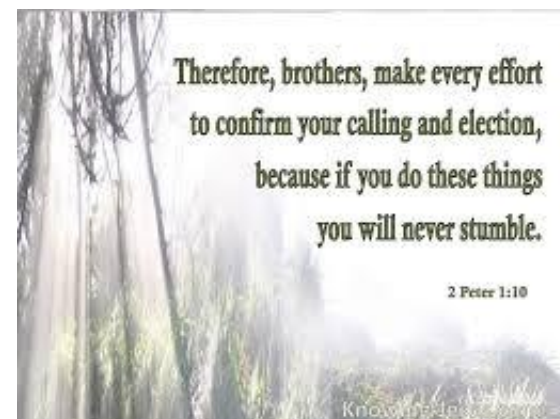
- This is why the Apostle Peter emphasised the importance of having fruitful growth in our faith.

The Apostle Peter wrote,

“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” **(2 Peter 1:5-8)**



“For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.” **(2 Peter 1:9-10)**

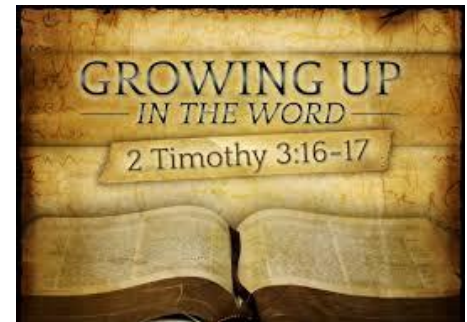


- Growing in our faith depends greatly on us spending quality time with the LORD and in God's word, (the bible)

- In chapter 3 of 2 Timothy we see two things that are very relevant to us today.

- I. The Apostle Paul *describing the state of the world in the times* that we are now living in (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

and



- II. The Apostle Paul emphasising to the young pastor Timothy *the importance of spending quality time in the word of God* to remain strong in his faith. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

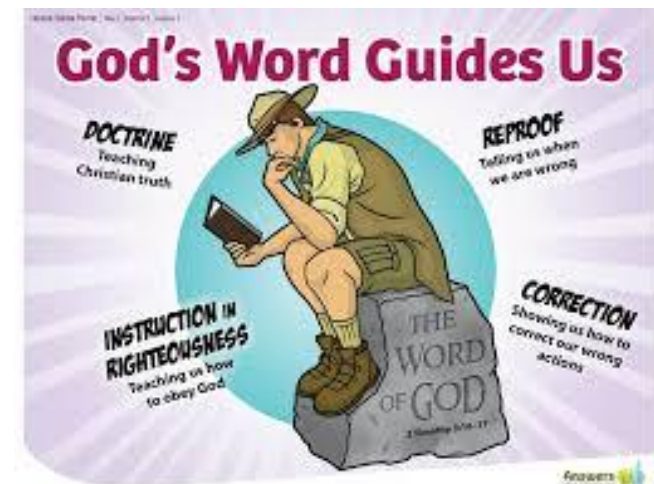
Firstly, The Apostle Paul wrote,

“But know this, that in the last days
perilous times will come: For men
will be lovers of themselves, lovers
of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers,
disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self
control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors,
headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather
than lovers of God, having a form of godliness
but denying its power. And from such
people turn away!” **(2 Timothy 3:1-5)**



Secondly, 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)**



- **Maintaining an ongoing intimate relationship with the Lord is also a great key to fulfilling God's unique plan for our life**

In the book of Proverbs we read,

“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)



