

BIBLE BASICS MANUAL

**15 STUDIES
FOR
NEWER CHRISTIANS**

Rodney W. Francis



“THE GOSPEL FAITH MESSENGER” MINISTRY

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This manual is dedicated to all who sincerely desire to learn more from the Word of God in order to live a God-glorifying life-style, and to those who will use it to teach others the positives of God's Word in the here and now.

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FOREWORD

For some time now I have seen the need for some basic follow-up Bible Studies to help newer Christians become established in the faith of the Word of God. This ministry continually receives requests for such materials and we are seeking to help meet some of those needs by producing such manuals as this.

There is no substitute for getting to know God's Word and discovering the truths about the many wonderful experiences He has for us. The blessings of Repentance, The Blood of Jesus, Water Baptism, Baptism Of The Holy Spirit, Faith, Wisdom, Giving, Praise, etc., are just some of the subjects presented in this manual.

My prayer is that **"Bible Basics – 15 Studies For Newer Christians"** will find its way into the lives of many hungry hearts around the world and help them to discover a more meaningful relationship and knowledge of God that enables them to **understand the truth that sets them free**. Jesus said the key to this is to **"continue in His Word"** (John 8:31-32, 36).

May the Holy Spirit open the Word of God to you as you **"Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth "** (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV).

". . . You must keep on believing the things you have been taught. You know they are true for you know that you can trust those of us who have taught you. You know how, when you were a small child, you were taught the holy Scriptures; and it is these that make you wise to accept God's salvation by trusting in Christ Jesus. The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us to know what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone " (2 Timothy 3:14-17, TLB).

God bless you.

- Rodney W. Francis

1. REPENTANCE

WHERE DOES the Christian life begin? It can only start effectively in one place – the place of repentance. Repentance happens when we realize our need of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, to step into our life in a personal way and to forgive us of all our sins (anything and everything that stands between us and God). When we repent, we are asking Jesus to forgive us and to change us so that we can live a life that is pleasing to Him. Until we repent we will still carry on sinning and offending a Holy God.

The words "repent, repentance and repenting" are used at least 108 times in the Bible. In the Old Testament the main Hebrew word used is "nacham," which, when translated into English, means "to comfort self, be penitent, repent" (Young's), or "in regard to one's own doings, to lament, grieve; hence to repent, to rue; grieving for the evil he has brought upon another" (Wilson's).

In the New Testament the main Greek words used are "metanoeo," meaning "to have another mind" (Young's); "to think differently" (Strong's) and "metanoia," meaning "a change of mind; amendment of life" (Young's).

"This change is always for the better, and denotes a change of moral thought and reflection; not merely to repent of, nor to forsake sin, but to change one's mind and apprehensions regarding it; hence, to repent in a moral and religious sense, with the feeling of remorse and sorrow" (Bullinger's).

The Bible teaches us that "**Godly sorrow works repentance**" (2 Corinthians 7:8-10). True repentance takes place in our life when we allow the Holy Spirit of God to convict us of that which He sees is wrong in our life – that which offends Him – and not merely what we think is wrong. **Repentance** is one of the principles of the doctrine ("teaching") of Christ (Hebrews 6:1-3).

(1) REPENTANCE UNTO SALVATION

There can be no true Salvation until we repent. The New Testament reveals the importance of the need for repentance – so much so that it declares: "**God now commands all men everywhere to repent**" (Acts 17:29-31).

WHO PREACHED REPENTANCE?

Different men and women of God proclaimed the message of repentance:

- **John the Baptist** preached repentance (Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3, 8). Note the terminology: "*baptism of repentance.*" Baptism means "*an immersion or washing with water*" (Acts 19:3-4). Repentance, likewise, must affect every part of us, i.e. immerse our lives!
- **The Lord Jesus** preached repentance (Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:14-15; Matthew 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32).
- **The Twelve Disciples** preached repentance (Mark 6:7, 12, 13).
- **Paul** preached repentance (Acts 26:15-23; Acts 20:17-21).
- **The Early Church** preached repentance (Acts 5:29-32; Luke 24:47).

The act of repentance is so important, according to the word of Jesus, that if we do not repent, we will perish (Luke 13:1-5). God's desire is that "***NONE should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance***" (2 Peter 3:9).

WHAT LEADS US TO REPENTANCE?

1. **The goodness** ("well disposed, actively beneficent in spite of ingratitude, morally good" – Bullinger's) and kindness of God:

"Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4, NKJV);

"Or do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?" (Romans 2:4, NIV).

2. **Our Seeing More of The Ways of the Lord:**

"Then Job replied to God: 'I know that You can do anything and that no-one can stop You. You ask who it is who has so foolishly denied Your providence. It is I. I was talking about things I knew nothing about and did not understand, things far too wonderful for me.

"[You said,] 'Listen and I will speak! Let me put the questions to you! See if you can answer them!' "[But now I say], 'I had heard about You before but now I have seen You and I loathe myself and repent in dust and ashes '" (Job 42:1-6, TLB).

Job Chapter One tells us Job was "*the greatest of all the men of the east*" (v.3). If he needed to repent, how much more do we?

3. **Through the Conviction of The Holy Spirit:**

"However, I am telling you nothing but the truth when I say, it is profitable – good, expedient, advantageous – for you that I go

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away. Because if I do not go away, the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengtheners, Standby) will not come to you – into close fellowship with you. But if I go away, I will send Him to you – to be in close fellowship with you. And when He comes, He will convict and convince the world and bring demonstration to it about sin and about righteousness – uprightness of heart and right standing with God – and about judgment.

About sin, because they do not believe on Me – trust in, rely on and adhere to Me.

About righteousness – uprightness of heart and right standing with God – because I go to My Father and you will see Me no longer. About judgment, because the ruler (prince) of this world [Satan] is judged and condemned and sentence already is passed upon him" (John 16:7-11, AMP.).

- There is joy in heaven when even one sinner repents (Luke 15:7, 10).
- Not all will repent – some will, and do refuse! (Revelation 9:20-21; Revelation 16:7-11).
- Not even if the dead are raised! (Luke 16:19-31). **Jesus rose from the dead – and people still refuse to believe it – and repent of their sinful ways!**

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL MEDITATION:

1. Do YOU understand what it means to repent?
2. Can YOU describe how repentance unto Salvation has affected YOU?
3. What do you think it was that made the people repent under John the Baptist's preaching?
4. Is it possible for people to "*believe the Gospel*" without repentance?
5. Do you think we appreciate the goodness or kindness of God enough?

(2) REPENTANCE AFTER SALVATION

Once a person has become a Christian, it does not mean that there will be no further need for acts of repentance to take place. As God's Holy Spirit deals with different areas of our life – and brings hidden things to the surface (or to light) – we will need to repent of them.

We shall now turn to 2 Corinthians 12:19-21 and look at some of the things God will bring us to repentance over. He deals with these areas of our life because He wants us to walk closer with Him, and because we desire to be right in His sight:

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"Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves unto you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification. For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults; lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication and lewdness which they have practiced" (NKJV).

Let me break down the meanings of these words further:

- **Contentions** - ("strife, quarrel, especially rivalry, contention ... wrangling, especially wordy-wrangling, disputation" - Bullinger's).
- **Jealousies** - ("jealousy, malice, indignation" - Strong's).
- **Outbursts of wrath** - ("the mind, the spirit that is breathed out, an intense passion of the mind . . . the demonstration of strong passion, which may issue in anger or revenge, though it does not necessarily include it" - Bullinger's).
- **Selfish ambitions** - ("contention, strife, quarrel" - Young's; "party-spirit, faction" - Bullinger's).
- **Backbitings** - ("defamation, evil-speaking" - Strong's; "speaking against, open evil speaking" - Bullinger's).
- **Whisperings** - ("a whispering, muttering" - Young's; "to whisper, say in the ear, especially to whisper what one dares not speak out; hence, a secret slandering" - Bullinger's).
- **Conceits** - ("a puffing up, inflation" - Bullinger's; "haughtiness" - Strong's).
- **Tumults** - ("instability; hence, disorder, sedition" - Bullinger's; "a loud confused noise, as of a crowd; commotion: violent agitation or disturbance: great emotional or mental agitation" - Collins). There was one when Barabbas was released instead of Jesus - (Luke 23:18-19).
- **Uncleanness** - ("impurity" - opposite to holiness).
- **Fornication** - ("whoredom" - Young's; "to act the harlot, including adultery and incest; indulge unlawful lust of either sex; practice idolatry" - Strong's).
"Fornication seems to be used of the sin of idolatry in the Church in the New Testament as adultery is of the same sin with the Jews" - Bullinger's.
- **Lasciviousness** - ("lustfulness, excess, beyond moderation").

What some other translations record about 2 Corinthians 12:20-21:

". . . For I am afraid that when I come to visit you I won't like what I find, and then you won't like the way I will have to act. I am afraid that I will find you quarreling, and envying each other, and being angry with each other, and acting big, and saying wicked things about each other and whispering behind each other's backs, filled with conceit and disunity. Yes, I am afraid that when I come God will humble me before you and I will be sad and mourn because many of you who have sinned became

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sinners and don't even care about the wicked, impure things you have done: your lust and immorality, and the taking of other men's wives" (TLB).

"For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder. I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged" (NIV).

For the Christian, the things mentioned in these verses are all things that have to be **repented** of. If we do not repent of them, they will "sour" our spirit and take us away from a close walk with the Lord Jesus. We shall also be guilty of turning the unsaved away from the Kingdom of God because they will not want to mix with people who live in the aforementioned sins!

Let us now look at just one or two sins that God called upon His people in the Old Testament to repent of:-

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Repent, turn away from your idols, and turn your faces away from all your abominations. For anyone of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, then comes to a prophet to inquire of him concerning Me, I the Lord will answer him by Myself. I will set My face against that man, and make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of My people. Then you shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezekiel 14:6-8, NKJV).

God called on the Israelites and foreigners to repent of:

- **Idolatry** - ("things worshipped before, or in the place of God"; "a material object, especially a carved image, that is worshipped as a god; any being other than the one God to which divine honour is paid" - Collins). **God must be Number One in our lives!**
- **Abominations** - ("to do abominably, chiefly in things connected with idolatry" - Wilson's; "something disgusting, an abhorrence" - Strong's; "a person or thing that is disgusting or loathsome; an action that is vicious, vile, etc." - Collins).

Where there is no repentance on the part of His people, God has said that He will personally set Himself against that person and bring him/her low. Running after God's prophets for help will not help either!

God calls us to **repent** wherever and whenever we sin against Him.

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"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord God. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord God. "Therefore turn and live!" (Ezekiel 18:30-32, NKJV).

The things they were called upon to repent of were:

- **Transgressions** - ("to revolt, rebel, to be contumacious; to refuse allegiance and duty to whom they are due; knowingly to refuse subjections to rightful authority, or obedience to a law which we ought to observe; to rebel against Jehovah, to apostatize from Him" - Wilson's). (The word "contumacious" means "stubbornly resistant to authority; wilfully obstinate" - Collins).
- **Iniquity** - ("perversity" - Young's; "lack of justice or righteousness; wickedness; injustice; a wicked act; sin" - Collins).

Another translation has this to say:

"Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!" (Ezekiel 18:30-32, NIV).

Very clearly the Bible tells us again and again that God **HATES SIN!** He loves the sinner - but He hates the sin. Once we have become born-again and filled with the Holy Spirit, we must be careful not to allow sin to come again and defile us. Sin separates us from God! (Isaiah 59:2). We continually need to be open to the conviction of the Holy Spirit so we can deal with anything that does come between us and God.

When a brother or sister (in Christ) trespasses (sins) against us, they need to **repent . . . and we need to forgive** (Luke 17:3-4).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL MEDITATION:

1. Are there any areas of your life where this section of the study has revealed a need for repentance?
2. Since becoming a Christian can you describe a specific incident in your life that God led you to repent over?
3. Sometimes our repenting will also involve other people - a need to say "Sorry," an admission of being wrong, etc. How easy do you find this?

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4. What part of "Repentance After Salvation" has spoken to you the most?

(3) EXAMPLES OF REPENTANCE

Although the message of repentance appears to be a negative one, it is rather exactly the opposite, for there are very powerful and positive results in our lives when we allow God to cleanse us from the works and habits of the flesh.

- **Repentance is an ongoing process in our lives!**

One reason for this is that as we seek to get closer to God, He puts His finger of conviction on things within us that are not pleasing to Him. The closer we draw to the Light, the more "exposed" we can feel - and the further we drift away from the Light, the less conviction we seem to have. Another reason is because we can be willing to "give up" to God some areas of our life more quickly than others. God in His tender mercy and grace continues to draw us in such a way that we will come to repentance on those things He puts His finger of conviction on. He works in our lives in such a way that we are able to handle it, and so come to a place of **willingly** giving to Him whatever He asks of us.

In this next part we will take some time to look at some examples of men in the Bible - men of God - who went through experiences of needing to repent from various things:

JOB: (pronounced Jobe) (the name means "hated" or "the cry of woe: I will exclaim").

"In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright ("good, straight"); he feared ("reverenced") God and shunned evil" (Job 1:1, NIV). (See also Job 1:8 and Job 42:1-6).

The above verse is God's testimony of the man Job. Yet God allowed Job to be tested by Satan for a period of time; after which Job received a new understanding of the ways of the Lord, and he repented:

"Then Job replied to the Lord, "I know that You can do all things; no plan of Yours can be thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this that obscures My counsel without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak. I will question you, and you shall answer Me. My ears had heard of You but now my eyes have seen You. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:1-6, NIV).

Because of a **repentant heart** God was able to bless Job's latter end much more than the beginning.

DAVID: (means "beloved"). (See 2 Samuel 11 and Psalm 51).

David, the king of Israel, was sitting home relaxing while Israel was at war.

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He was tempted by a beautiful woman called Bath-sheba (the name means "daughter of the oath") and committed adultery with her. The woman became pregnant and, in order to cover up his sins, David tried to get Uriah ("Jah is light") her husband to sleep with his wife, making Uriah to think he was the father. But Uriah disobeyed and would not sleep with his wife while Israel was at war. David then had him sent to the front lines so he would be killed in battle! After Uriah died in that battle David sent for Bath-sheba and married her, out of the will of God (2 Samuel 11:27). God had to send Nathan ("giver") the prophet to David to bring him to repentance. We read David's prayer of repentance in Psalm 51.

HEZEKIAH: (means "Jah is strength" or "strengthened of Jehovah").

"In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. He prayed to the Lord who answered him and gave him a miraculous sign. But Hezekiah's heart was proud and he did not respond to the kindness shown him; therefore the Lord's wrath was on him and on Judah and Jerusalem. Then Hezekiah repented of the pride of his heart as did the people of Jerusalem; therefore the Lord's wrath did not come upon them during the days of Hezekiah" (2 Chronicles 32:24-26, NIV). (See also Isaiah 38).

Hezekiah had a problem with pride. It took a serious sickness to bring him low. God dealt with him by facing him with death. But Hezekiah humbled himself and wept bitterly (an act of repentance); God in His mercy then spared Hezekiah's life and gave him a further 15 years of living.

EPHRAIM: (means "doubly fruitful").

"I have surely heard Ephraim's moaning...'You disciplined me like an unruly calf, and I have been disciplined. Restore me and I will return because You are the Lord my God. After I strayed, I repented; after I came to understand, I beat my breast. I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth" (Jeremiah 31:18-19, NIV).

In this Scripture we see the struggles of a young man being broken-in to wearing the yoke of the Lord. Too often we make this carrying of the Lord's yoke more difficult than we should (Matthew 11:28-30). The result is we experience many times of repenting as we go through life.

What the Bible says about Ephraim can be applied to so many of us today:

"Ephraim mixes with the nations; Ephraim is a flat cake not turned over (non repentant). Foreigners sap his strength, but he does not realize it. His hair is sprinkled with gray, but he does not notice. Israel's arrogance testifies against him, but despite all this he does not return to the Lord his God or search for Him. Ephraim is like a dove, easily deceived and senseless . . . now calling to Egypt, now turning to Assyria" (Hosea 7:8-11, NIV).

We have to repent of "going our own way," even as Christians!

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JUDAS: (means "he shall be praised").

Also known as Judas **Isca**riot (means "he will be hired: a man of the cities"). Judas Iscariot was the disciple who betrayed Jesus. Only Jesus really knew what was in that man's heart. Not one of the disciples had discerned the things that Judas had allowed Satan to put in to his heart. Here is a short account of Judas:

"He is sometimes called 'the son of Simon.' This name has received various interpretations, e.g., it has been derived from 'Kerioth' (Joshua 15:25) in the tribe of Judah; from 'Karth' in Galilee (Kartan, Joshua 21:32) . . . from 'Scortea' a "leathern apron" applied to him as the bearer of the bag, i.e., 'Judas with the apron'; and from the Hebrew 'Ascara,' strangling (angina) given him after his death. He was that apostle and disciple who betrayed his Master" (Young's).

Judas repented – but too late!!

"Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. They bound Him, led Him away and handed Him over to Pilate, the governor.

When Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood."

"What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself" (Matthew 27:1-5, NIV).

What a tragedy!

What money, (or should I say), the love of money will do to people! How important that we have a right attitude and motive toward money. If it gets the better of us, we can self-destruct just like Judas Iscariot. **He actually "sold" Jesus for 30 pieces of silver!** May God help us to repent over wrong attitudes and actions concerning the love of money.

ESAU: (means "shaggy: his doings" or "hairy").

"Try to stay out of all quarrels and seek to live a clean and holy life, for one who is not holy will not see the lord. Look after each other so that not one of you will fail to find God's best blessings. Watch out that no bitterness takes root among you, for as it springs up it causes deep trouble, hurting many in their spiritual lives. Watch out that no one becomes involved in sexual sin or becomes careless about God as Esau did: he traded his rights as the oldest son for a single meal. And afterwards, when he wanted those rights back again, it was too late, even though he

wept bitter tears of repentance. *So remember, and be careful*" (Hebrews 12:14-17, TLB). (See also Genesis 25:31-34).

Esau despised his birthright. He took his inheritance far too cheaply. It cost him dearly! We must guard against living for the fleshly things of the world that cause us to despise our God-given spiritual inheritance. The loss will be great if we do!

- **Repentance turns our heart . . . Repentance turns the hand of God!**

It is obvious from Luke 17:3-4 that we have to regularly exercise the ministry of repentance and forgiveness toward one another:

"Pay attention and always be on your guard – looking out for one another; if your brother sins (misses the mark), solemnly tell him so and reprove him, and if he repents (feels sorry for having sinned), forgive him. And even if he sins against you seven times in a day, and turns to you seven times and says, I repent (I am sorry), you must forgive him – [that is,] give up resentment and consider the offense as recalled and annulled" (AMP).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL MEDITATION:

1. What are some things we can learn from Job's experience?
2. Why did God have to send a prophet to King David?
3. Why did Hezekiah receive a further 15 years of life?
4. Why did Judas Iscariot's repentance not save him?
5. Do you think there are any sins that cannot be repented of, and forgiven?

(4) REPENTANCE IN THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Just as we have discovered that there is a need in Christians (individually) for times of repentance, we shall now see that there are times when churches have need of repentance from wrong things.

Our study is built around Christ's message to the Seven Churches in the Book of Revelation.

The Church of Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7) –

- **Was told to repent because she had left – not lost – her first love and had fallen.**

The Church in Pergamos (Revelation 2:12-17) –

- **Was told to repent of false doctrine (teaching) which caused fornication and the eating of foods sacrificed unto idols (devils – 1 Corinthians 10:19-22).** They had followed the teachings of Balaam (who was an "Ishmael" rather than an

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"Isaac" ministry – Ishmael being half spiritual/half carnal, while Isaac is the child of God's promise – Genesis 21:1-13 and Galatians 4:22-31).

•
The Church in Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29) –

- **Was told to repent of false prophets, fornication, adultery and idolatry. The spirit of Jezebel prevailed** – she was a rebellious woman who rose above her husband's authority and ruled Israel by subtle, deceptive means. She was out of divine order.

The Church in Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6) –

- **Had to repent of a false reputation ("*you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead*"!), imperfect works and for being lax in watchfulness.**

The Church of the Laodiceans (Revelation 3:14-22) –

- **Had to zealously repent of lukewarmness, trusting in their own riches and goods, and blindness to their true condition (in God's eyes they "*were wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked*" – a shame).**

A total of five out of the seven churches were told to repent of various things in their midst.

The lesson is there for us to always be on guard against those things that will try to take us out of – and away from – the will of God. Let us be ever sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit and to repent as HE convicts us.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL MEDITATION:

1. **IF** you had a strong conviction in your heart that there was a genuine need for your church to come to repentance over a certain matter, how would you go about it?
2. What has spoken most to your heart from this section on church repentance?
3. On recapping this study on Repentance, what points have struck you most that you feel you need to remember?

SUMMING UP:

Repentance is God's way of dealing with us – first to bring us to Salvation, and then, secondly, to keep us going on in the way of Salvation. This applies to us individually, as well as collectively. When we view repentance in the light of God's love for us, we have much to be thankful for – that God would even take the time and patience to deal with us lovingly as He does, and to bring us to repentance over those things that do not glorify Him. Each time we truly repent, there is a drawing closer to God, the One Who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

- HE CARES FOR YOU!

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

2. YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN!

THE LORD JESUS TAUGHT that we must be born again to see and enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:1-12).

In John Chapter Three we read of a religious man by the name of Nicodemus. The name, "Nicodemus," means "innocent blood," and his belief was that of a Pharisee (meaning "separate"). "The Pharisees were the largest of the three or four Jewish sects; noted for their self conceit and long prayers; paid unnecessary tithes, fasted often, made broad their phylacteries ("a guard, a charm") (Matthew 23:1-7), held to traditions, etc." (Young's).

Nicodemus was a ruler (a rabbi, teacher, a leader, authority) of the Jews. It was to him that Jesus said, "*You must be born again.*"

The Amplified Bible has this to say:

"Jesus answered him, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that unless a person is born again (anew, from above), he cannot ever see – know, be acquainted with [and experience] the Kingdom of God.

Nicodemus said to Him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter his mother's womb again, and be born?

Jesus answered, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, except a man be born of water and (even) the Spirit, he cannot [ever] enter the Kingdom of God. [Ezekiel 36:25-27.] What is born of [from] the flesh is flesh – of the physical is physical; and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not – do not be surprised, astonished – at My telling you, you must all be born anew (from above) (John 3:3-7).

In Verse 5 Jesus said, "*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit . . .*"

There appears to be three main interpretations as to what the "*water*" here

YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN

speaks of.

1. The physical birth (John 3:6)
2. The Word (Ephesians 5:26)
3. Water baptism (Mark 16:16)

To the Christian all three can apply – my preference is No. 2, because 1 Peter 1:23 tells us: ***“Being born again . . . by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever.”*** (See also Titus 3:5; James 1:18).

To be ***“born again”*** one must be conceived by God – or, God plants His seed in our life.

That seed is His Word breathed upon by the Holy Spirit, which then produces life – eternal life – in us! It happens when we respond to His love, to His dealings, and to the conviction of His Holy Spirit which brings us to repentance. At that point a spiritual conception takes place. God's Word or seed begins to develop our life into the image of Jesus Christ and causes us to grow, until such time as we become mature sons and daughters of God (John 1:12-14; 1 John 5:4).

- **How do we know we are born of God?**

We know because we find there is a new and indwelling love for God, for those who love God, and people generally (1 John 4:7 – I encourage you to read the whole chapter).

Some evidence that we are ***“born again of the Holy Spirit”*** is that we will find ourselves with a hunger to know Jesus Christ, the Word of God; we will want to be where we hear and know of Him; we are conscious of a desire to want to be right in the sight of the Living God, and we find ourselves desiring more and more to make ourselves available for the service of God.

I had been brought up in a Christian Church all my life. But I was not ***“born again”*** until I was 17 years of age. I knew about God, had heard about Jesus, BUT – I had never had or known a personal experience of meeting with Jesus. After being invited to a Christian meeting and listening to a Holy Spirit-filled preacher present to me the Gospel in power, I responded to the altar call, went forward and invited Jesus Christ to become my Saviour and Lord. When I did that (in a public gathering), I was ***“born again by the Holy Spirit.”*** Jesus came into my life in a personal way; He forgave me of all my past sins, rebellion and failures against Him, and began a change in my life which continues to this day. I know I met God at that time. I literally felt a whole load of guilt and shame lift off my life. I felt like a bird that had suddenly been let out of a small cage – and I was now free!

If a person as religious and notable as Nicodemus had to be “born again,” then how much more do we need to be “born again”?

If you have not already done so, Jesus is waiting for you right now to give your life over to Him. He can do more good for you in two minutes than you cannot do in 20 years!

BIBLE BASICS

Unless and until we are *“born again by the Holy Spirit,”* we will never see nor enter the Kingdom of God.

- Jesus gave His all for YOU!
- What will you give back to Him?
- All He asks for is your love and your life.
- Don't delay – Repent today and be *“born again”!*

YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

3. WATER BAPTISM

This is a message to help those who have come to faith in Jesus Christ, and now need to consider what the Bible teaches on the subject of Water Baptism.

AS A NEW-BORN BELIEVER in Jesus Christ who has experienced the reality of having come under the conviction of sin and then repenting of it . . .

- Where do we go from there?
- Is that all there is to this Christian faith?
- What do we do now?

Bible Christianity is a life – and it is alive! Whatever has life GROWS! God wants us to grow in our new-found faith and to get to know Him and His Word better:

"But grow in spiritual strength and become better acquainted with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ . . . " (2 Peter 3:18, TLB).

The Bible teaches us about Water Baptism; something we do after we have been born-again. It is a public happening . . . a public declaration to the world, to our friends and relatives, to everybody . . . that we have chosen to believe the claims of Jesus Christ and follow Him. We have chosen to be His follower or disciple. The word "disciple" comes from the Greek word "mathetes" meaning "taught or trained one" (Young's); or "a learner, pupil. In the New Testament it is more than this; it is a follower, one who follows both the teacher and the teaching" (Bullinger's).

To the born-again believer this means we have made a decision to yield our life over to The Master Teacher, JESUS CHRIST, and we now seek to follow what He says and does.

One of the first challenges He gives us to test our commitment to Him is by commanding us to be baptized in water.

JESUS SET THE EXAMPLE – HE WAS BAPTIZED IN WATER:

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John (the Baptist). But John tried to deter Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness." Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:13-17, NIV). See also Mark 1:9-11 and Luke 3:21-22.

- Why was Jesus baptized in water?
- He said it was to fulfil all righteousness.
- It was an action that pleased God.

Today, Jesus Christ is still our example. If He was willing to be baptized to fulfil all righteousness and to please God, so should we.

What does the word "righteousness" mean? In Matthew 3:15 (and many other New Testament verses) it is translated from the Greek word "dikaiosune" meaning: "rightness, justice" (Young's); or "the doing or being what is just and right; the character and acts of a man commanded by and approved of God, in virtue of which the man corresponds with Him and His will as His ideal and standard; it signifies the sum total of all that God commands and approves. As such it is not only what God demands, but what He gives to man, and which is appropriated by faith; and hence it is a state called forth by God's act of justification; in other words by judicial deliverance from all that stands in the way of being righteous" (Bullinger's).

That is a lot of explaining about just one word, but if we can take in exactly what God did for us when we repented of our sin and turned our life over to Him, you will discover we have been made "a brand new person" in the sight of Almighty God!

- Before, we were filthy before Him.
- Now, we are cleansed and made righteous!
- Now, our life and actions carry God's approval.
- We are on His side, and He is on ours! Praise the Lord!

Water Baptism, therefore, is a public statement to others that we have come into a new life of righteousness before God. We have responded to His command to "**Repent and believe** ("to adhere to, trust, rely on, to remain steadfast in" – Young's) . . . **the Gospel**" (Mark 1:15).

Now we move on from repentance and get Water Baptized. The word "baptize" comes from the Greek word "baptizo" meaning "to consecrate (by pouring out on, or putting into)" – Young's; or "to immerse, to make a thing dipped or dyed" (Bullinger's).

The word "immerse" means "to plunge or dip into liquid; to involve deeply; engross; to baptize by immersion" (Collins).

Water Baptism by immersion, therefore, is when the whole of a person's body is submerged in the water:

"Jesus, when He was baptized, went up out of the water . . ." (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10).

"And John was baptising in Aenon . . . because there was much water there . . ." (John 3:23). The NIV says – *"There was plenty of water."* The AMP – *"There was an abundance of water there; and the people kept coming and being baptized."*

". . . and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water . . ." (Acts 8:38-39).

These Scriptures show us that Water Baptism meant the going down into the water completely and then coming up out of the water again. They were totally immersed in it! Dipped! Dyed!

SOME NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES OF WATER BAPTISM:

The book of Acts is a short but interesting account of the Early Christian Church in action. The following Scriptures tell of believers in Jesus Christ being baptized:

- The believers at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost: *"With many other words he (Peter) warned them; and he pleaded with them, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day"* (Acts 2:40-41, NIV). *"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized . . ."* (Acts 2:41, KJV). There was a glad and believing response to Peter's preaching that saw many that day baptized in water.
- The converts at Samaria: *"But now they believed Philip's message that Jesus was the Messiah, and his words concerning the Kingdom of God; and many men and women were baptized"* (Acts 8:5-12, especially Verse 12, TLB). The new Christians at Samaria heard the Gospel and believed on the Name of Jesus Christ; the result was their being water baptized. This happened in spite of opposition from an occultic leader by the name of Simon.
- The Ethiopian Eunuch: *"So Philip began with this same Scripture and then used many others to tell him about Jesus. As they rode along, they came to a small body of water, and the eunuch said, 'Look! Water! Why can't I be baptized?' 'You can,' Philip answered, 'if you believe with all your heart.' And the eunuch replied, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' He stopped the chariot, and they*

went down into the water and Philip baptized him” (Acts 8:35-38, TLB). To get the full story, please read Acts 8:26-40. This eunuch was a very important gentleman. He carried great authority and was responsible for the finances of Ethiopia. Yet he was hungry for more of God. He tried reading the Scriptures but could not understand them. That's when the Holy Spirit led Philip to go to him. Philip was able to present the claims of Jesus Christ to him, showing him out of the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. The Ethiopian official believed Philip's words and immediately had a desire to want to "seal" his believing by being Water Baptized. Philip did not prevent that, and the same day he was baptized. Oh, that Christians today would want to be so willing to obey the Word of God!

- **Saul of Tarsus:** *“. . . Paul could see, and was immediately baptized”* (Acts 9:18, TLB). Before Saul met Jesus on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1-22) he was a hater of the Christians and went about to persecute and harm them. That happened in spite of the fact that he was a very religious Pharisee (Philippians 3:4-6). Then he met Jesus! Everything changed! He became a baptized believer! Saul's name was changed to Paul, who later became the great Apostle Paul, the writer of many of the New Testament books of the Bible.
- **Lydia the Merchant Lady:** *"One of them was Lydia, a saleswoman from Thyatira, a merchant of purple cloth. She was already a worshiper of God and, as she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart and she accepted all that Paul was saying. She was baptized along with all her household . . ."* (Acts 16:14-15, TLB). Lydia had been a believer in God for a while, but had never been challenged about Water Baptism. Obviously, after hearing Paul preach, she was convinced it was the right thing to do and was baptized with all the others who lived in her house. Every believer on Jesus Christ needs to be challenged to be baptized in water. It fulfils righteousness and pleases God!
- **The Philippian Jailer:** *"He then brought them out and asked, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' They replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household. "Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized . . . he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God – he and his whole family"* (Acts 16:30-34, NIV). To get the background to this exciting event, make sure you read Acts 16:16-40. The jailer had most likely been a very hard man prior to this miracle that took place that night. An earthquake shook the prison violently enough to break the stocks and chains that held the prisoners secure. A riot could have broken out. Lives could have been lost. The jailer's job would have been "on the line." It was so serious the jailer himself contemplated committing suicide! Then the man of God spoke. Paul calmed him down, told him of Jesus. **The response was a new family for Christ**, even Water Baptized in the early hours of

the morning. Praise be to God!

- **Crispus and Some Corinthian Believers:** *"But Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed [that Jesus is the Messiah and acknowledged Him with joyful trust as Saviour and Lord], together with his entire household; and many of the Corinthians who listened [to Paul also] believed and were baptized"* (Acts 18:8, AMP.). Crispus had been involved in synagogue (or church) duties for many years, but had never personally responded to the Gospel! But after hearing Paul preach he made a decision to believe and be baptized.
- **Some Disciples at Ephesus:** *"While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through Turkey and arrived in Ephesus, where he found several disciples. 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' he asked them. 'No,' they replied, 'we don't know what you mean. What is the Holy Spirit?' 'Then what beliefs did you acknowledge at your baptism?' he asked. And they replied, 'What John the Baptist taught.' Then Paul pointed out to them that John's baptism was to demonstrate a desire to turn from sin to God and that those receiving his baptism must then go on to believe in Jesus, the One John said would come later. As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then, when Paul laid his hands upon their heads, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other languages and prophesied. The men involved were about twelve in number"* (Acts 19:1-7, TLB). Those disciples had known the experience of being baptized by John the Baptist. But they had not gone on to actively believe in Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit, another baptism that we will learn more about in another lesson.

Paul decided they needed to be baptized again, and this time they were filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied. Their obedience to believing in Jesus brought an immediate release in their spirit.

- In the New Testament we do not read of any believer refusing Water Baptism. It is a command to all:

Then Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost " (Acts 2:38).

WATER BAPTISM REPRESENTS JESUS' DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION:

Water Baptism (by full immersion) is a public identification with Jesus. We are following in His footsteps by faith and obedience. Taking Jesus Christ into our life means we die to sinful living. We are no longer living for self – we have died to self. Water Baptism is a funeral – it is the burial of the “old, dead man/woman.” What do you do with a corpse? You bury it!

So, in Water Baptism you are attending a funeral of somebody who has died – YOU!

“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

If we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over Him. The death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God.

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey – whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness” (Romans 6:1-18, NIV).

Water Baptism, therefore, is the burial of the old self. We go down into the water. When we come up out of the water it symbolizes our being raised from the dead into a new life. Just like Jesus. That means the life we live after Water Baptism is now different to the life we lived before we died to self and were buried in baptism.

- Before, we lived to please self.
- Now, we live to please God through Jesus Christ!
- We walk with Him by His resurrection power!

Another Verse of Scripture puts it this way: *“I have been crucified with Christ: and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, who*

loved me and gave Himself for me. I am not one of those who treats Christ's death as meaningless . . ." (Galatians 2:20-21, TLB).

This new life which we have found in Jesus Christ now releases us into limitless possibilities to be used by God to touch other lives (still bound in sin) in such a way as to see them also released into a new life through Jesus. Praise the Lord!

If we can accept it, God has now released us from every blockage and barrier that was ever between Him and us.

- He has made us free in Christ!
- We walk in resurrection life and power!
- The same Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead now lives inside of us! (Romans 8:11).
- We are now available for God's service. Let us walk in this glorious freedom He has provided for us!

THE COMMAND OF JESUS:

Jesus commanded His followers to make disciples of all nations:

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age'" (Matthew 28:18-20, NIV).

Some translations use the terminology, *"Baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . ."* (e.g. TLB and AMP). When we are baptized we are baptized in (or into) the Godhead, or the Triune ("three in one") God:

"The Father" is - "God the Father",
 "The Son" is - "God the Son (Jesus Christ)."
 "The Holy Spirit" is - "God the Holy Spirit."

According to John 14:16-23, the Father God, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit Comforter all take up residence inside the life of those believers who love Jesus and keep His commandments.

- What tremendous protection is ours!
- What tremendous security is ours!
- What a blessed privilege is ours to be chosen as the dwelling place of the Triune God!
- He lives inside us right now! And He has promised to stay inside of us forever!

Water Baptism is an action on our part to show Jesus we really do love Him,

and His Word, and will obey whatever He wants.

He wants us to fulfil all righteousness by being baptized.

WATER BAPTISM ALSO HAS TO DO WITH OUR CONSCIENCE:

"And baptism, which is a figure [of their deliverance], does now also save you [from inward questionings and fears], not by the removing of outward body filth (bathing), but by [providing you with] the answer of a good and clear conscience [inward cleanness and peace] before God, [because you are demonstrating what you believe to be yours] through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21, AMP).

If we really are going to be effective in our lives for Jesus, then we do need to be living with a good, clear, and clean conscience. Water Baptism does that for us.

The command to you is: **Be baptized! Be obedient!**

CONCLUSION:

Water Baptism is commanded by God's Word for every born-again Christian. To disobey will bring frustration and defeat to your spiritual walk. To obey will bring tremendous blessing and will be a stepping-stone to even greater experiences in your walk with the Lord. **The path of obedience is the path of blessing.**

4. THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

GOD'S WILL IS for every Christian to be strong in his/her journey of faith. He wants us to experience His living presence and to know that He actually lives inside of us continually. John's Gospel Chapter 14 teaches us that God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit Comforter come to take up residence in the lives of all who love Jesus and follow His Word (John 14:16-27). He makes this real to us by His Holy Spirit.

There we read:

- The Holy Spirit is sent to help us (v.16, 26)
- The Holy Spirit is sent to abide with us forever (v.16)
- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (v.17)
- The world (unbeliever) does not see or know the Holy Spirit (v.17)
- But we who believe on Jesus know the Holy Spirit (v.17)
- The Holy Spirit dwells (lives) in us (v.17)
- The Holy Spirit becomes our Protector and Provider, our Comforter and Security, so we will not be orphans (v.18)
- We live because Jesus lives! (v.19)
- The day the Holy Spirit Baptism comes into our lives we receive a greater knowledge of Jesus being in His Father, our being in Jesus, and Jesus living in us! (v.20)
- This is all part of a wonderful love relationship we have with Jesus through the Holy Spirit – a relationship that makes us want to obey whatever Jesus says (v.21)
- Jesus will manifest Himself to us through the Holy Spirit (v.21)
- This revelation or manifesting of Jesus comes through our demonstrating our love to Jesus by our obedience to what He says (v.21-23)
- This love relationship is with God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son of God, and God the Holy Spirit – Who have taken up residence within the Holy Spirit-filled believer (v.23)
- The Holy Spirit is sent from the Father in the Name of Jesus (v.26)
- The Holy Spirit ministry is to teach us all things (v.26)
- The Holy Spirit ministry is to bring to our remembrance every thing that Jesus has told us (v.26).

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The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the releasing of God's Spirit that came into us when we were born-again; releasing His power and enabling us to express ourselves to God in the Spirit's prayer language. The Holy Spirit has been sent by God to make Jesus and The Word alive and real to us; much more so than seeking to serve Jesus in our own strength.

Before Jesus went back to the Father in heaven, He taught His disciples that it was all part of God's plan that He leave them. Then, He said, He would send the Holy Spirit Comforter into them, Who would be with them – and live inside them – forever.