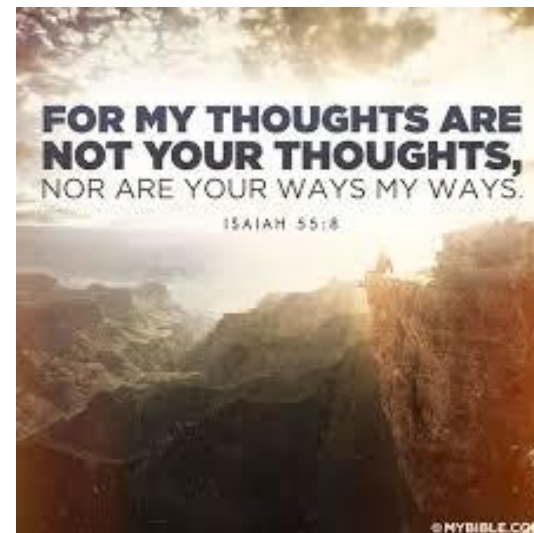
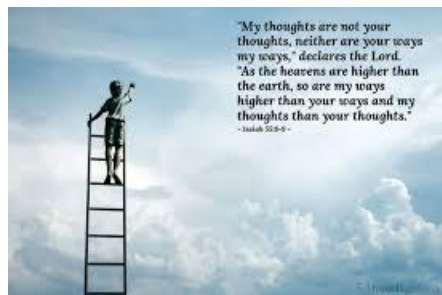
- Being intimate in our walk with the LORD is a great key to consistently hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit who will give us guidance to help us to live a fruitful and fulfilled life

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)



- The bible makes it clear that God's plan for our life is far better than ours



In the book of Isaiah we read,

“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, “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)



- Maintaining an intimate walk with the Lord is therefore crucial if we are to realize our full potential in Christ and to experience the abundant life that Jesus spoke of in John 10:10**

- Intimacy with the Lord will help us to finish our Christian walk strongly and to be always ready for the imminent rapture of all true believers

Like the Apostle Paul we want to be able to say at the end of our 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.” **(2 Timothy 4:7-8)**



- Spending quality time with the Lord and in God's word helps us to grow in character
- Growing in Christlike character is a great key to promotion in God's Kingdom



In the book of James we read,

**“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord,
and He will lift you up.” (James 4:10)**

So practically how can we MAINTAIN an intimate and abiding relationship with the Lord as believers

1) We need to continually purposely put Christ first in our life and plans. That Jesus Christ is truly Lord of our life



Jesus Himself said,

“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)

Jesus Himself said,

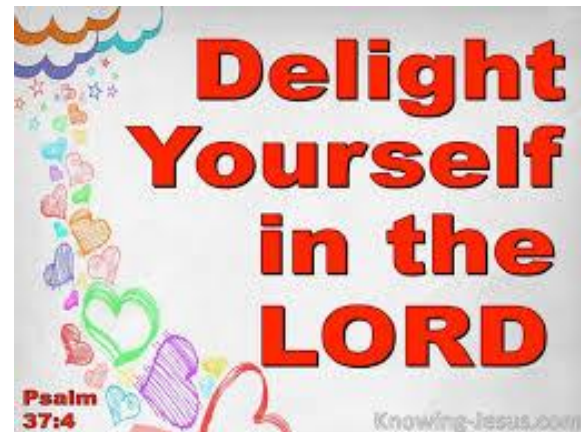
“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ Or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

(Matthew 6:31-33)



King David wrote,

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



2) We need to make time on a daily basis to hear from the Lord. Daily we need wisdom from God

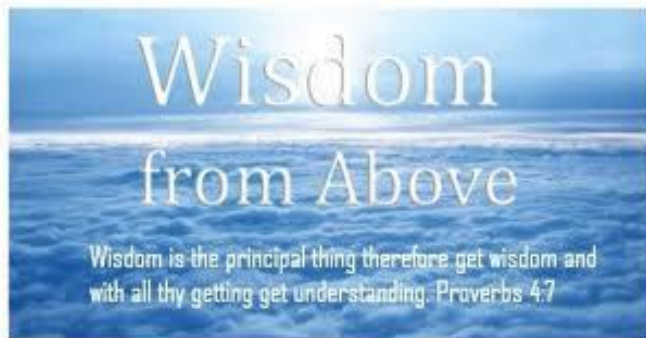
King David wrote,



“O GOD, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for you; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.” **(Psalm 63:1-3)**

In the book of James we read,

**“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”
(James 1:5)**

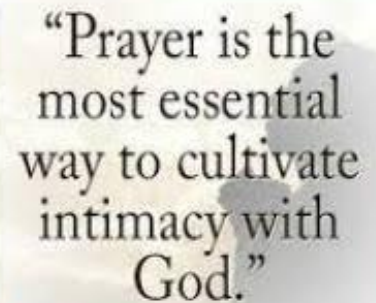


3) HAVING A LIFESTYLE OF PRAYER

We need to learn to involve God in all that we do. God always knows what is best for us in every situation and at all times

This is why the Apostle Paul wrote,

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” **(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)**

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“Prayer is the most essential way to cultivate intimacy with God.”