HERE ARE SOME KEY VERSES FROM JESUS:

“Now on the final and most important day of the feast, Jesus stood forth and He cried in a loud voice, 'If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink! He who believes in Me – who cleaves to and trusts in and relies on Me – as the Scripture has said, Out from his innermost being springs and rivers of living water shall flow (continuously). 'But He was speaking here of the Spirit, Whom those who believed – trusted, had faith – in Him were afterward to receive. For the (Holy) Spirit had not yet been given; because Jesus was not yet glorified (raised to honour)” (John 7:37-39, AMP.).

Notice, the Holy Spirit is already within us. We must learn how to release Him to flow out of us.

He comes out of those who are thirsty enough to come to Jesus and drink.

- He comes out of those who believe in Jesus and the Scriptures.
- When the Holy Spirit is released in us, it is like a spring of living water flowing continuously.

"If you [really] love Me you will keep (obey) My commands. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener and Standby) that He may remain with you forever, The Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive (welcome, take to its heart), because it does not see Him, nor know and recognize Him. But you know and recognize Him, for He lives with you [constantly] and will be in you.

I will not leave you orphans – comfortless, desolate, bereaved, forlorn, helpless – I will come [back] to you. Just a little while now and the world will not see Me any more, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. At that time – when that day comes – you will know [for yourselves] that I am in My Father, and you [are] in Me, and I [am] in you . . .

But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate,

Strengtheners, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall – will remind you of, bring to your remembrance – everything I have told you" (John 14:15-20, 26, AMP.).

Jesus was sending the Holy Spirit to us for the following reasons:

- To comfort us.
- To remain with us forever.
- He is the Spirit of Truth (He does not tell lies)!
- He will live within us (not only with us, but **within** us – continually).
- He brings God's personal presence to the believer.
- He causes us to know the relationship between Jesus and the Father, our being in Jesus, and Jesus being in us (v. 20).
- The Holy Spirit comes to represent Jesus and act on His behalf (John 15:26).
- The Holy Spirit will teach us all things.
- He brings to our remembrance the words of Jesus.

"However, I am telling you nothing but the truth when I say, it is profitable – good, expedient, advantageous – for you that I go away. Because if I do not go away, the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengthener, Standby) will not come to you – into close fellowship with you. But if I go away, I will send Him to you – to be in close fellowship with you.

And when He comes, He will convict and convince the world and bring demonstration to it about sin and about righteousness – uprightness of heart and right standing with God – and about judgment. About sin, because they do not believe on Me – trust in, rely on and adhere to Me. About righteousness – uprightness of heart and right standing with God – because I go to My Father and you will see Me no longer. About judgment, because the ruler (prince) of this world [Satan] is judged and condemned and sentence already is passed upon him. I have still many things to say to you, but you are not able to bear them, nor to take them upon you, nor to grasp them now.

But when He, the Spirit of Truth (the truth-giving Spirit) comes, He will guide you into all the truth – the whole, full truth. For He will not speak His own message – on His own authority – but He will tell whatever He hears [from the Father, He will give the message that has been given to Him] and He will announce and declare to you the things that are to come – that will happen in the future. He will honour and glorify Me, because He will take of (receive, draw upon) what is Mine and will reveal (declare, disclose, transmit) it to you. Everything that the Father has is Mine. That is what I meant when I said that He will take the

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things that are Mine and will reveal (declare, disclose, transmit) them to you (John 16:7-15, AMP.).

- It is good for us that Jesus went away so the Holy Spirit could come to us.
- The Holy Spirit brings us into close fellowship with Himself.
- His work is to convict and convince the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.
- His work is to bring the word of Jesus to us as we can grasp it.
- He guides us into all truth.
- He shares with us what He hears from the Father and Jesus.
- He will show us things to come.
- He always honours and glorifies Jesus.
- He is a Revealer of the things of Jesus.

***“Behold, I send the Promise* (“one’s intentions”) *of My Father upon you; but tarry* (“wait, linger, remain”) *in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued* (“to be clothed; be invested or provided with”) *with power* (Greek: “dunamis” meaning “ability, power”) *from on high*” (Luke 24:49, NKJV).**

***“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait* (“to wait around, to remain for” – Bullinger’s) *for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now’*” (Acts 1:4-5, NKJV).**

Here Jesus was telling His disciples of the necessity for them to receive God's promise of the Holy Spirit. They were instructed to wait in Jerusalem until they knew they had received the power of the Holy Spirit in their own lives.

***“But you shall receive power – ability, efficiency and might – when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends – the very bounds – of the earth”* (Acts 1:8, AMP.).**

- The Holy Spirit baptism empowers us for service; to be witnesses for Jesus all around the world.
- Power to overcome!
- Power for service!

All these Scriptures were spoken by Jesus prior to His returning back to the Father in heaven. He pointed the disciples to a coming day when the Holy Spirit would be released and poured out from and through their lives. That day for them was the day of Pentecost:

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one

place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:1-4, NIV).

Just as Jesus had promised that, after He returned to the Father in heaven, He would send the Holy Spirit to indwell His disciples in a new and powerful way. The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost ("fiftieth" or "feast on fiftieth day after Passover").

A mighty endowment of power came on them. They found their tongues were released to speak a language they had never learned. It is called speaking in other tongues. It is the language of the Holy Spirit and it bypasses the intellect. That experience changed those followers of Jesus from being fearful men to mighty, bold leaders of the Early Church, leading multitudes into the reality of Jesus Christ; baptizing them in water and also seeing them baptized with the Holy Spirit.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS FOR ALL BELIEVERS:

Once the disciples of Jesus had been baptized with the Holy Spirit they began to preach that all believers should receive this experience:

"God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear . . . Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:32-39, NIV).

Here Peter gave three distinct steps for new Christians:

1. Repent and Believe.
2. Be baptized in water.
3. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This message was proclaimed among the Jewish believers. Then, the Holy Spirit was also poured out on the Gentiles (or non-Jewish nations). An angel was sent to a Gentile believer by the name of Cornelius (Acts 10). He was given instructions to send to Joppa for a certain man called Simon Peter. Cornelius was obedient and sent for Peter. While the men were away, Cornelius with great faith, vision and expectancy, called all his close

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

relatives and friends to come and hear what this man "sent from God" had to say. Peter came and spoke to them about God being no respecter of persons. While Peter preached to them, something wonderful happened that opened the door for Gentile believers world-wide to receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit:

"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God" (Acts 10:44-46, NIV).

When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the people – Jew and Gentile alike – they began to speak in other tongues and praise God.

The spirit language of speaking in other tongues is a very important way of communicating with God. We can express ourselves with our spirit far more meaningfully and more deeply than simply praying from the intellect in our natural language.

- **Speaking in other tongues edifies us** (1 Corinthians 14:4).
- **When we pray in the Holy Spirit we build up our faith level** (Jude 20).
- **The Apostle Paul was a man who boasted that he spoke with tongues more than all the rest of the believers!** (1 Corinthians 14:18).

Much controversy has been stirred up over many generations about the speaking in other tongues. We must always come back to what the Scriptures say. The Scriptures written in this lesson are ample proof that tongues are a gift of the Holy Spirit to help us in our ministry unto Jesus, and then to the world.

MY TESTIMONY:

When I received my "Pentecostal blessing" I was just 18 years old. It was about 5.30 a.m. on a very dark morning while I was rounding up the cows on my father's farm. I had sought the infilling of the Holy Spirit on several occasions, always being defeated by a very real spirit of the fear of man blocking me. I just could not get released in tongues when people were around! But on that morning there was only God, me and 72 cows. **Suddenly I began speaking in a language I had never learned. It just poured out of me! The presence of God was there. It was as though I had been speaking in tongues all my life!** But that morning was the very first time – Oh, how the rivers of the Holy Spirit flowed. Then God spoke to me very clearly, calling me to the ministry. He told me of things He would do straightaway as a sign to me that He had called me. It happened. Doors opened to me to begin preaching – and I've been preaching ever since (over 55 years).

The Baptism with the Holy Spirit has made all the difference to my Christian

walk. Just like the Bible promised, *“We would receive power after the Holy Spirit comes upon us”* (Acts 1: 8), so it has been.

The wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit have also been released and it is a tremendous thing to be able to minister in the name of Jesus, and with the power of the Holy Spirit there to confirm the Word with signs following.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

If you have not as yet been filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit and received your heavenly prayer language of speaking in other tongues, then I urge you to make it a top priority in your life.

Go to your Pastor or Minister and ask for prayer to receive the Holy Spirit baptism. Build a strong desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Do not let excuses or negative, unbelieving, professing Christians turn you away from pressing into the realm of the mighty Holy Spirit.

- **Believe what the Bible says!**

If the disciples of Jesus (who had personally walked with Jesus for approximately three and a half years) needed this experience of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, how much more do we today need to be filled with the Spirit? (Ephesians 5:18-20).

“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues” (Mark 16:17, NKJV).

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

5. FAITH

FAITH is a major part of the Christian life. It is so important that without faith we are unable to please God. And if we are not pleasing God, then there is something very wrong with our believing and knowledge of God. In this section we will look at four areas of faith: A. The Importance Of Faith, B. How Do We Get It? C. Learning To Use It, and D. What Faith Can Do. May you be blessed as you consider the necessity of faith today.

A. THE IMPORTANCE OF:

For the Christian, faith is essential. It is the making or the breaking of our spiritual progress:

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

The word "faith" has two main meanings:

1. "firm persuasion, the conviction which is based upon hearing, not upon sight, or knowledge; a firmly relying confidence in what we hear from God in His Word."
2. "hope, i.e. expectation of something future; a dearly cherished and apparently well-grounded expectation and prospect of some desired good" (Bullinger's).

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

Faith is believing – believing God's Word:

1. ". . . that God is . . ." (John 6:28-29; Hebrews 11:6);
2. ". . . that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Faith is believing – believing that Jesus Christ is the One who God has sent (to save us):

“. . . spend your energy seeking the eternal life that I, the Messiah, can give you. For God the Father has sent Me for this very purpose.” They replied, “What should we do to satisfy God?” Jesus told them, “This is the will of God, that you believe in the One He has sent” (John 6:27-29, TLB).

Faith is believing – believing is faith!

Faith is positive – it has no room for hesitation or doubt:

“But let him ask in faith, not wavering. For he that wavers (“hesitates”) is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:6-8).

In these verses we see that God responds to faith and gives to us according to our faith. But if we are wavering, doubtful (double minded), we will not receive anything.

Jesus met people's needs with the words, *“According to your faith be it unto you”* (Matthew 9:27-31), or *“Great is your faith: be it unto you even as you will”* (Matthew 15:21-28), or *“Your faith has made you whole”* (Matthew 9:20-26; Mark 10:46-52, blind Bartimaeus).

God is a rewarder of faith, and, going by Hebrews 11:6, faith means that we *“diligently seek Him”* (the Lord). We must actively pursue faith by actively seeking His Word, for *“faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God”* (Romans 10:17).

Faith is important because:

- *We are saved through faith* – Ephesians 2:8;
- *We are God’s children by faith in Jesus Christ* – Galatians 3:26;
- *We come under the blessings of Abraham through faith* – Galatians 3:5-18;
- *The just* (justified ones) *live by faith* – Romans 1:16-17; Romans 3:22; Galatians 3:11-14; Habakkuk 2:4; Hebrews 10:38;
- *Being justified by faith gives us peace with God* – Romans 5:1;
- *God’s righteousness is by faith* – Philippians 3:9; Hebrews 11:4;
- *Faith gives us physical healing* – Acts 3:16.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL MEDITATION:

1. What are the two essentials of believing faith? (Hebrews 11:6).
2. Why does faith have to be totally positive?

3. How does God respond to us?
4. Without looking at the study paper, what are some of the things we have by, and through faith?

B. HOW DO WE GET IT?

Faith is so important that God has given us every opportunity to become people filled with faith. Therefore it is vital that we understand how to receive it so we can get on in our Christian life enjoying the benefits of faith.

Often our first introduction to Christianity is because of the faith of someone else, i.e. Christian parents or a friend.

Timothy came from a family heritage of faith (2 Timothy 1:5-7) – his mother and grandmother before him were women of faith.

Moses lived because his parents' faith told them he was a special child with the call of God on his life (Hebrews 11:23). He should have died by the command of Pharaoh, but didn't because faith triumphed.

Faith is not something we manufacture or work up. Faith is resident in Jesus, the Living Word. ***“He is the Author and the Finisher of our faith”*** (Hebrews 12:2; Galatians 5:6) – that is why we must continually look to Him.

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

The Holy Spirit makes the Word of God alive and, when that Living Word is received into our hearts, we then have faith.

In Acts 6:3-5 we read of Stephen, ***“a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.”*** He became a powerful witness for Jesus (as well as the first Christian martyr).

The Holy Spirit within us energizes and produces faith, for He shares with us the things of God. The Holy Spirit helps us to build up our faith.

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

God gives to every Christian ***“the measure”*** (“capacity”) ***of faith”*** (Romans 12:3). In other words, God gives us the ability to function in faith. Therefore we ought to do what God has called us to do ***“according to the proportion of faith”*** (Romans 12:6), or function in that realm where our faith level is at.

Faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:9). The gift of faith is the special enabling of the Holy Spirit to enable us to accomplish things beyond our own realm of faith. For example, large financial achievements in the

work of God, miraculous provision, healing, etc.

Faith is also a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Our faith needs to continually grow. Increase of faith comes through humility and willingness to serve others (Luke 17:5-10). According to the Bible we can have "**little faith**" or we can have "**great faith**".

LITTLE FAITH:

The following Scriptures in Matthew's Gospel all tell us of "**little faith**":

In Matthew 6:24-34 (especially verse 30), Jesus teaches us of the importance of knowing that God is able to provide for us. Faith trusts what He has promised. God is well able to provide our food and clothing. Do not limit Him – that is "**little faith**".

In Matthew 8:23-27 (especially verse 26), we are told of Jesus' power over the elements. The disciples panicked in the midst of the storm – Jesus rebuked them for their smallness of faith.

In Matthew 14:22-33 (especially verse 31), when Peter walked on the water, he did so by faith. Then, when he got his eyes off Jesus and on to the circumstances around him, his faith failed and he began to sink. Jesus rescued him. Peter's little faith still accomplished more than the other disciples in the boat!

In Matthew 16:5-12 (especially verse 8), the disciples smallness of concept and their limiting themselves to natural reasonings, brought them the description of having "**little faith**."

GREAT FAITH:

Now we shall look at what "**great faith**" can accomplish:

In Matthew 8:5-13 (especially verse 10), the Centurion at Capernaum was honoured by Jesus (above and beyond any Israelite), because he had "**great faith**" in the authority he recognized was in Jesus.

In Matthew 15:21-28 (especially verse 28), the Syrophenician woman had sufficient faith to press in to the Lord – and keep pressing in even when it seems He rebuked her. Jesus honoured her "**great faith**," and her daughter was healed.

Let us be people who settle for nothing less than great faith!

So, in answer to the question, "How do we get faith?" here is a summary:

1. From Jesus "**the Author and Finisher of our faith**" (Hebrews 12:2).
2. From "**hearing the Word of God**" (Romans 10: 17).
3. From the Holy Spirit Who "**quickens** (or makes alive) **our faith**" (Acts 3:1-16; Acts 6:3-5).
4. From the Holy Spirit Who gives "**the gift of faith**" (1 Corinthians 12:9).

5. From the Holy Spirit Who produces *"the fruit of faith"* (Galatians 5:22).
6. From God Who gives us *"a measure of faith"* (Romans 12:3).
7. From Godly parents (2 Timothy 1:5).
8. Faith is increased in us through humility and a willingness to serve others (Luke 16:10).
9. We choose whether we will be people of little faith or great faith (Matthew 9:29). *"According to your faith, be it unto you,"* declares Jesus.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (AND PERSONAL MEDITATION):

1. How do you know when you have faith?
2. How do you think others will know when you have faith?
3. Do you know of any examples of the gift of faith in action?
4. What does Jude verse 20 mean to you? How would you build yourself up in faith?
5. Discuss ways of increasing your faith.

C. LEARNING TO USE IT:

In our first two sections on Faith we have looked at:

- (a) The importance of, and (b) How to get it.

In this third section we want to take what we have received and begin to more consciously use it. **God has already given to us faith.** In fact God has chosen us because we are *"rich in faith"* (James 2:5). To keep it rich and alive we must use it.

- Faith is more than talk.
- Faith is demonstrated by our works of action.
- Faith is an action.

What does it profit ("advantage, assist"), my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute ("to be left, forsaken of any thing") of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works (James 2:14-18, NKJV).

"But do you want to know, O foolish ("vain empty") man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:20 – see also James 2:21-26).

Faith is based upon God and His Word. The Holy Spirit within us responds to God and His Word, thereby helping us to release faith. We can know so

much about God and His Word, but **until we act upon it faith cannot be fully released**. Our faith actions can be shown in simple things, i.e. giving a meal or food to someone in need, showing kindness, help, etc., without looking for a natural reward.

Another illustration of faith is shown in Luke 17:5-10 where Jesus taught us to do those things which are ***“our duty to do.”*** Humility in serving one another is a way of learning to use faith.

Stephen, in Acts 6, was a man ***“full of faith and the Holy Spirit”*** who was one of the seven men chosen to wait on widows' tables. Our first reaction to this may be, "If he was full of faith, why only serve at tables?" Answer: To prove a Bible principle: ***“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much”*** (Luke 16:10). If Stephen failed in that responsibility he would never have been trusted in bigger things. Stephen exercised his faith in that seemingly mundane task, proving himself reliable and faithful. It was not very long before his faith released him into greater things, for we read in Acts 6:8, ***“And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.”*** Stephen learned in serving people how to release faith and soon was serving God in a powerful ministry of deliverance.

FAITH IS OUTSIDE OF NATURAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

Faith does not depend on circumstances, feelings, or what we see with the natural eye. All these things may be quite contrary to what faith says. For example, when God told Noah what was going to come upon all the world, Noah knew he could be the means of salvation for his household. By faith and being ***“moved with fear”*** (Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 6:5-22; Genesis 7) he began to build an ark – a huge boat on dry land – even though the world had not, up to that time, known rain. All natural circumstances told him (in the eyes of the people) that that was a crazy thing to do. But Noah's faith won the day, whereas the people's lack of faith caused them to perish.

Likewise, Abraham believed God for a son (at least 25 years) even though he and Sarah were 100 years and 90 years old respectively by the time he (Isaac) was born (Romans 4; Genesis 17 and 21; Hebrews 11:11). Everything natural was against them. Faith gave them a son.

One of the areas where faith often gets hindered in our using of it is that of being afraid to act, a lack of courage and boldness to declare publicly what God's Word says and can do!

- Christians can witness to the lost (that is an act of faith).
- Christians can pray for the sick – you can do that! It takes faith to tell others Jesus can heal them and to ask if they would like you to pray for them.

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the area of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Christians can learn to exercise their faith through the operation of the vocal gifts – prophecy, and tongues, and interpretation of tongues. When we come together in fellowship we can make ourselves available to the Lord. If and when He wants us to give out a prophecy, or a tongues message, or an interpretation of a tongues message, we will know in our spirit because the Holy Spirit witnesses with us. When we know this, we then look to the Lord for the right timing in the meeting – the anointing upon us lets us know this – then at that point we have to **exercise faith** by speaking forth publicly that which has been given to us privately by the Holy Spirit. What we say needs to be within the guidelines of edification ("building up"), exhortation ("a calling near, a stirring up") and comfort ("a solace, to cheer up") (1 Corinthians 14:5; Romans 12:6).

FAITH SPEAKS

Faith, Bible faith, is not a silent thing of the heart. We must confess it, speak it out: ***"We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken: we also believe and therefore speak"*** (2 Corinthians 4:13; see also Psalm 116:10).

But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way . . . But what does it say? "The word is near ("close to") you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus (the Word) and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved ("to make sound, to save, preserve safe from danger, loss or destruction"). For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:6-17, NKJV).

Salvation is an ongoing thing, an ongoing confession of our faith in Jesus.

Speaking out aloud our positive confession and belief in God's Word is a very faith-building and faith-releasing thing. Let us finish off this section with a very positive statement Jesus has given to us:

"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 SHALL HAVE WHATEVER HE SAYS. 'Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask ("to ask for something, require, desire, demand – expressive of petition from an inferior to a superior") when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them" (Mark 11:22-24).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (AND PERSONAL MEDITATION):

1. Can you name some other "faith works" not mentioned in this section?
2. How important are the "little things" in the Christian life?

3. Can you give an example of how you are learning to exercise faith?
4. How can we deal with hindrances to faith?
5. Discuss ways of increasing your involvement in exercising the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
6. How can we improve our confession of the faith?

D. WHAT FAITH CAN DO:

For the Christian, faith is one of the most important and effective "keys" he will ever possess. **Faith can unlock anything and also unlock us into anything.** It is **faith alive in us** that releases the power of God. And what can stand in the way of the power of God when it is in action?

Jesus taught us that faith alive in us enables us to have *“whatever we say”* (Mark 11:22-24). He had just demonstrated faith in action by speaking a curse on a fig tree, which withered up and died! (See Matthew 22:18-22; Mark 11:12-24).

HEBREWS CHAPTER 11

Let us turn now to the Faith Chapter of the Bible – Hebrews 11 (the whole Bible is a faith Book, but this Chapter is recognized as such because it is all on the subject of faith).

This is what faith does:

- Gives us the evidence ("conviction") of what we are believing for (verse 1).
- Enables us to obtain a good report (verse 2).
- Gives us understanding that the worlds were framed by the Word of God (verse 3).
- Enables us to make the right sacrifices to God (verse 4).
- Enables us to please God (verse 5).
- Teaches us that God does reward those who diligently seek Him (verse 6).
- Moves us with fear to do the will of God (verse 7).
- Gives us obedience to fulfil God's call into the unknown (verse 8).
- Gives us vision to look for that which God builds (verses 9-10).
- Enables babies to be conceived and born (verse 11).
- Enables saints to not be "tangled up" with the world (verse 13).
- Enables us to make the most supreme sacrifices in the midst of testings and trials, according to the Word of God (verses 17-19; See also Genesis 22).
- Releases blessings (verses 20-21).
- Gives knowledge of death (verse 22; See Genesis 50:24-26).
- Brings protection against death (verse 23).
- Gives victory over fear (verses 23, 27).
- Gives strength to make the right decisions (verses 24-26).

- Enables us to suffer for righteousness' sake (verses 25-26).
- Helps us to see pleasures for what they are – temporary and seasonal (verse 25).
- Gives us the right values in life (verse 26).
- Gives us endurance ("to be strong, firm") (verse 27).
- Gives us insight into the invisible (verse 27).
- Gives us the protection of the Blood of Christ (verse 28).
- Gives us advantage over the worldly people in the area of miracles, supply, protection, deliverance from the enemy, etc. (verses 29-30).
- Gives protection to those helping Christians (verse 31).

FAITH ENABLES US TO:

- Subdue ("contend against") kingdoms (verse 33).
- Bring about and do righteousness (verse 33).
- Obtain promises (see them brought to pass) (verse 33).
- Stop the mouths of lions (any wild beast) (verse 33).
- ***"Extinguish the power of raging fire"*** (verse 34, AMP.).
- Escape death from the sword (or gun, knife, etc.) (verse 34).
- Be made strong out of weakness (verse 34).
- ***"Be mighty and resistless in battle"*** (verse 34, AMP.).
- ***"Make whole armies turn and run away"*** (verse 34, TLB. See also Deuteronomy 32:30; Joshua 23:9-11; Judges 15:15-16; Psalm 91:7).
- Raise the dead (verse 35). Notice it was the women of faith who are mentioned as doing this!
- Accept torture, rather than compromise the faith (verse 35). They could go "free" if they would renounce Christ. This torture included trials of mockery, scourgings (being whipped), being bound up in prison, being stoned, cut up with saws, killed by the sword, wandering about with next to nothing, being destitute ("to be last, behind"), afflicted ("pressured"), tormented ("suffering evil, being ill used"), having to live in dens and caves, with only the food one can find (verses 35-38).

The Bible saints **chose to live by faith** rather than give in to the will of man and compromise. They did this to ***"obtain a good report"*** – to get God's approval, which was everything (verse 39). They did not receive the promise, because the promise is for you and I today to receive, live out and fulfil by faith in Jesus our Risen Lord (verses 39-40). When we live by faith in the promise of Jesus we can:

- Be provided with money (Matthew 17:24-27).
- Receive clothing and food (Matthew 6:25-34).
- Heal every sickness and disease (Matthew 8:1-17; Luke 9:1-2; Luke 10:1-9, 17:20; Acts 10:38. This also includes delivering people from evil spirits).
- If there is anything we have missed, then include it here. Faith

has the answer. **ALL THINGS ARE YOURS!** Hallelujah! (1 Corinthians 3:21-23; Philippians 4:13,19).

Jesus said: ***"If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and IT SHALL REMOVE . . . AND NOTHING SHALL BE IMPOSSIBLE UNTO YOU"*** (Matthew 17:20, KJV).

Faith in you will do what you will let it do – ***"according to your faith, be it unto you"*** (Matthew 9:28-29).

May these notes encourage more of the outworking of faith in our lives. Let us pursue it earnestly, knowing that God is a rewarder of them who believe Him enough to diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). God bless you mightily.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (AND PERSONAL MEDITATION):

1. What stage do you think you are at in faith? In other words, what can **YOUR FAITH** do for you right now?
2. Do you believe your faith can conquer every negative mood in life? i.e. depression, grumpiness, anger, pouting, etc? (These things all help to destroy our faith).
3. Is there anything that faith cannot do?

6. TRUST

JUST A LITTLE WORD, but what a huge difference it can make in our life! This is a word that we Christians often use quite glibly in telling others to “*Trust God.*” **But do we trust God?** Have we been so impacted by Jesus Christ that we have learned to trust Him more than anyone or anything else? Trust is a powerful word, so let us look more closely at it:

1. **Trust is "confidence, trust, boldness"; "to rely upon, to have a fully convinced persuasion of a thing as true" (Bullinger's).**

To have a fully convinced persuasion builds such a confidence, peace and assurance into our lives. It gives us meaning, direction and purpose in life. How beautiful to have the privilege to trust God each step of the way throughout our time here on earth. We need to treasure it greatly.

2. **There is a Blessing in Trusting God:**
“Blessed is the man that makes the Lord his trust . . .” (Psalm 40:4; Psalm 84:12). Our lives, transformed by God, will cause others to trust in the Lord (Psalm 40:3). Trust generates blessing! Blessing means contentment. **There are so many benefits when we trust God!**
3. **Trust Brings Blessings:**
Thus says the Lord: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord . . . Blessed is the man who TRUSTS in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord” (Jeremiah 17:5, 7, NKJV). These verses are self-explanatory. We have the choice: we can either put our confidence in the “cleverness” of man and be cursed, or we can put our trust in the Lord and be blessed. The choice is clear-cut! Choose wisely and well.
4. **Trust Gives Happiness:**
“. . . And whoever TRUSTS in the Lord, happy is he” (Proverbs 16:20).

How many people today are seeking happiness? They look here and they look there; they give their time and expense to all sorts of pleasures seeking that elusive happiness. But happiness is not found in things, or riches, or this world's goods – it is found in trusting the Lord!

5. Trust Brings Peace:

“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). What a tremendous promise from God's Word! Perfect peace becomes the possession of those who will keep their minds focused on the Lord. We have the assurance of God's everlasting strength strengthening our lives from day to day.

6. Trust Brings Safety:

“The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever TRUSTS in the Lord shall be safe” (Proverbs 29:25). Here we have the assurance of God watching over us to keep us safe. What great comfort that brings to us.

7. Trust Brings Security:

“They that TRUST in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abides forever” (Psalm 125:1). Trust is like a huge anchor that enables us to stand tall and true whatever storms in life come our way. The world cannot give this to us.

8. Mercy Surrounds Those Who Trust God:

“Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he who TRUSTS in the Lord, mercy shall surround him about” (Psalm 32:10). Every day we need to know God's mercy toward us. How good it is to know that this is all a part of our trusting God.

9. Trusting in God Brings Help:

“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart TRUSTED in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him” (Psalm 28:7). God's help is available to those who simply put their trust in the Lord. When we trust our lives to Jesus Christ and His plan of Salvation, we are trusting our lives to the most wonderful and secure Person we will ever know this side of eternity. *“Thank You, Lord Jesus, for Your help in our lives.”*

10. Trust Brings God's Provision and Things to Pass:

“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). These verses have long been favourite ones for many Christians throughout the generations. There is a pure and true way to receive the desires of our heart, and that is through delighting ourselves also in the Lord. When we put Him first, then He is committed to watching over us, providing for us, and causing us to carry a testimony of the goodness of God in

our lives day by day.

11. Trust is Built on Relationship:

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust." Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence" (Psalm 91:1-3). Here is another awesome promise of God to us. When we choose to abide ("dwell") close to God in that secret ("hiding") place – the place known only to Him and you – then we are indeed in a very wonderful place. We are fully protected by an Invincible God Who is stronger than any other being on earth! And He is committed to watching over us!

What is a "fowler"? It comes from the Hebrew word "yaqosh" meaning "one who took birds by means of nets, snares, decoys, etc. Among the Egyptians 'fowling' was one of the great amusements of all classes. Those who followed this sport for their livelihood used nets and traps . . ." (Unger's Bible Dictionary). A "fowler" in Scripture is anyone or anything that entices us away from that place of relationship with Jesus in the secret place! When that happens we always finish up trapped or snared; living a life of bondage to someone or something other than Jesus Himself.

What is the "perilous pestilence"? "Perilous" means "very hazardous or dangerous" (Collins) and "pestilence" means "any epidemic outbreak of a deadly and highly infectious disease, such as the plague; an evil influence or idea" (Collins); "the Hebrew is 'deber' and seems to have originally meant 'destruction,' but is regularly applied to that common oriental epidemic, the plague. The prophets usually connect sword, pestilence and famine" (Unger's Bible Dictionary).

The Bible warns us that the last days will be "*perilous times*"; it then describes the conditions of those perilous times. It is not hard to see that we are now living in those perilous times (see 2 Timothy 3).

12. Trust Needs to Be Whole-hearted:

"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). This is easier said than done. We have been so used to relying on our own understanding that it takes a conscious effort to lean on the understanding of God. Remember, His ways are very different from our ways, and so we have to make adjustments to the way we think and live in order to get the benefits of Him directing our paths day by day. You can do it!

13. The Israelites Came Under God's Displeasure:

Why was that? Because they **TRUSTED NOT** in His Salvation (Psalm 78:20-22). Salvation is all about trusting Someone else (Jesus Christ) to carry you and to get you where you are meant to be going in time and throughout all eternity. Only Jesus Christ can get you there – and that is why we need to trust in His way of Salvation. There is no other

name, or way, whereby we can enter the Kingdom of God (John 14:6; Acts 4:10-12; 1 Timothy 2:5-6).

14. **Our Hearts Need to Be Fixed on Trust:**

“A good man (the righteous) deals graciously and lends; he will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he will never be shaken; the righteous will be in everlasting remembrance. He will not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is steadfast, TRUSTING in the Lord” (Psalm 112:5-7). There is real stability and wisdom to those who trust in the Lord.

15. **Trusting Brings Fatness (of soul):**

“. . . He who TRUSTS in the Lord will be prospered (“to push forward, break out, go over, be good, be profitable, to make to prosper” – Strong’s). *He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered”* (Proverbs 28:25-26). Again we see the positive benefits of trusting the Lord over and above our own hearts. Consider what is being said here.

16. **God is a Refuge to Be Trusted at All Times:**

“In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. TRUST in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah” (Psalm 62:7-8). God is always there for us. He is only a prayer away. He has promised to *“never leave us nor forsake us”* (Hebrews 13:5-6). The word “Selah” means “to pause, stop for a while and think upon what has been said.”

17. **Trust No Matter What:**

Job said: *“Though He slay me, yet will I TRUST Him . . .”* (Job 13:15). Job was severely tested in his faith, yet because of his **implicit trust** he came through his trials doubly blessed of God than ever before. No wonder he could speak the above words in the midst of his trial.

18. **Knowledge Brings Trust:**

“And those who know Your name will put their TRUST in You; for You, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You” (Psalm 9:10). We have a real privilege in knowing God personally. It is that knowledge which causes us to put our trust in Him.

19. **Trust Gives Us a Testimony:**

“But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my TRUST in the Lord God, that I may declare all Your works” (Psalm 73:28). Trusting God enables us to boldly declare what the Lord has done. He has done – and is doing – wonderful things today. Trust Him and see.

20. **Trusting God Brings Opposition:**

“For to this end we both labour and suffer reproach, because we TRUST in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe” (1 Timothy 4:10). We Christians have to be very realistic when it comes to serving Jesus. Those who have never been born-again of the Holy Spirit do not understand, neither do they know the things that

have become very precious to us. The things of God are foolishness to them. Through ignorance of the truth they speak and act against those who now know the joy of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 13:52 & 1 Corinthians 2).

21. Trust Is An Answer to The Fear of Man and Enemies:

“Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; fighting all day he oppresses me. My enemies would hound me all day, for there are many who fight against me, O Most High. Whenever I am afraid, I will TRUST in You. In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my TRUST; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?” (Psalm 56:1-4 NKJV). Opposition will cause the man and woman who trusts in God to rise up with courage and in boldness, knowing that God is far greater than all our enemies.

“In God have I put my TRUST; I will not be afraid. What man can do to me?” (Psalm 56:11).

22. King Hezekiah is an example of how trusting God can cause us to be severely tested by our enemies (2 Kings 18 & 19; Isaiah 36 & 37).

23. Trust Solves the Problem of Backsliding:

“. . . I have also trusted in the Lord; I shall not slip” (Psalm 26:1). It is very difficult to distance oneself from the Lord when we know the joy and intimacy of that abiding trust in Him; they are two opposites.

24. David and Jonathan had to trust one another to enable their covenant relationship to be successful – otherwise Saul would have destroyed it. Their trust in one another endured through to the end, when Jonathan was killed in battle next to his father, Saul (1 Samuel 20 & 1 Samuel 31).

25. A virtuous woman causes the heart of her husband to safely trust in her. This is a beautiful illustration of the woman being the bride of Christ and what she can accomplish as a result of that trust. She trusts in God, and He trusts in her (Proverbs 31:10-12).

26. Psalm 4:5 – “Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your TRUST in the Lord.”

To be a genuine Christian we must demonstrate our trust in the Lord by our actions. It must be more than talk. It has to become a life-style, the truly positive Christian way of living. Putting it another way, we have to “Walk the talk” more than to “Talk the walk.” God bless you.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

7. POSSESSING WISDOM

Wisdom! Now this is something we all need more of! Everywhere we look today we can see some evidence of the lack of wisdom. So much of our time, energy, people contacts, and money can be wasted through the lack of wisdom being applied in our day-to-day living. Wisdom is not an automatic gift in our lives; we must learn how to get it, and then how to apply it. The proverbs say we need to *“buy”* it:

“BUY (“obtain, acquire”) THE TRUTH and sell it not; also WISDOM, and instruction, and understanding” (Proverbs 23:23).

The purpose of our need to understand the Word of God is *“to KNOW WISDOM”* (Proverbs 1:1-6).

WHAT IS WISDOM?

The Scriptural meaning is: “skill, skilfulness in applying knowledge; the right application of knowledge; understanding, intelligence, substance.” Collins English Dictionary gives the following meanings: “the ability or result of an ability to think and act utilizing knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense and insight.”

WISDOM IS A SPIRIT:

“So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the SPIRIT OF WISDOM . . .” (Exodus 28:3, NKJV).

Bezaleel was filled with wisdom from God:

“And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, IN WISDOM, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship” (Exodus 31:3 and 35:31).

Joshua received an impartation of wisdom from Moses:

“Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM, for Moses had laid his hands upon him . . .” (Deuteronomy 34:9).

Jesus is the Wisdom of God:

"The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isaiah 11:2).

"And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with WISDOM; and the grace of God was upon Him" (Luke 2:40).

The New Testament Saints Required Wisdom to Lead Others:

"Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit AND WISDOM . . . And they were not able to resist the WISDOM and the Spirit by which he spoke" (Acts 6:3,10).

"For to one is given THE WORD OF WISDOM through the Spirit . . ." (1 Corinthians 12:8).

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM and revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Ephesians 1:17).

WISDOM COMES FROM GOD:

"And Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whose heart THE LORD HAS PUT WISDOM and understanding, to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, shall do according to all that the Lord has commanded" (Exodus 36:1-2).

"And GOD GAVE Solomon WISDOM and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. Thus Solomon's WISDOM excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men . . . and his fame was in all the surrounding nations" (1 Kings 4:29-31; 5:12).

We can see from these Scriptures that wisdom causes men and women to be promoted to honour, and to become known far and wide. No wonder, then, that Solomon prayed to God for wisdom:

"Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?" Then God said to Solomon: "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honour or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life – but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king – "wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honour, such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like" (2 Chronicles 1:10-12).

"For GOD GIVES WISDOM and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight . . ." (Ecclesiastes 2:26).

“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).

It is the duty of Christians to be asking God for His wisdom, knowledge and understanding, so we will know how to conduct our affairs in a world that is often skeptical of Christian principles. If we lack wisdom it is because we are not asking and seeking God for it.

WHY DO WE NEED WISDOM?

1. ***“Wisdom is the principal (“beginning”) thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding”*** (Proverbs 4:7).
2. Wisdom comes before all things we can desire (Proverbs 3:13-16; 8:11).
3. Wisdom enables us to know and comprehend the calling of God (Ephesians 1:17-18; Colossians 1:9-13).
4. Wisdom gives understanding (Proverbs 1:5-6; Proverbs 2:1-6; Proverbs 3:13; Proverbs 4:4-7; Proverbs 10:23; Proverbs 14:8, 33; Proverbs 17:24).
5. Because the Christian Gospel is a mystery (“that which is known only to the initiated”) and it takes the wisdom of God (not man) to know and speak it (1 Corinthians 2:1-8, especially Verse 7).
6. Wisdom motivates us rightly in our works (Exodus 35:10, 25-35; Exodus 36:1-2). ***“Therefore DO according to your WISDOM . . .”*** (1 Kings 2:6).
7. It is the first of the Spiritual Gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8).

WHERE DOES WISDOM BEGIN FOR US?

“The fear (“reverence”) of the Lord is the beginning of WISDOM” (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 9:10; Job 28:28). ***“The fear of the Lord is the instruction of WISDOM . . .”*** (Proverbs 15:33).

HOW DO WE GET WISDOM?

1. Through understanding the interpretations of proverbs, parables, dark sayings, secrets, mysteries of God's Word (Proverbs 1:1-6; 2 Timothy 3:14-17).
2. ***“By inclining (“stretching out”) our ears to God's Word”***: having ***“ears to hear”*** (Proverbs 1:5; Proverbs 2:1-2; Psalm 49:1-4; Jeremiah 9:12-16, 20-24). ***“. . . but he who heeds counsel is wise”*** (Proverbs 12:15).
3. By receiving the instruction (“chastisement”) of wisdom (Proverbs 1:2-3). ***“Hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not”*** (Proverbs 8:33, KJV). ***“. . . With the well-advised is wisdom”*** (Proverbs 13:10). ***“The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom . . .”*** (Proverbs 15:33).