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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 need to find a secret place where we can meet with the Lord without distractions. It is so important that we can spend quality time alone with the Lord in a place where we have no distractions from other people or things

Jesus Himself said,

“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” (Matthew 6:6)



5) We need to continually maintain a soft and repentant heart. We need to be quick to repent of all known sin in our life and be quick to forgive others. Unconfessed sin will negatively affect our intimacy with the Lord

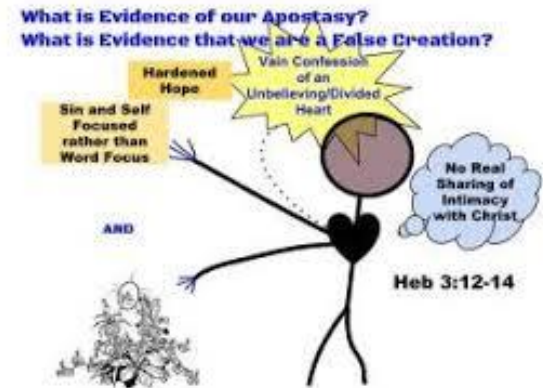


The Psalmist wrote,

“I cried to Him with my mouth, And He was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear. But certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer.” **(Psalm 66:17-19)**

- Continually persisting in known sin will adversely affect our faith. In the book of Hebrews we are warned about the consequences of continually persisting in known sin.

The writer 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 John wrote,

“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)



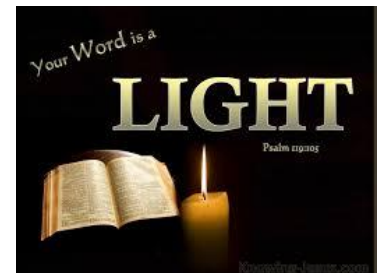
- **Having a repentant heart helps to keep the communication pipeline open between God and us and enables us to experience sweet fellowship in our walk with the LORD**

6) The importance of having an open bible when we spend time with the Lord. God will always speak clearly to us through His word as the Holy Spirit highlights passages of Scripture that speak to us and that are relevant to our circumstances



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

“Direct my steps by Your word, And let no iniquity have dominion over me.” (Psalm 119:133)



7) We need to always meet with the Lord with an expectation that He will speak to us.

- We can gain so much wisdom and guidance from God when we spend time with Him
- God loves to be involved in our lives
- Having two way communication with the Creator of the universe helps to keep our faith alive and vibrant
- God has so much that He wants to reveal to us when we draw aside to spend time with 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)**

AND



8) Cultivating a *lifestyle* of true worship.

- Worship helps us to connect to the heart of God
- **King David was a worshipper who wrote many of the Psalms. He was the only one referred to in the bible as being a man after God's own heart**

God's Heart 
for the
Whole World



In the book of Acts we read, “And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.’ (Acts 13:22)

- **This is why Jesus emphasised the importance of true worship to the woman at Samaria.**

Jesus said to her, “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)



- **Having a lifestyle of worship is a great key to maintaining our passion for the things of God**

So in conclusion

May I encourage you, given the times that we are now living in, that you would make your relationship with the Lord your highest priority in life



- In doing this you will remain strong in your faith and begin to see all that God has planned for your life unfolding in the days to come, as you allow Him to direct your steps in life
- You will also experience God's peace and joy even during your trials and challenges as you learn to *abide in Him* and to grow in your *unconditional love for others*



- **God has so much planned for our future**

We see this clearly, as I close, in the book of Jeremiah, “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)



**INTIMACY WITH THE LORD HELPS US
TO SEE GOD’S PLAN FOR OUR LIFE COMING TO PASS,
SO THAT OUR LIVES BEAR MUCH ETERNAL FRUIT**