HOW CAN WE RECEIVE MORE WISDOM?

1. By asking God in faith (James 1:5-6).
2. Through righteousness (Psalm 37:30-31).
3. Through heart application (Psalm 90:12).

4. By receiving instruction ("chastisement") and having a teachable spirit (Proverbs 1:3).

ALL WISDOM FOR CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE CENTRED IN AND AROUND JESUS CHRIST THE LORD (1 Corinthians 1:18-31):

But of Him (God) you are in CHRIST JESUS, who became for us WISDOM from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption – that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:30-31).

Read also Colossians 1:25-29 . . . Paul taught every man of the mystery of **CHRIST IN ALL WISDOM**, which helps to perfect us.

Now let us look at Colossians 2:1-3 . . . Paul wants us to have our hearts *“encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the FULL ASSURANCE OF UNDERSTANDING, to the knowledge* (“full knowledge”) *of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of CHRIST, IN WHOM ARE HIDDEN ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE.”*

I think there is sufficient information here to show you the importance of the place of WISDOM in our lives. The subject is so vast; in fact the words “wisdom, wise, wisely and wiser” are collectively mentioned in the Bible at least 466 times! There is not another Book anywhere that can give us the necessary wisdom we need to succeed in life to the glory of God! So let us always seek to be wise!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND MEDITATION:

1. How can we help one another to grow in wisdom?
2. How important is it to understand the place of wisdom in your life day by day?
3. Do you pray for more wisdom?
4. Do you discipline yourself to gain more wisdom from God’s Word?

8. PROVERBS, PARABLES, MYSTERIES AND SECRETS

This little study is here to help you get to know God and His Word better. It is so important that we do “get to grips” with God's Word. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to cultivate a real hunger and desire within us to “*search the Scriptures*” (John 5:39). It is the Scriptures that hold all the keys of God’s wisdom and knowledge, and, as we search them out, the Holy Spirit is able to give us insight and revelation into the truths that are contained in them.

Right from the very start of our Christian walk we need to know that God's Book, the Bible, is different to every other book that has ever been written. It far surpasses anything else you have ever read. It is God's Book – His Word to you and me. The Bible comes “alive” to us after we are “born-again” of the Holy Spirit, and the same Holy Spirit of Truth makes God's Word real to us.

To get the best understanding of the Bible it is so vital that we recognize it is a spiritual book and, therefore, must be “*spiritually discerned*” (“examined closely”) (1 Corinthians 2:14). It is very important that we allow Scripture to interpret Scripture, and to know that in our interpreting of the Scriptures that Jesus Christ always remains the central focus. He is “*the way, the truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me* (Jesus Christ)” (John 14:6).

The natural man, that is the old life before we were born-again – and the uncrucified life after we are born-again – cannot understand the things of God. It takes the Holy Spirit of God within us to show them to us (see 1 Corinthians 2:1-16).

Jesus said: “. . . *the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*” (John 6:63).

Therefore, when we come to God's Word, we must look to Him to give us the understanding; to ask the Holy Spirit to help us receive what God is saying to us in His Book. We need to look beyond the surface and see there

PROVERBS, PARABLES, MYSTERIES AND SECRETS

are also deeper truths and meanings for us to “feed” our souls on. God's deeper truths and meanings are often veiled in proverbs or parables, and can be missed if we do not take the time to search for the “hidden meanings.”

The introduction to the Old Testament Book of Proverbs can be applied to the whole Word of God, so let us read what it says:

“The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: to know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding, to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice (“right, rightness”), judgment, and equity; to give prudence (“craftiness”) to the simple (“foolish, easily enticed and seduced, credulous, inexperienced” – Wilson's), to the young man knowledge and discretion (“meditation, thought; device, counsel, purpose” – Wilson's) – a wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, to understand a proverb and an enigma (“riddle, parable”), the words of the wise and their riddles (“a knot, acute hidden saying or thing” – Young's; “a puzzle, hard question, proverb, riddle” – Strong's).”

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise (“to treat or regard with contempt, tread on”) wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:1-7, KJV).

According to these verses, **anyone** who will apply themselves to the principles of God's Word will know a definite change in their life-style, from:

- That of being a fool to a wise person;
- That of being ignorant to being a man/woman of knowledge;
- That of not understanding God to that of understanding much more of God (who will ever understand all of God this side of eternity?).

You see, God has all the answers that we will ever need as we travel through life, and, if we will take the time to listen and learn from His Word, we will be amazed at just how right it is. God already knows the end from the beginning and reveals it to us through His Word and Holy Spirit. Our responsibility is to believe what He says, and to show our trust of Him by doing whatever He tells us.

Why does God want us to know His Word?

SOME KEY PURPOSES:

- ***“To know wisdom”*** (5 times in Proverbs 1:2-7);
- To know ***“instruction”*** (4 times in verses 2-8) (“instruction” and “chastisement” come from the same Hebrew word: “musar”).
- ***“To perceive the words of understanding”*** (to know what a proverb – and their dark sayings – is meaning).
- To receive ***“justice”*** (“right, rightness”);

- To receive the instruction of **“judgment”**;
- To deal with **“equity”** ("upright things");
- To give **“prudence”** ("craftiness") to the simple (those who live life in its simplicity);
- To give to the young man **“knowledge”**;
- To enable us to act with **“discretion”** ("thoughtfulness");

This enables a wise person:

- To hear;
- To increase learning;
- To be a man or woman of understanding (4 times);
- To attain unto wise counsels ("combinations, plans").

Proverbs, Parables, Mysteries and Secrets all need to be interpreted or translated to the point that we gain the benefits of what they are speaking to us about: **“To understand the Proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings”** (KJV). The words “proverb” and “parable” come from the same Hebrew word “mashal” meaning: “a ruling, saying, proverb, parable, similitude.” Another way of saying it is, “An earthly story with a heavenly meaning.” They are part of God painting pictures to us, and those pictures need to be both seen and understood.

A PROVERB IS A PARABLE:

In the Old Testament both words are translated from the same Hebrew word "mashal."

In **Proverbs 1:1-6** Solomon gives us the purpose for them from the Old Testament (please read these verses carefully from your Bible).

In **Matthew 13:3, 10-17**, Jesus gives us the purpose for them from the New Testament, and that is: **“to know the mysteries** (“what is known only to the initiated”) **of the Kingdom of heaven.”**

All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: “I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 13:34-35; see also Mark 4:10-13, 33-34; Luke 8:4-18).

Psalm 49:1-4: The Psalmist exhorts us to give time to wisdom and understanding, recognizing that they are tied up in parables and dark sayings. He found he could bring release through music – his harp.

Psalm 78:1-11: This is very similar to Psalm 49:1-4, except here we are shown the responsibility of passing on **“revealed parables and dark sayings”** to our children and the generation to come – that they might know the praises of God, His strength, His wonderful works – that they should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God and not forget His works, but keep His commandments . . . this is

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covenant life. (See also Deuteronomy 29:29).

Proverbs 26:1-11: Parables and fools do not mix! (Verses 7 and 9). *“A fool has no delight in understanding . . .”* (Proverbs 18:2).

Deuteronomy 28:37: Disobedient Christians become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word (people cannot understand those who are out of tune with God). (1 Kings 9:6-7 and 2 Chronicles 7:20).

1 Kings 4:29-34: God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceedingly, and largeness of heart . . . he was wiser than all men. He spoke 3,000 proverbs and his songs were 1,005. The big question is: “Did Solomon himself not understand the words of his own mouth given to him by God?” . . . (Solomon's life fell away from God dreadfully at the finish: 1 Kings 11).

Born-again, Holy Spirit-filled, New Covenant saints have a tremendous advantage over Old Covenant people because we have direct access to the Revealer of the Word Himself (Jesus Christ), through His abiding in us by the Holy Spirit.

“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. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you . . .” (See John 16:13-18, 19-24).

Then Jesus said, *“These things I have spoken to you in figurative language (“parables, obscure sayings” or “parables”), but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father”* (John 16:25; See also 1 Corinthians 2:9-16).

THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL

(I am linking proverbs, parables, and figurative language (dark sayings) with the word "mystery"):

JESUS:

And the disciples came and said to Him (Jesus), “Why do you speak to them in parables?” He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to YOU TO KNOW THE MYSTERIES (“what is known only to the initiated”) of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it has not been given” (Matthew 13:10-11).

See also Matthew 13:34-35:

“I will open my mouth in parables: I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world” (KJV).

PAUL:

The Apostle Paul *“became a minister according to the stewardship (“dispensation or administration”) from God which was given to me for YOU, TO FULFIL THE WORD OF GOD, THE MYSTERY which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but NOW has been revealed TO HIS SAINTS. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this MYSTERY among the Gentiles: which is CHRIST IN YOU, the hope of*

glory" (Colossians 1:25-27, NKJV).

In Ephesians 1:9 Paul declares that **GOD HAS MADE "KNOWN TO US THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL . . ."** See also Ephesians 6:19: ". . . *that he is able to open his mouth boldly to make KNOWN THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL*" (see also Colossians 4:2-6).

In Romans 16:25-26 Paul speaks of "*God's power to establish*" ("to make firm, confirm") *us according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began.*" You and I are very privileged to have access to this revelation of God; it comes to us by the Holy Spirit Who has been sent by Jesus to reveal more of the truth of Jesus to us (John 14:15-18, 25-26; John 15:26; John 16:1-15; 1 Corinthians 2).

In 1 Timothy 3:9 Paul calls the faith a mystery. We are to hold it with a pure conscience.

In 1 Corinthians 2:7-8 Paul talks of "*speaking the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*" This surely makes us to realize how important it is that we get the revelation of the truth, for those "*rulers*" were religious leaders who all had a knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures – which testified of the coming of the Saviour, Jesus. Yet they could not "see" nor "understand" the truth of what they were declaring. Nothing has changed very much even today, for this world is full of religions, many of which are supposedly based on Scriptures from the Bible. But they deny the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and so are basing their believing outside the realm of the revelation of the Holy Spirit of truth.

In Colossians 2:2-3 Paul declares:

"That their hearts may be encouraged ("comforted"), *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.*" Think about this for a moment. It is awesome to know that God desires to share His love, understanding, wisdom and knowledge with US!

In 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 Paul tells us that we are "*Servants*" ("ministers") *of the mysteries of God*" and that we are required to be faithful to that calling.

QUESTION:

- How can we fulfil the afore-mentioned Scriptures unless we understand those mysteries spoken about? And if we do not understand, then what are we ministering?

THE GOSPEL IS FULL OF MYSTERIES

- Speaking in tongues is "*speaking MYSTERIES in the Spirit*" (1 Corinthians 14:2);

PROVERBS, PARABLES, MYSTERIES AND SECRETS

- The type of CHRIST and HIS CHURCH is likened to a marriage relationship and is described as a MYSTERY (Ephesians 5:31-32);
- There is *“the MYSTERY of godliness”* (1 Timothy 3:16);
- There is the MYSTERY of Israel – natural and spiritual (Romans 11:25);
- There is *“the MYSTERIES of the Kingdom of Heaven”* (Matthew 13:11);
- . . . *“the MYSTERY of the Kingdom of God”* (Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10);
- Revelation 10:7 talks of *“the MYSTERY of God”*;
- Revelation 1:20 talks of *“the MYSTERY of the seven stars, and the seven golden candlesticks”*;
- Revelation 17:5 talks of *“the MYSTERY of Babylon”*;
- Revelation 17:7 talks of *“the MYSTERY of the woman”*;
- 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 tells us the MYSTERY of the change we go through when Jesus comes again.

THE SECRET OF THE LORD

(Linking the word “secret” in with the proverbs, parables, figurative language – dark sayings – mysteries of the Word of God):

Psalm 25:14:

“The SECRET (“counsel, secret”) of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and HE WILL SHOW THEM HIS COVENANT.”

Deuteronomy 29:29:

“The SECRET things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which ARE REVEALED belong to us and to our children forever, that we may DO ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LAW.”

Job knew the experience of God's presence and knowledge in his life, yet his trial made him feel like he had lost it:

When He (God) made a law (“decree”) for the rain, and a path for the thunderbolt, then He saw wisdom and declared it; He prepared it, indeed, He searched it out. And to man He said, “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.”

Job further continued his discourse (“parable”), and said: “Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God watched (“preserved, to keep, observe”) over me; when His lamp shone upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness; just as I was in the days of my prime (“youth”), when the friendly counsel (“secret”) of God was over my tent” (Job 28:26-28 to Job 29:1-4).

Proverbs 3:32: *“. . . God’s SECRET counsel is with the upright.”*

Amos 3:7:

“Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He REVEALS HIS SECRET to His servants the prophets.”

Daniel 2:22:

“He reveals the deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him.”

Isaiah 45:1-3 (verse 3):

“And I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the Lord, Who call you by your name, am the God of Israel.”

Proverbs, parables, mysteries and secrets . . . all these words help us to realize how much we really need the Holy Spirit to unlock God's Book (the Bible) to us. But once the things of God do unlock to us, we discover there is tremendous power in God's Word:

- To work on our behalf;
- To work in and through our life today;
- To make us effective witnesses of Jesus Christ;
- And to prepare us for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

God's Word is so full of His promises to those who will respect and serve the Lord today. God's Word not only cleanses us from living evil lives; it also keeps us from sinning against God Himself:

“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart have I 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).

The message is not only for young men: the principles are for all who will take heed to, and listen to God's Word.

HOW POWERFUL IS GOD'S WORD?

“For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; and judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess” (Hebrews 4:12-14, NIV).

- Prove the Word of God!
- Do what it says!

And you will discover (like multitudes of others) that it does have power to do for you what no other book has or can.

To further your knowledge of God's Word, I encourage you to be involved in Bible Correspondence Courses, Bible study groups and Bible reading programmes. “The Gospel Faith Messenger” Ministry can help you with

PROVERBS, PARABLES, MYSTERIES AND SECRETS

these (address at the front and back of this manual).

Make sure you spend time talking to Jesus and the Holy Spirit to unlock to you the proverbs, parables, mysteries and secrets of His mighty Word, so you can come to a greater understanding of the marvels and wonders of God's Living Book, the Bible.

- Why not put time aside right now to search out more of God's Word?
- Try reading it out aloud.
- Put yourself into the Bible teachings, stories and illustrations.
- Let Jesus and the Holy Spirit be real to you through the Word.

God bless you.

9. THE BLOOD OF JESUS OR THE BLOOD COVENANT

THIS IS a very important part of the Christian life. Yet, far too often in these days, we do not hear the Blood of Jesus preached like it should be. Through the blood of Jesus Christ we come to a place of knowing cleansing from all sin, and the power of sin (it is sin or disobedience to God that separates us from Him. Sin can be anything that comes between us and God). It is this cleansing that enables us to stand before a Holy God accepted and uncondemned. The only way into the throne room of God is through the blood of Jesus Christ His Son. So, let us look at this subject:

- ***“The life of the flesh is in the blood”***
(see Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11; Deuteronomy 12:23).

In order for us to fully appreciate the significance and blessing of the shed blood of Jesus, we shall need to look into the Old Testament application of the blood by the Israelites.

The earliest mention in the Bible of the use of lambs for sacrifice is in Genesis 4:4. Abel brought forth a sacrifice – a lamb – which was very pleasing to the Lord. From there the lamb became the prophetic symbol or type for the supreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The Blood of Jesus is far superior to the blood of Abel (compare Genesis 4:4-10 with Hebrews 12:24).

THE PASSOVER (Exodus 12:11-14)

It was to be eaten “. . . ***with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff (“rod”) in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s Passover***” (verse 11).

Why eat in haste? Egypt was pursuing them. It was not time for feasting and taking things easy.

- Thought: The Lord ***“prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies”*** (Psalm 23:5).

It was a time of judgment and death for the Egyptians – and all who were

THE BLOOD OF JESUS or THE BLOOD COVENANT

not protected by the Blood, the sign of God's Covenant (see Exodus 31:21-23). The only safe place was in the houses that had the blood applied on them! The blood protected those people from judgment, plagues, death and destruction (Exodus 12:12-13, 22-23). The Passover feast was not for strangers, but for the circumcised, the set apart ones for God (Exodus 12:43-51; Romans 2:29).

- **The Blood was applied by Faith** (Hebrews 11:28).

The Passover was to be kept as a memorial throughout the generations . . . forever (Exodus 12:14, 24-27). (We will come back to this later in the study. See the part on Holy Communion).

The Blood Covenant is kept by our obedience to God:

EXODUS 24:1-11:

Now He said to Moses, "Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. And Moses alone shall come near the Lord, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him" (Verses 1-2).

When Moses went and told the people all of the Lord's words and laws, they responded with one voice, **"Everything the Lord has said we will do"** (Verse 3). Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said (Verse 4).

He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord. Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, **"All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient"** (Verse 7). Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, **"This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words"** (Verse 8).

Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under His feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise His hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank (Verses 10-11, NIV).

The NIV Bible gives a comment on Exodus 24:8 . . . *"This section (along with many others in the laws of sacrifices) indicates how frequently blood was used in the Old Testament to purify the people and the tabernacle. The author of the Book of Hebrews interprets this Old Testament ceremony of the sprinkling of blood to be prophetic of the blood of Jesus Christ, which purifies us from sin and brings us salvation"* (Hebrews 9:11-28; see also 1 John 1:7).

A BLOOD COVENANT WITH ISRAEL, AFTER THEY HAD VOWED TO BE OBEDIENT TO GOD'S WORD.

Moses sprinkled half of the Blood on the altar (Exodus 24:6). He read the words of the Book of the Covenant; the people promised to obey, after which Moses sprinkled the other half of the Blood on the people.

Verse 10 says: *"They saw the God of Israel."* The Amplified Bible says: *"They saw the God of Israel [that is, a convincing manifestation of His presence] . . ."*

The Old Testament priests were consecrated by blood (Exodus 29:15-21).

THE OLD TESTAMENT – ATONEMENT

In the Old Covenant the blood of the sin offering of atonement was made once a year (Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 4).

Hebrews 10 tells us the old yearly sacrifice and offering up the blood of bulls and goats could never make the people perfect ("complete"). In fact, God did not delight in the blood of bullocks, lambs or goats (see also Hebrews 9:11-28).

In order to give us a clearer understanding of the difference of the Old and New Covenant let us look more closely at the different words that are used:

In the Old Testament the word "atonement" is used to describe the power of the animal blood sacrifices.

"It is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11, 14).

"Atonement" is mentioned 80 times in the Old Testament and means "to cover, to cover sin, or to secure the sinner from guilt and punishment; to atone for an offence" (Wilson's); "covering." It is mentioned only once in the New Testament: in Romans 5:11 where it means "reconciliation (a thorough change)."

The Old Testament (Covenant) shedding of blood **covered** the people's sins (Psalm 32:1; Psalm 85:2). But it could not **take away** our sins (Hebrews 10:3-4).

THE NEW COVENANT – THE SHEDDING OF JESUS' BLOOD:

Jesus Christ gave His life – not to COVER our sins – **but to take them away!** (John 1:29; Hebrews Chapters 9 and 10).

There had to be a Blood Sacrifice that was powerful enough to **remove sin** – or to take away sin – and only the offering up of **Jesus' Blood** was worthy enough to be that sacrifice: He shed His precious, spotless Blood when He

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was crucified for us on the Cross of Calvary (John 19) – not to “atone” or cover our sins (the word “atone” is not used). Notice the New Testament words that are used instead of “atonement”:

REMISSION, REDEMPTION and FORGIVENESS:

Remission means “dismissal, discharge, setting free; remission of debt or punishment; hence, the forgiveness of sins on the part of God, and with reference to the future judgment; total remission and forgiveness excluding all idea of punishment” (Bullinger’s); “a sending away” (Matthew 26:26-28).

Redemption means “the act of freeing or releasing; deliverance; redemption, not with reference to the person delivering, but to the person delivered. Hence, redemption for one from guilt and punishment, brought about by expiation . . . applying to the whole being, deliverance of the soul from sin, and the body from the grave” (Bullinger’s); “a loosing away” (Ephesians 1:7). The word “expiate” means “to atone for or redress (sin or wrongdoing); make amends for” (Collins).

Forgiveness means “discharge, setting free; remission of debt or punishment” (Bullinger’s); “sending away, loosing” (Colossians 1:14).

Notice the New Testament preachers did not preach “atonement” but “remission” of sins:

- **John the Baptist** preached repentance for **the remission** of sins (Mark 1:4; Luke 1:77; Luke 3:3).
- **Peter** preached **remission** of sins (Acts 2:38; Acts 10:43).
- **Paul** preached **remission** of sins (Romans 3:23-26).

He also emphasized: ***“And without shedding of blood there is no remission”*** (Hebrews 9:22).

Jesus told His disciples: ***“Whose soever sins ye remit (to send away), they are remitted (sent away!)”*** (John 20:23, KJV).

- **We today** are commissioned to preach repentance and **remission** of sins in **JESUS' Name** among all nations (Luke 24:47).

The New Covenant is by way of **remission** of sins, which means there is no more (or no other) offering for sin – but a new and living way into the holiest by **The Blood of JESUS** consecrated through His flesh (Hebrews 10:16-27). This shows the promise and reality of the New Covenant. **Jesus gave His Blood** through the laying down of His flesh (life) that we might be cleansed in our bodies (flesh) by His **Blood**.

WARNING: If, after receiving this knowledge of the truth, and we sin wilfully, we have judgment to face (Hebrews 10:26 –This is speaking to mature believers).

- The Blood is the protection – the Blood is our personal protection – walk in its power.

There is forgiveness for sinning ignorantly (Leviticus 4; 1 Timothy 1:12-15). *“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 . . . If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:7-10; 1 John 2:1-2).

The provision which God has made for us through the blood of Christ is now in force (Isaiah 53; Ephesians 2:13-22; Colossians 1:20-21; Revelation 1:5-6). Last wills, covenants and testaments, only come into force when the one who made it dies. In Bible terms this means the shedding of blood. Jesus has died for us!

THE BLOOD COVENANT

Let the Bible explain it to us:

“[Christ, the Messiah] is therefore the Negotiator and Mediator of an [entirely] new agreement (testament, covenant), so that those who are called and offered it, may receive the fulfillment of the promised everlasting inheritance, since a death has taken place which rescues and delivers and redeems them from the transgressions committed under the [old], first agreement.

For where there is a [last] will and testament involved, the death of the one who made it must be established,

For a will and testament is valid and takes effect only at death, since it has no force or legal power as long as the one who made it is alive.

So even the (old) first covenant [God's will] was not inaugurated and ratified and put in force without the shedding of blood.

For when every command of the Law had been read out by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of slain calves and goats, together with water and scarlet wool, and with a bunch of hyssop sprinkled both the Book [the roll of the Law and covenant] itself, and all the people, Saying these words: This is the blood that seals and ratifies the agreement (the testament, the covenant) which God commanded [me to deliver to] you. [Exodus 24:6-8.]

And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and all the [sacred] vessels and appliances used in [divine] worship.

[In fact], under the Law almost everything is purified by means of blood, and without the shedding of blood there is neither release from sin and its guilt nor the remission of the due and merited punishment for sins.

By such means therefore it was necessary for the [earthly] copies of the heavenly things to be purified, but the actual heavenly things themselves [required far] better and nobler sacrifices than these.

For Christ, the Messiah, has not entered into a sanctuary made

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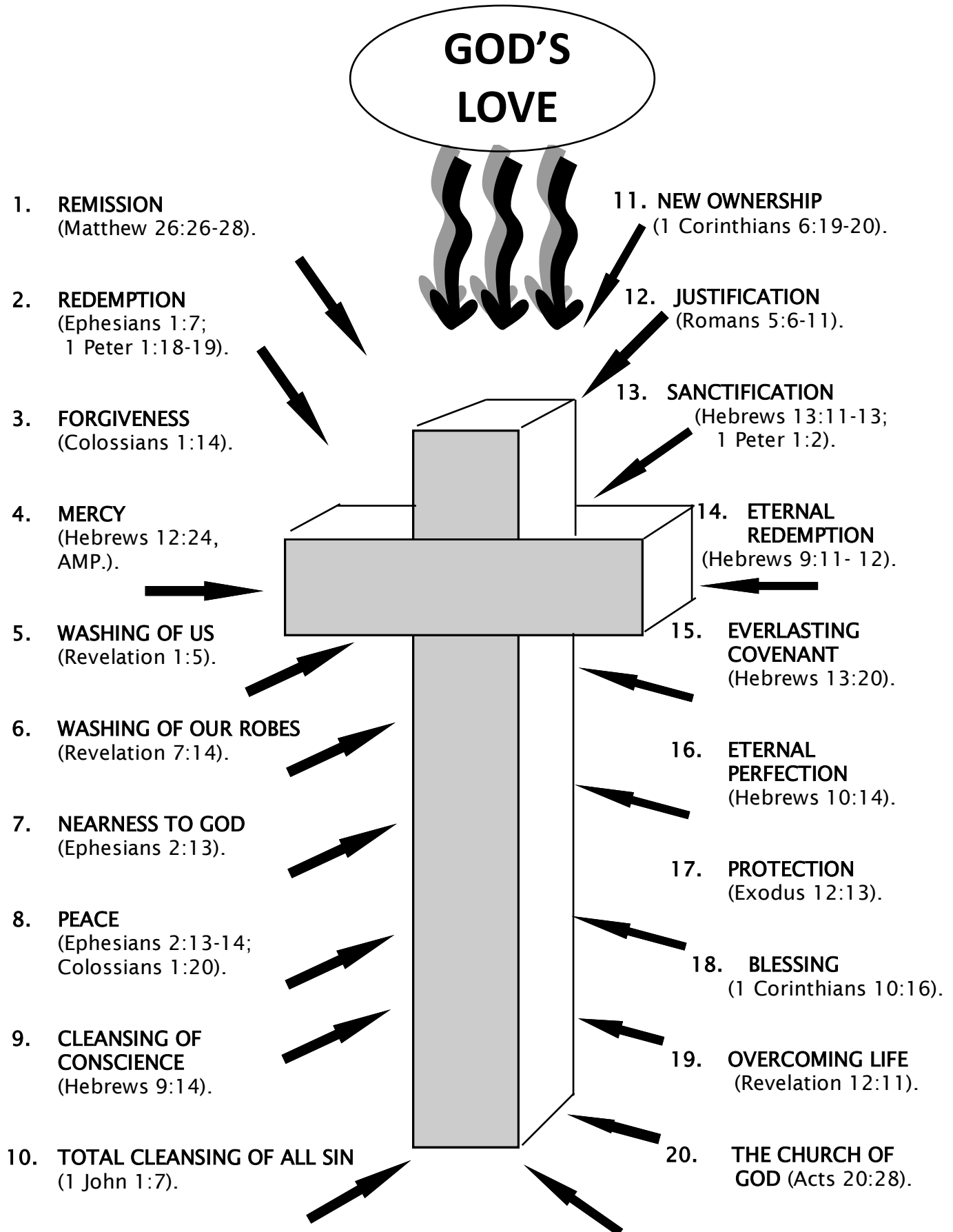
with [human] hands, only a copy and pattern and type of the true one, but [He has entered] into heaven itself, now to appear in the [very] presence of God on our behalf.

Nor did He [enter into the heavenly sanctuary to] offer Himself regularly again and again, as the high priest enters the [Holy of] Holies every year with blood not his own;

For then would He often have had to suffer, [over and over again] since the foundation of the world. But as it now is, He has once for all at the consummation and close of the ages appeared to put away and abolish sin by His sacrifice [of Himself].

And just as it is appointed for [all] men once to die and after that the [certain] judgment, Even so it is that Christ having been offered to take upon Himself and bear as a burden the sins of many once and once for all, will appear a second time, not carrying any burden of sin nor to deal with sin, but to bring to full salvation those who are (eagerly, constantly and patiently) waiting for and expecting Him" (Hebrews 9:15-28, AMP).

WHAT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST PROVIDES FOR US



THE BLOOD OF JESUS or THE BLOOD COVENANT

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Having seen what the **Blood of Jesus** has purchased for us, it is our duty to walk in fellowship with Jesus by partaking of His flesh and His blood (John 6:53-57). In the Old Covenant the Israelites had to keep the Passover as a memorial (Exodus 12:11-14). In the New Covenant believers are commanded to keep the remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice by partaking of the Holy Communion Table. Jesus said: "***Do this in remembrance*** (or "memorial") ***of Me***" (Jesus) (1 Corinthians 11:23-33).

- **The Communion Table is "*a cup of blessing*"** (1 Corinthians 10:16).

We have a responsibility to rightly discern the Lord's body; otherwise we lose the blessing of Holy Communion. If we do not rightly discern the Lord's body we will become weak and sickly, with some even dying (1 Corinthians 11:27-32).

Even those in Moses' day that were not under the protection of the blood over the houses, were dealt with by the judgment of God. Hebrews 10:29 also brings out this strong warning – **belittling the Blood of JESUS** will bring the judgment of God upon us!

- **Jesus has a robe dipped in blood** (Revelation 19:11-13).

Because JESUS shed His blood for me, I can now truthfully say "***HE HAS SET ME FREE***. Praise God!" "***For whom the Son sets free, he is FREE INDEED***" (John 8:32-36).

Our responsibility (now) as born-again by the Holy Spirit, blood-washed and Holy Spirit-filled believers, is to live our lives in such a way that we demonstrate the power of Jesus' blood that has been applied over and in us. We are a very privileged people to know that cleansing of Jesus' blood – the only way of access to the Father's Throne. May this message help you to know the power and reality of those privileges through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord. Let us, each day, overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and the Word of our testimony (Revelation 12:10-11).

10. EVANGELISM

EVANGELISM IS “THE CUTTING EDGE” of the Gospel! It is the winning of the lost to Jesus Christ. It is the ministry of enlarging the Kingdom of God. Every genuine Christian should carry a strong heart’s desire to see men and women come to a personal saving knowledge of Jesus Christ in their own individual lives, in order that they have a blessed and fulfilled life here on earth, as well as the peaceful assurance of eternal life in His presence after we leave this earth. Evangelism should be the norm for every Holy Spirit-filled believer, either in a direct (by personally witnessing our faith in Jesus), or an indirect way (i.e. supporting those who are on the “front lines”)!

Evangelism is:

1. “the practice of spreading the Christian Gospel.
2. ardent or missionary zeal for a cause.
3. the work, methods, or characteristic outlook of a revivalist, or evangelist preacher” (Collins).

What emphasis did Jesus place on the evangelistic ministry?

One of His last commands to His disciples was:

“Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned . . .” (see Mark 16:15-20, NKJV).

Believes what? Believes what you and I say! (Who else is saying it? We are God’s mouthpiece to take this Glorious Message to our generation.) We have already been instructed by the Lord to take His Good News of full Salvation into all the world . . . to every creature.

In 2 Peter 3:9 we see something more of the heart of God:

“. . . He is longsuffering (patient) with us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

When men first began to follow Jesus, we see they were charged with a desire to bring others to Him.

ANDREW:

“The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus” (John 1:41-42, NIV).

PHILIP:

“Philip found Nathanael and told him, ‘We have found the One Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph’ (John 1:45, NIV).

JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF:

Jesus demonstrated His love for the lost when He ministered life and forgiveness to the woman at the well (John 4). That one meeting with Jesus turned that Samaritan woman at the well into a real evangelist, for she returned to her village and people exclaiming Jesus is the Christ! This example shows us the power of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, for it was a word of knowledge about the woman’s husbands that impacted her life to know that she was dealing with someone who knew things about her situation.

God's purpose for Christendom – and especially Pentecostal Christendom – is that we be endued or clothed upon with power from on high to be witnesses unto Jesus (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). He has empowered us for the express purpose of making us His living witnesses. That is, that through His sacrificial love in redeeming us, He has transformed us from wretched sinners to victorious saints and made us *“able ministers of the New Covenant”* (2 Corinthians 3:2-6) to speak powerfully of the truth of the Gospel. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit we can speak with authority of the fact that Jesus is the only way of Salvation; that God has raised Him from the dead, and that He lives today to meet us at our point of need.

PAUL:

When Jesus met Paul on the Damascus road, this is what Jesus said to him: *“But rise and stand upon your feet: for I have appeared unto you for this purpose, to make you a minister (“huperetes” meaning “an under-rower or common sailor; an assistant; any subordinate acting under the direction of another” – Bullingers) and a witness (“martus” meaning “martyr; one who has information, or knowledge of a thing, and can therefore give information concerning; bring to light or confirm anything” – Bullinger’s) both of these things which you have seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto you. Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision . . . Having therefore obtained help from God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great . . . That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles” (Acts 26:16-23, KJV).*

THE EARLY CHURCH:

The Early Church disciples were motivated by a strong passion to preach

Jesus Christ wherever they went. Not even persecution stopped them! (see Acts 4:16-22; Acts 5:17-32; Acts 5:40-42; Acts 8:1-8).

- **Evangelism is not “a programme” for the Church, but a life-style for the people (of God)!**

To me, it seems a real tragedy that the area of our most potential in God – namely evangelism in the power of the Holy Spirit – has somehow become our greatest lack. Generally speaking, in a nation like New Zealand, the Christian community really struggles to openly, boldly and fearlessly witness of Jesus.

- **If the burden, desire, passion, and zeal for the lost is not burning in our hearts, then no amount of programming in the Church will make us ongoing, effective witnesses for Jesus.**

Yet, in saying this, church should be a place where the presence and reality of Jesus is experienced and therefore our “church programmes” should be immersed in the burden, desire, passion and zeal to win the lost to Jesus Christ – and at the same time be happy to obey the great commission of Jesus to touch our world with His good News.

LET'S GET BACK TO BASICS

Evangelism, witnessing, sharing our testimony and preaching the Gospel is the very basis of Bible Christianity. **We must rekindle the flame!** Maybe we should even seek to have a new experience of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire (Matthew 3:11)?

As far as I can see from the Word of God, the steps for a Christian to be an effective witness of Jesus are:

1. **Know that God has chosen you** (or taken you in hand).
2. **Know His will.**
3. **See the Just or Righteous One (Jesus).**
4. **Hear His voice** (Acts 22:14).

Then, in the very next verse, Jesus told Paul that he would be His witness unto all men of what he had seen and heard! (Acts 22:15).

- **When we have the basics right, evangelism will again become the norm of a Christian lifestyle!**

I am not anti-programmes for evangelism. Anything that will lead to the salvation of the lost is good and God-glorifying. What I am saying is that programmes can never fully take the place of Christians being living witnesses of Jesus at home, work, school and play. I encourage churches to be involved in outreaches into the community, i.e. prison ministry, short and long-term missionary service home and abroad, daycare centres, school involvement, Bible in schools teaching, coffee mornings, etc., the opportunities and ideas are endless.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO RESTORE THE CUTTING EDGE?

I believe we need to address the reasons why so many Christians are ineffective in their Christian witness. The biggest hindrance would be **the fear of man . . .** the Proverb says it snares us: *"The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe"* (Proverbs 29:25).

Fear! We must face it and realize it renders us powerless. Fear robs and binds us; it prevents us from being what Jesus purchased us to be! Let's acknowledge it, renounce it, and actively work on eliminating it from our life. How?

"Perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment ("torment"). The one who fears is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18, NIV).

- Love is the answer!

"For God so loved the world that He gave . . .!" (John 3:16).

- True Christians LOVE! – They love God! They love other Christians! They love the people in the world! They love themselves!
- Fear has caused us to hide behind **excuses!**

One of the big excuses for not witnessing is the idea that it is better to be a "silent witness." **Let's face it: if we really are a silent witness there is no need to be worried about being a talking witness!** The truth is that far too many of us struggle with speaking out the name of Jesus within earshot of the unsaved!

The Bible asks the question:

"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?" ("to be a herald, discharge an herald's office, to make proclamation, announce publicly, publish announcements" – Bullingers; a "preacher" is an ordinary Christian who is telling the Good News of what Jesus has done for him!) (Romans 10:14).

So, Scripturally speaking, a silent witness is not an effective witness. We are called and commissioned to preach, speak out, tell the glad tidings of good things – not just some of us, but all of us! Let me remind you that **we gained our salvation** on the basis that we confessed Jesus aloud with our mouth (Romans 10:8-13). **We keep our salvation** by the same principle of continuing to confess Jesus before men:

"If anyone publicly acknowledges Me as his friend, I will openly acknowledge him as My friend before My Father in heaven. But if anyone publicly denies Me, I will openly deny him before My Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33, TLB).

Without faith we cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6), and **faith SPEAKS!** (Romans 10:6, 8-13).

- **Christians confess Christ before men!**

My prayer is that you will be helped and challenged by this word on evangelism. May you be open in your heart to stir the desire to be zealous in your witness to Jesus before others. The lost need to hear what Jesus has done for you. Don't wait for other Christians – **share your faith**. Jesus has done great things in your life. Tell someone about it. Ask God to release a new infilling of His Holy Spirit into your life, giving you fresh power to witness unto His Name. There's nothing more satisfying than sharing your Christian faith with someone who does not yet know Jesus. Who knows, your testimony may be the means of bringing that someone to eternal life.

JOIN ME IN THIS PRAYER

Let us pray this prayer together:

"Dear Father, in Jesus' Name I come to You specifically to ask for a renewed zeal, passion and love for those around me who are lost – those who do not know You in a personal way. I understand by Your Word that You have commanded me to be Your witness and to help to preach the Gospel to every creature. Please forgive me for the times I have failed to take the opportunities You have given me to speak about You to others. Lord, I really do want to be a soul-winner. Please use me to witness to them! Please give me a renewed boldness to share my faith. Take every hindrance out of my life and put into me what is necessary for me to fulfil Your Word. Save the lost, Lord Jesus! Give me a greater burden for them, Lord, I pray in Jesus' Name. Amen."

"Go quickly now, and tell . . ."

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

11. FOUR KEY WORDS FOR EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

God's Way of Reaching the Lost and the Needy is Through You and Me.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD today is challenging Christians as never before of the utmost importance of being able to EFFECTIVELY minister to the multitude of human needs all around us. Unless we learn to manifest these four key words in our life and ministry, the needs of others will never be properly met. Christianity was never meant to be a selfish “all about me and my needs” life style. It is about Jesus Christ so changing us from the inside out that we are now able to minister in His name, power and love that life-changing message to benefit others to His praise and glory.

Before we look more closely at the four words, let us carefully consider the two following passages of Scripture:

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news (the Gospel) of the kingdom, and curing all kinds of disease and every weakness and infirmity. When He saw the throngs, He was moved with pity and sympathy for them, because they were bewildered - harassed and distressed and dejected and helpless - like sheep without a shepherd” (See also Zechariah 10:2). Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the labourers are few. So pray the Lord of the harvest to force out and thrust labourers into His harvest.” And Jesus summoned to Him His twelve disciples and gave them power and authority over unclean spirits, to drive them out, and to cure all kinds of disease and all kinds of weakness and infirmity (Matthew 9:35-38 to Matthew 10:1, AMP).

Jesus has commissioned His followers - His disciples - to lay a hold on the things He taught and imparted to us. He has already given us of His authority to take the Gospel to the nations!

FOUR KEY WORDS FOR EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" He replied. "How do you read it?" He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, "Love your neighbour as yourself."

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' "Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:25-37, NIV).

The needs of humanity are endless! Everywhere they stare us right in the face!

- But do we see them?

Jesus saw them. And when He saw them He was moved with compassion to do something about it.

- He taught them;
- He blessed them;
- He healed them;
- He delivered them.

Everywhere Jesus went He saw a harvest of lost souls to be gathered in. But there were so few who were involved in gathering in of that harvest.

The labourers are few!

The labourers are few!

The labourers are few!

Will we respond to the call of Jesus? One of the reasons Jesus has called you and me to walk with Him is so He can teach us how to gather in the harvest. **He wants to give us the keys to do it.** Notice in the first passage that the ones Jesus told to *“pray that God would send labourers into His harvest”* were His very own disciples. Then in Matthew 10:1 those **same disciples** were commissioned to go out into that harvest and gather it in!

If we are going to be effective in our Christian ministry we are going to have to see the needs of the multitudes out there. The cry of Jesus to reach the needy has to permeate our hearts and minds to the point where we will actually do something about it!

Let us not be as the Pharisees of old: *“They did not see what Jesus saw, so they did not do what Jesus did”* (John Ortberg in his book “Love Beyond Reason”).

We must guard against wasting our life once we have become born-again, Holy Spirit-filled Christians! God saves and fills us for the purpose of making *“His deeds known among the people”* (1 Chronicles 16:8; Psalm 105:1). **Be motivated to do all His will today!**

- What will our decision be?
- Will we see the harvest as ready for reaping?
- Will we be moved with compassion toward it?
- Will we pray for God's answer to it?
- Will we pray for God to raise up labourers?
- Will we put ourselves in a position to be able to go?
- Will we respond?
- Will we . . .? . . . or will we make excuses?

The second Scripture passage is one that shows up human nature in a bad light. Even though the priest and Levite were religious men who should have known how to respond to need, they were so “wrapped up in their own importance” that they were unable, or unwilling, to get involved. They made a decision to cross over **away from the need** – *“they passed by on the other side”!*

- **Are we like that?** Too often we are! Too often we avoid getting involved in helping those who have greater needs than ourselves. Tragically, we always seem to find a “justifiable” excuse!

The people Jesus uses are those who are **available to Him; who will respond to compassion's cry; who will show mercy and not condemnation; who have learnt how to bind up the wounds; who know what to do.**

Jesus gave us the example. Now we are to *“Go and do likewise”* (Luke 10:37). In ministry there are four key words that need to become a part of us. The four words are love, compassion, understanding and responsibility.

FOUR KEY WORDS FOR EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

1. LOVE

(The Greek word is "agapao" – Matthew 22:36-40).

Christians are called to a total love of God – to LOVE HIM with ALL our heart, soul, strength and mind. This love for God is the same love we must have for our neighbour – the same word "agapao" is used for both. This kind of love can only take us to one place, the same place it took Jesus – **THE CROSS**.

The Cross speaks of death, self denial, sacrifice; it is costly and will cost us to follow in Jesus' footsteps.

"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24).

Jesus said: *"And he that takes not his cross, and follows after Me, is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:38).*

Jesus said: *"Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mark 8:34).*

Jesus said: *"And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:27).*

Jesus said: *"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsakes not ALL that he has, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:33).*

These verses test our personal love for Jesus Christ! (See also John 14:23-24 and John 15:13). But "agape" or "agapao" love does not limit itself to loving God only! It has to show itself to our **"neighbour"** (1 John 4:20). And, like the lawyer of Luke 10:25-29, we try to justify ourselves by asking: **"Who is my neighbour?"**

Again, JESUS leaves us in no doubt! Our **"neighbour"** is the person in need – the ones who have fallen among the thieves of this world. If we cannot see "neighbours" all around us, we are not a disciple of Jesus.

Recommended Reading: Rodney's book: "You Can Measure Your Love For God."

2. COMPASSION

In Matthew 9:35-38 we see Jesus ministering in love to the people, and in Luke 10:25-37 the Good Samaritan ministering in love to the fallen.

- How did they display their love?

Through compassion; compassion is "to feel the bowels yearn, to pity, to show mercy, to have the desire of relieving the miserable, to show kindness by helping, to suffer with another, to be affected in like manner" (Bullinger's).

When Jesus saw the multitudes *"He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted* ("to lose out, relax, had given up"), *and were scattered* ("thrown down"), *as sheep having no shepherd."* The needs were so great, that Jesus alone could not minister to them all. He called His disciples (those who love Him with all their heart, soul, strength and mind) to PRAY that God would send forth labourers ("workers") to reap the plenteous harvest of human need. Those who prayed were the very ones that were called to minister! **There is no escaping the will of God if we really LOVE HIM AND OUR NEIGHBOUR.**

Without love there is no compassion, and without compassion there is no love (see 1 John 3:16-18). Once Christians have allowed our love for God and men to take US to the Cross, compassion begins to flow in us. To minister love and compassion we have to consider our third key word, which is:

3. UNDERSTANDING

(Matthew 13:23; Ephesians 5:17).

Every needy person is an individual with individual needs. To minister properly and effectively in love and compassion we also need to understand the person we are seeking to help. Sadly, there have been many people, including Christians, who have been really hurt and wounded because there was no understanding of the real problem. Prayer, praise and quoting the Scriptures is not the answer to many problems. Some spiritual healings need time and patience – time on their part . . . patience on ours! Trust has to be earned and built. We have to understand whether or not there is need of forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, breaking of curses, deliverance, etc. before we can effectively bring about a total restoration in a person's life. This can often mean that we have to let go of some pre-conceived ideas about a person and their problem before we can make any real headway in seeing them set free.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

True love, compassion and understanding brings a certain responsibility to the Christian. It is amazing how many **try** to avoid responsibility! The Jesus way of life makes us responsible citizens – Good Samaritans to our neighbours, having the answers to the needs of humanity (not like the Levite and priest who passed by on the other side; religious, but not followers of Jesus' will).

The challenge of Christ that motivated the Apostle Paul must also be the challenge that motivates us: *"To present every man perfect* ("complete, mature") *in Christ Jesus"* (Colossians 1:27-29).

This is our responsibility, and with these four key words in mind we can do it for the glory of God. To actively pursue these four key words in our life as soon as we can after being born-again by the Holy Spirit will help us to rise up and achieve great things for God. He has chosen us to be His living witnesses of what His power can do in and through the life of a person. Do not be afraid of taking responsibility; it can be the very making of your

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character and bring you through into a very fruitful place in the Kingdom of God. Accept your responsibility to take the Gospel message out to the nations motivated by love, compassion and understanding of the heart of Jesus toward them. Let us not be guilty of being “a saved soul but having nothing to show for it” when we stand before the Lord on that day to give account of those things we have done (or not done) here on this earth. Amen!

12. CHRISTIANITY IN THE HOME

THE Real test of our life is, “How Christian are we when we are not in church?” The word “Christian” means “Christ-like” (or like Christ) and is Scripturally-applied to those people who are **disciples** of Jesus Christ (Acts 11:26).

In today's world Christianity in the home is the way we live with our family (wife, husband and children) or, if we are single, and away from home, the way we live in the flat, boarding house, etc. **It is at home where the qualities of our commitment to Christ must shine through.**

One of the first challenges a Christian faces as an individual away from church fellowship is the “getting together” of a daily devotional altar in our life – making time to pray and read the Bible. This is vitally important and often becomes the most neglected. **Discipline is a must!**

PRAYER

Prayer is simply talking to God: Telling Him all about it - seeking His guidance and answers for the many things that confront us as we go through life's journey. Someone once said: *“Talk to God often, for He is easier to get on with than most people!”*

- Matthew 6:5-16 gives us some advice on prayer.
- 1 John 5:14-15 gives us assurances of prayer.

BIBLE READING/STUDY

To be an effective, informed Christian we need to know what the Scriptures say – firsthand! Hosea 4:6 tells us God's people are **“destroyed for lack of knowledge.”** Ignorance should only apply to the newborn Christian. Jesus taught us to **“Search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me”** (John 5:39). True searching of the Scriptures brings us into personal relationship with Jesus Himself. We need to let His sayings sink down deep into our heart so our whole life will be

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motivated and ordered by His truth. There are plenty of materials available today to help us in keeping up a daily devotional life style. For example, "The GFM" Daily Bible Reading Chart is a very good means of making sure you read the whole Bible over a period of time (the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice a year). Good discipline!

The above two areas are vital for singles and marrieds and families. Because every home has its own set of circumstances, each will have to find their own "best" time and way to read and pray.

If we get into the habit of praying and reading God's Word daily as a single Christian, we will want to continue it with our wife or husband when we get married, and then as a family, if and when we have children. A family altar will alter the family more than anything else when it is done right. The family that prays together stays together.

Praying and reading God's Word daily is the setting aside time each day to acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ over us. This in turn will produce a spirituality in our life through which God can work on our flesh, or character, personality, traits and defects, etc., (which we all have, and which, if the Lord isn't allowed to deal with, can lead us horribly astray).

WORLDLY THINGS

In today's world, Christianity in the home means we individually have to learn to exercise right decisions in areas of our life with regards to what we feed our minds on. For example we have a continual barrage of ***"the world, the flesh and the devil"*** thrown at us via the Internet, radio, TV, social happenings, books, magazines, films, DVD's, etc. We have to learn to control their influence on us, or else these things will make us miserable, powerless, half-hearted Christians. **A lot of tension is created in homes today because of individual personal desires for things of the world. We must remember who we are and that our commitment is to please Jesus – not ourselves!**

The Bible clearly tells us: ***"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides forever"*** (1 John 2:15-17).

- **Worldly things drain us of spiritual power!**

SEXUAL CONDUCT AND IMMORALITY

A major problem area today is in the realm of sexual behaviour. The world makes out it is okay to "sleep around" and that it is wrong to stop people sexually expressing themselves "if they want to." In spite of what the "experts" say, our minds are affected by pornographic Websites (over four million of them!), magazines and books, so called "love-making" scenes on TV and in the cinemas. **If the Christian does not exercise strong self-**

restraint and avoid “feeding the flesh” on such things, then much heartache and sorrow lies ahead. Sexual immorality shatters God's principles for wholesome living, “fouls up” our conscience, spirit, mind and body (all at once!), takes away the necessary securities of life such as trust, confidence, strength, etc. A Christian wife or husband who suspects their partner is unfaithful goes through sheer hell because of it. Many would rather lose their mate in an accident than have an unfaithful partner that eventually wrecks a marriage and home.

To the Christian, the Bible clearly teaches that sex only brings fulfilment and blessing within a marriage. Sex among single Christians is wrong and must be repented of. There is forgiveness and healing for those who will repent and let Jesus cleanse them.

Likewise, it is wrong for Christians who are married to have sexual relationships other than with their wife or husband.

Today we have an increasing number of people in the world who have no sexual restraints at all. Anything goes! And tragically, the devil makes people believe it is okay. Homosexuality is wrong (a homosexual is a person who is sexually attracted to members of the same sex – today, generally, applied to men, and the name lesbian to women). Bestiality is wrong (bestiality is sexual activity between a person and an animal). Incest is wrong (incest is sexual intercourse between two persons commonly regarded as too closely related to marry, i.e. father and daughter, mother and son, brother and sister). **Child sexual abuse is causing huge problems in society today!**

These sexual sins lead to various sicknesses and diseases, as well as open people up to spirits - insanity is a very real one.

Some Scriptural references on sexual matters are:

- 1 Thessalonians 4:1-5 and 5:22;
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-20 and Chapter 7;
- 2 Timothy 2:22;
- Proverbs Chapters 5 through to 9.

For further Scriptures and teaching on sexual conduct I suggest a re-read of Chapter 9 of my book "*Counselling and Deliverance*" (copies are available).

HUSBANDS AND WIVES AND HOMES

The strength of the Church is directly related to the strength of the marriages within the Church. If I as the pastor am preaching my heart out at church and then go home and belittle, criticize, argue and generally “put down” my wife, then I am headed for trouble. Over a period of time I will lose credibility with the people and they will reject me because of it. They will “pick up” what I am **really** like and re-act to me accordingly. Many well-intentioned Christians never make it into an anointed ministry because their marriage and home is no example to others. You see, the home is a mini-church. If we do well at home, we will do well in the Church. **If we apply**

Christian principles in daily living at home, we will succeed in public acceptance and ministry in the church.

A husband's duty before God is to love and cherish his wife (she is God's gift to you, husband) (Ephesians 5:25; 1 Peter 3:7).

A wife's duty before God is to respect and honour her husband (he is God's protection to you, wife) (Ephesians 5:22; 1 Peter 3:1).

A father and mother's duty before God is to bring their children up in the nurture ("environment") and admonition ("discipline") of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). It takes real commitment to set up and run a Christian home, but it must be done if we want to make an impact upon others. Make no mistake about it: we cannot hide forever the real us, **for what we are is how others will eventually see us.**

Concerning home life, I would like to include here a portion of an article out of "Australia's New Day" magazine, September 1983 - (adapted for New Zealand purposes):

"How we are governed is determined, ultimately, by how we run our families, or, as one writer puts it, when there's harmony in the home, there's order in the nation . . .

Over the years the meaning of the word "government" has come to apply to matters of state. This was not always the case. Webster's Dictionary 1828 edition defines government as "the exercise of authority by a parent or householder. Children are often ruined by a neglect of government in parents." It then goes on to say: "Let family government be like that of our Heavenly Father, mild, gentle and affectionate."

So, much wider definition of the word should be applied to comprehend the full meaning which would include (besides church and civil government) that of family and self-government . . .

1 Timothy 3:4-5 teaches us about the necessity of having well behaved, obedient children. The benefits of this harmonious home life flow on to the Church and to our society. Tragically this is not present in many churches today, due to incorrect family priorities, and the absence of teaching in this area . . . It is obviously the family home where the foundations of Christian character are laid. As Christian parents restore the family altar the nation will be changed. The destiny of New Zealand lies not in the outward changes of governments, but in the inward character of its people and regardless of the future problems this nation faces, New Zealand first needs to have Christian character in its citizens. The Christian family should reflect the character of God and should be the place where a person gains experience on a small but ever increasing scale by applying Biblical principles to life's situations, children learning from their Christian parents who have in turn been taught from God's Word."

The above quote can be applied to every nation. Christian home life is made more difficult today because of the increasing numbers of "one

Christian parent” situations; the Christian continually having to battle against the negative influence of an unsaved partner caught up in the ways of the world. Nevertheless, as a church, we encourage you to **“let your light shine”** and to do all within your power to set a good Christian example for others to follow (Matthew 5:14-16).

A CLEAN AND TIDY HOME

There is no doubt that people do judge us by what they see. If we are busy telling others how to live the Christian life, and our own home is not in order, then our voice in the community will grow weaker and weaker. In fact we will become the talking point for others to mock Christianity.

In every area of life the Christian is called to set an example. We should take “personal pride” in keeping ourselves clean and tidy – and sweet smelling! Our clothing should be neat, without being overdressed one way, or too scruffy the other. (Husbands, allow your wives the pleasure of new clothing from time to time by giving extra money).

Our home and property also needs to show forth a Christian testimony. Keep it clean and tidy. The Book of Proverbs has quite a bit to say about the subject of idleness and laziness, or as it is commonly called, slothfulness (Proverbs 18:9; 19:15 and 24:30-34).

WE ARE CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS

“When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun! All these new things are from God who brought us back to Himself through what Christ Jesus did. And God has given us the privilege of urging everyone to come into His favour and be reconciled to Him. For God was in Christ, restoring the world to Himself, no longer counting men’s sins against them but blotting them out. This is the wonderful message He has given us to tell others. WE ARE CHRIST’S AMBASADORS. God is using us to speak to you: we beg you, as though Christ Himself were here pleading with you, receive the love He offers you – be reconciled to God. For God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God’s goodness into us!” (2 Corinthians 5:17-21, TLB).

- **Ambassadors!**
- **Representatives of God!**

No wonder our home life should be an example!

Collins English Dictionary describes the word “ambassador” as follows:

1. “Short for **Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary** (“plenipotentiary” means “invested with or possessing full power or authority, – absolute authority”); a diplomatic minister of the highest rank, accredited as permanent representative to another country or

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sovereign); (a “diplomat” is a person skilled to deal with people; he is engaged in “diplomacy” which is “dealing peacefully through conduct” in managing relationships).

2. **Ambassador extraordinary**, a diplomatic minister of the highest rank sent on a special mission.
3. **Ambassador plenipotentiary**, a diplomatic minister of the first rank with treaty-signing powers.
4. **Ambassador at large** – In the U.S.A. an ambassador with special duties who may be sent to more than one government.
5. An authorised representative or messenger.”

The Bible meaning of “ambassador” is very similar to the Dictionary meaning. It means “to be the elder or eldest; to rank before, take precedence of others. To be an ambassador or go as one; to treat or negotiate as one” (Bullinger's).

The word is used 10 times in the Old Testament, and twice in the New Testament.

- 2 Corinthians 5:20 – **we** are ambassadors.
- Ephesians 6:20 – Paul called himself an *“ambassador in chains.”*

Also the word *“ambassage”* or *“delegation”* is used once in Luke 14:32 to *“seek conditions of peace rather than war.”*

An ambassador's home or dwelling place is called an **“EMBASSY.”**

In 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 we see the spiritual and practical duties of an ambassador:

1. Christ renews us and makes us ambassador material – Verse 17.
2. It is not our doing, but God's (verse 18). *“All things are of God.”* He has reconciled us to Himself.
3. We have been given the ministry of reconciliation (“change on the part of one party only, induced by some action on the part of another”). It means “to change thoroughly” (verse 18).
4. We must not hold others trespasses, mistakes, sins against them – Christ did not hold ours against us (verse 19).
5. As an ambassador we have not only the ministry of reconciliation, but also the word of reconciliation – we change others by example of service (ministry) and also by speaking the word that reconciles (changes thoroughly).

Our mission is to bring others – by example and peaceful means – into right relationship with the One who has commissioned us. *“That we might be made the righteousness of God in Christ”* – Jesus did it for us. Now, through us, He wants to do it for others.

Proverbs 13:17 – *“A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a faithful ambassador brings health.”*

In every aspect of life we need to be seen as true and faithful ambassadors to the One who has sent us: at home, at work, at play, at church – in fact,

everywhere.

- **We are Christ's ambassadors!**

Remember, we are now Christians.

- Our whole life should be showing forth the evidence that we are a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).
- We have been given the ministry of reconciliation (“to change thoroughly”). **To thoroughly change others we must first be thoroughly changed ourselves! We have been made an ambassador for Christ.**
- **We now represent Him! It is a high and holy calling – one we must guard closely.**
- **Let us be ambassadors for Jesus right within our own home.**

Let us encourage one another to press on for the glory of God and to see His love and power revealed totally through each one of us. Amen.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (AND PERSONAL MEDITATION):

1. Suggest some ways to improve prayer and Bible study methods.
2. How can we overcome worldly things we enjoy, knowing they are not pleasing to the Lord?
3. Why is it so important to keep ourselves from sexual immorality?
4. What are some of the results of sexual immorality?
5. What are some of the strengths of a Christian home?
6. How important is Christian hygiene and appearance?
7. What does it mean to be an ambassador for Christ?

“In 1 and 2 Samuel we read of men used of God whose lack of family priorities led to national consequences. Both Eli and Samuel were ineffective fathers to their sons. Sociological studies show a direct relationship between juvenile delinquency in boys and the amount of time spent with them by their fathers. In one sense, then, juvenile delinquents don't exist, only delinquent parents” (taken from "Australia's New Day" magazine).

So much more could be written on this very important area of life, but there is sufficient here to cause us to know that we have an example to set to others.

If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character.

If there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home.

If there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation.

When there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

13. GIVING TO GOD

IN this section of Bible Basics we will take a look at our financial responsibility to God. You might even be surprised to know that we who belong to Jesus do have a financial responsibility to God. Some will very quickly point out that they cannot spare any money; they are now already too much in debt; or, are unemployed, etc.

Regardless of the circumstances we find ourselves in, we must be open to God's Word to instruct us in our finances.

- **Our finance represents us!**

We spend so much of our lives working to get it, and we all feel we never get enough!

If we really want our lives to be blessed, and we want our lives to bless God and others, then we have to face up to the truth that it all has a lot to do with our attitude toward giving, and money in general.

As Christians we can choose to be selfish, or we can choose to bless others. We can have an attitude of *"What can I get out of this?"* or we can choose to be generous in our thinking and say, *"What can I give?"*

- **Everything about God and Christianity has to do with giving!**

"For God so loved the world that He gave . . ." (John 3:16).

"Jesus so loved the Church that He gave Himself for her" (Ephesians 5:25).

Every miracle Jesus did was in order to give people a better lot in life.

"It is more blessed ("happy") *to give* ("to give, present, giving freely and unforced") *than to receive"* (Acts 20:35, KJV).

The Christian life is a giving life: giving ourselves, our time, our money, etc., to help the Lord's work, and others. Be encouraged to get into the habit quickly of being a giver more than a receiver. Let us look at what God's Word says:

“Honour (“to regard, treat, or practically declare one as worthy of honour: to come to honour, to get honour and glory” – Wilson’s) ***the Lord with your substance*** (“wealth, riches, sufficiency”), ***and with the first fruits of all your increase. So shall your barns be filled with plenty, and your presses shall burst out with new wine***” (Proverbs 3:9-10, KJV).

“Honour the Lord by giving Him the first part of all your income, and He will fill your barns with wheat and barley and overflow your wine vats with the finest wines” (Proverbs 3:9-10, TLB).

When we choose to honour God with our income, He promises to look after us and bless us.

- How can we honestly say God is Lord of our life if He is not Lord of our money?
- How we handle money determines the kind of person we really are. There is a great need today for many Christians to be delivered from a miserly, poverty mentality. It will only happen as they learn to give out from themselves.

Listen to what Jesus said:

“Try to show as much compassion as your Father does. Never criticize or condemn – or it will all come back on you. Go easy on others; then they will do the same for you. For if you give, you will get! Your gift will return to you in full and overflowing measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use to give – large or small – will be used to measure what is given back to you” (Luke 6:36-38, TLB).

When we are generous in our giving, Jesus said we will receive back generously. We set the measure. It is so important we discover the blessings of being liberal with our giving.

HOW MUCH SHOULD WE GIVE?

Obviously, the question is going to be asked, *“How much of my money am I supposed to give to God’s work?”* The Old Testament believers were all taught to tithe. *“What is that?”* you may ask. To “tithe” means to give “a tenth part” of your earnings. That tenth belongs to the Lord. It is His as of right!

“And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord’s; it is holy to the Lord”

“And if a man wants to redeem any of his tithe, he shall add a fifth (20%) to it” (Leviticus 27:30-31, AMP.).

The children of Israel lived by the tithe principle of giving one-tenth of all their income back to God. They recognized that God had given them tenths to start with and, for them to only give back one tenth was very evident of a gracious, generous Heavenly Father.

When God's people honour the Lord with their giving it releases the blessings of God in abundance. Look what happened in Hezekiah's day:

Hezekiah assigned the priests and Levites to divisions – each of them according to their duties as priests or Levites – to offer burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, to minister, to give thanks and to sing praises at the gates of the Lord's dwelling. The king contributed from his own possessions . . . He ordered the people living in Jerusalem to give the portion due the priests and Levites so they could devote themselves to the Law of the Lord. As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything. The men of Israel and Judah who lived in the towns of Judah also brought a tithe of their herds and flocks and a tithe of the holy things dedicated to the Lord their God, and they piled them in heaps . . . When Hezekiah and his officials came and saw the heaps, they praised the Lord and blessed His people Israel.

Hezekiah asked the priests and Levites about the heaps; and Azariah . . . answered, "Since the people began to bring their contributions to the temple of the Lord, we have had enough to eat and plenty to spare, because the Lord has blessed His people, and this great amount is left over."

"Hezekiah gave orders to prepare storerooms in the temple of the Lord, and this was done. Then they faithfully brought in the contributions, tithes and dedicated gifts . . ." (2 Chronicles 31:2-12, NIV).

The people not only tithed, but they also brought contributions and gifts into the house of God. They gave as unto God Himself. When they all gave and fulfilled their responsibility to God we find there was an abundance of supply. God's work will never suffer when God's people are faithfully obeying the Word of God.

- Abraham, the man of faith, paid tithes (Genesis 14:18-23; Hebrews 7:1-10).

After God had dealt with Jacob and blessed him, Jacob promised to give God a tenth of all He gave him:

Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's house, then the Lord will be my God and . . . of all that You give me I will give You a tenth" (Genesis 28:20-22, NIV).

All of the things that Jacob was concerned about are all promised to us by Jesus (Matthew 6:25-34). When we do as He asks us in our giving, we can trust Him to fulfil all His promises to us, even today!

ARE WE GUILTY OF ROBBING GOD?

To the Christian this question may be re-acted against by our saying, *“Of course not! We wouldn't do such a thing!”* Yet this is exactly what God accused His people of doing because they neglected Him in their tithing and giving. Through their withholding from God, they tied His hands from blessing them! Let's read it in Malachi 3:8-12:

“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ IN TITHES AND OFFERINGS. You are cursed with a curse; for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse (your church home or Christian Ministry), that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such a blessing, that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I (God) will rebuke the devourer (the devil) for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” says the Lord of Hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,” says the Lord of Hosts (NKJV).

What tremendous promises are given to those who put God first in their giving:

1. God opens the windows of heaven to us;
2. He pours out a blessing, so much so that there will not be room enough to receive it;
3. He rebukes the devourer for our sake;
4. He protects our source of supply;
5. The blessings will be seen by others, who will be attracted to our life-style.

It needs to be made clear at this point that our motivation for tithing and giving must be right. **We give out of love and obedience to God** – not for what we can get out of it in the way of blessing, etc. Jesus had to rebuke the Scribes and Pharisees for their religiosity in tithing and yet leaving aside the love of God, judgment, mercy and faith, etc. (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42).

Jesus also rebuked the Pharisee who tried to justify himself because he tithed of all that he possessed (Luke 18:9-14).

If tithing was an Old Testament practice, why do we have it today? Tithing, or a tenth of our wages, is a basic minimum standard that all Christians need to start off with in their giving to God. The New Testament teaches us to give freely and bountifully.

THE GRACE OF GIVING

2 Corinthians Chapters 8 and 9 are on the message of giving. In Chapter 8 we read how the Christians continued to sacrifice in their giving in order that others might be blessed:

"And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But just as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us – see that you also excel in this grace of giving" (2 Corinthians 8:1-7, NIV).

- There is a grace of giving. Giving is a grace!

Every Christian is a recipient of the grace of God, therefore we need to let our lives extend that grace out to others. The grace of giving is one way we can do that.

Just as we saw previously from Luke 6:38, we place the measure on that grace of giving. We can have small grace or large grace. Here is another Scripture that tells us we determine the size of the blessing:

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." (Psalm 112:9)

Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the Gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:6-15, NIV).

All the promises of God are very positive in the outpouring of blessings to those who are generous in their giving to the Lord and His work.

- **There is a ministry of giving** (Romans 12:8).

THREE KEYS TO GIVING:

I have found there are three basic keys in giving today. Let me share them with you:

1. GIVE WILLINGLY.

"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering: of every man that gives it willingly ("to impel or urge into action; to be of a willing mind; to give willingly; voluntarily, readily, promptly, generously" - Wilson's) *with his heart you shall take My offering"* (Exodus 25:2, KJV).

"Then the people rejoiced because these had given willingly, for with a whole and blameless heart they had offered freely to the Lord. King David also rejoiced greatly" (1 Chronicles 29:9, AMP.).

2. GIVE WITH SIMPLICITY (generously):

". . . he that gives, let him do it with simplicity" (Romans 12:8, KJV).

". . . if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously" (Romans 12:8, NIV).

3. GIVE CHEERFULLY:

"Let each one [give] as he has made up his own mind and purposed in his heart, not reluctantly or sorrowfully or under compulsion, for God loves (that is, He takes pleasure in, prizes above other things, and is unwilling to abandon or to do without) a cheerful (joyous, prompt to-do-it) giver - whose heart is in his giving" (2 Corinthians 9:7, AMP.). (See also Proverbs 22:9).

Giving according to these keys is going to give us the right attitude toward our financial responsibility to God. As we prove God in giving, we will want to increase our giving because of what He has done for us.

- **We cannot out-give God.**

WHEN DO WE GIVE?

In 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 the saints were taught to lay aside that which they were going to give on the first day of the week. The Christians brought their gifts to the church each week - they did not have to wait for the

collection plate to go round to remind them. Giving was an important part of Christianity – and still is – we all should want to give our "first-fruits" to God first. His portion is put aside first – not if there is anything left over! (Deuteronomy 16:17; Proverbs 11:25; Acts 11:29).

Some people say they cannot afford to give even a tithe. What they should be saying is that they can't afford NOT to!

- **Put God first.**

If you think you are a genuine case of hardship, see your House or Cell Group Leader or the Pastor, and they will see what can be done to release God's blessings in your life.

Because so much of our life revolves around money – the earning, receiving, spending and saving of it – it is vital that we have our priorities in order. Put God first; honour Him; make adjustments in other areas so He can bless us and bless others. Budget if necessary to avoid waste.

WHERE DO WE GIVE?

Our first obligation is to the church where God has planted us. You bless with your giving the place where God blesses and feeds you (Malachi 3:10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3).

Your leadership has a responsibility to God to spend it, or send it, according to the leading of God. It costs a lot of money to have a full-time pastor, run a church building, office, advertising, etc., which is basic administration work. On top of this, we have a vast evangelistic challenge to reach the world for Jesus and to make "*disciples of all nations*" (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-20). Together in giving we can do it. Yet, in saying the above, **we also need to be very open to the leading of the Holy Spirit to guide us to give to those Ministries that are making good impact upon the winning of the lost, making disciples among all nations, and in fulfilling the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-20).** God wants to lead and guide us by His Holy Spirit and so it is vital that we listen to Him and do what He asks.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (AND PERSONAL MEDITATION):

1. Do you think a tenth is too much or too little to give to God?
2. How much of Malachi 3:10-12 are you seeing in your life?
3. If you are conscious of having failed God in your giving, would you be too proud to ask for help?
4. Can you visualize just what a church could accomplish if every wage earner gave at least a tenth to God? For example, ten people faithfully tithing could support one full-time worker on their average wage.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

14. SUBMISSION AND OBEDIENCE

In this study we will look at some areas of submission and obedience to see the importance of them in developing an ongoing Christian walk and testimony. Submission and obedience should be motivated out of a heart of love for Jesus rather than an "I have to do it because the Bible, or my pastor, or my church demands it" attitude.

- To "submit" one's self means "to cease fighting, to give way under, to give under, to yield" (Bullinger's). "Be humbled, subdued (willingly)."
- To be "obedient" means "to hear (with the idea of stealth, stillness or attention in order to answer) to listen; hence (as the result of this) to obey" (Bullinger's).

In the area of obedience to leadership and authorities it means "to suffer one's self to be persuaded or convinced, to be persuaded in favour of any one, yield assent to, obey or trust him. To obey a ruler, obey one in authority, to obey or follow one's advice."

Jack Lloyd (a New Zealand preacher) once said: "*People cannot hear what you say for what you are.*" This is so true in the area of submission. We can talk all we know about God, the Scriptures, etc., but if we are not submitted and walking in obedience to God-ordained authorities we are missing God's best purpose for our life. Actions speak louder than words!

"*Salvation is submission*" says Juan Carlos Ortiz in his book "*Disciple.*" Salvation means coming under Christ and His ways. None of us are called of God to "do our own thing." Yet outside of submission and obedience, that's exactly what we do! That's what Jesus was showing Simon Peter in John 21:15-19. Up to that time, even though a follower of Jesus, he had been doing "his own thing," his own will.

On the other hand, we see in Abraham's experience with God and Isaac (Genesis 22) how submitted and obedient he was to Divine authority. There were good reasons why Abraham should not offer up Isaac, but what God said came first.

SUBMISSION AND OBEDIENCE

Jesus in Gethsemane, contrary to His own feelings and will, submitted Himself to the Father's will – there He resolved within Himself to become *"obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"* (Matthew 26:36-39; Philippians 2:5-11).

SEVEN AREAS:

We shall now look at seven areas that Christians are taught to be in submission. Our motivation should be Colossians 3:23-25:

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favouritism" (NIV).

"Work hard and cheerfully at all you do, just as though you were working for the Lord and not merely for your masters, remembering that it is the Lord Christ who is going to pay you, giving you your full portion of all He owns. He is the One you are really working for. And if you don't do your best for Him, He will pay you in a way that you won't like – for He has no special favourites who can get away with shirking" (TLB).

1. Submission to God:

But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:6-7, NIV).

2. Submission to Church Authorities:

"Obey them that have the rule ("those who lead, guide, and govern us") over us and submit ("yield under") yourselves: for they (those who rule you) watch ("to watch, keep guard, be wakeful) for your souls, as they that must give account ("give a reckoning"), that they may do it with joy, and not with grief ("groan, sigh"): for that is unprofitable ("hurtful") for you (Hebrews 13:17, KJV).

Submit yourself to those in the ministry:

"I urge you, brethren – you know the household of Stephanas, that is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints – that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labours with us" (1 Corinthians 16:15-16, NKJV).

Genesis 16 – regarding Hagar and Sarah. Hagar had been submitted to Sarah for 10 years. When she conceived a child by Abraham – which Sarah had not been able to do – Hagar became proud and began antagonising

Sarah. Hagar came out of a place of submission, which caused a re-action in Sarah. Sarah had to bring corrective measures, which Hagar rejected and ran away from. (The big test of submission and obedience is whether or not you can take correction). After Hagar left, the angel of the Lord spoke to her, telling her to return to Sarah and submit herself under her hands (Genesis 16:9). This Hagar did. (I don't think things were quite the same again for Hagar, for in time both Hagar and Ishmael were cast out – Genesis 21:9-10).

We must be sure that the leaders we submit to (in order to obey) are leaders who carry a genuine heart for our well-being and who desire to want to see us fulfil our calling and destiny in God. Relationship is all about knowing each other's heart.

3. Submission to Transfer of Leadership:

Example: David to Solomon ~

"And David said to all the assembly, Now adore (praise, and thank) the Lord your God! And all the assembly blessed the Lord the God of their fathers, and bowed down and did obeisance to the Lord, and to the king [as His earthly representative]. The next day they offered sacrifices and burnt offerings to the Lord, one thousand bulls, one thousand rams, and one thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel; They ate and drank before the Lord on that day with great rejoicing. They made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed him as prince for the Lord, and Zadok to be high priest. Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. All the leaders and mighty men, and also all the sons of King David, pledged allegiance to King Solomon. And the Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel" (1 Chronicles 29:20-25, AMP.).

These can be difficult times, for we have become used to a previous leader, and then he/she moves away somewhere else. Usually the replacement is a very different type of leader, whose vision, style and personality is different to what we are used to. This can be a very unsettling time, and often churches find a lot of people move out – and others move in – during the new season that comes through the transfer of a leader.

In Charismatic and Pentecostal circles, people are often “attracted” to a church through the ministry and personality of the church’s leader. While he/she remains, all is well. But when he/she moves on, then an “unsettledness” can become so great that a number of the people move on as well. Know where you are called so you can become a part of the fulfilment of the vision and not a hindrance.

4. Submission One to Another in the Fear of God:

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

"Likewise you that are younger and of lesser rank be subject to the elders – the ministers and spiritual guides of the church, giving them due respect and yielding to their counsel. Clothe (apron) yourselves, all of you, with humility – as the garb of a servant, so that its covering cannot possibly be stripped from you, with freedom from pride and arrogance – toward one another. For God sets Himself against the proud – the insolent, the overbearing, the disdainful, the presumptuous, the boastful, and opposes, frustrates and defeats them – but gives grace (favour, blessing) to the humble. (See Proverbs 3:34).

Therefore humble yourselves (demote, lower yourselves in your own estimation) under the mighty hand of God, that in due time He may exalt you. Casting the whole of your care – all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all – on Him; for He cares for you affectionately, and cares about you watchfully (See Psalm 55:22).

Be well-balanced – temperate, sober-minded; be vigilant and cautious at all times, for that enemy of yours, the devil, roams around like a lion roaring [in fierce hunger], seeking someone to seize upon and devour. Withstand him; be firm in faith [against his onset], – rooted, established, strong, immovable and determined – knowing that the same (identical) sufferings are appointed to your brotherhood (the whole body of Christians) throughout the world" (1 Peter 5:5-9, AMP.).

It is important that we get along with other Christians, and people in general. We will always benefit when we are able to receive advice, direction, even rebuke from those who genuinely care about us.

5. Submission to Man's Ordinances and Bosses:

"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by Him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone. Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honour the king" (1 Peter 2:13-17, NIV).

"Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve

wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free" (Ephesians 6:5-8, NIV).

"Servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not only when their eyes are on you, as pleasers of men, but in simplicity of purpose (with all your heart) because of your reverence for the Lord and as a sincere expression of your devotion to Him" (Colossians 3:22, AMP).

Whether we like it or not, most rules are made for our good. As Christians we are called to be law-abiding citizens, especially as we are now living in a much more open lawless society. Good role models are becoming increasingly more difficult to find and, as a result, many are growing up today with the wrong influences from public figures whose life-styles are anything but God-honouring.

In the work place, schools and training institutions, there has to be rules to go by. Christians will seek to be an example for good and not for evil.

6. Wives Submission to Their Husbands:

"Honour Christ by submitting to each other. You wives must submit to your husbands' leadership in the same way you submit to the Lord. For a husband is in charge of his wife in the same way Christ is in charge of His body the Church. (He gave His very life to take care of it and be its Saviour!) So you wives must willingly obey your husbands in everything, just as the Church obeys Christ. And you husbands, show the same kind of love to your wives as Christ showed to the Church when He died for her . . .

That is how husbands should treat their wives, loving them as part of themselves. For since a man and his wife are now one, a man is really doing himself a favour and loving himself when he loves his wife! . . . So again I say, a man must love his wife as a part of himself; and the wife must see to it that she deeply respects her husband – obeying, praising and honouring him" (Ephesians 5:21-33, TLB).

"Therefore as the Church is subject ("to set in array under, submitted") unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" (verse 24, KJV).

A wife will submit to a truly loving husband who is also submitted to the Lordship of Christ in his life. ". . . *wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord" (Colossians 3:18-19) ". . . Be in subjection ("to put in array under, be submitted")" (1 Peter 3:1-7).*

It is very unfortunate that today the institution of love and marriage to one husband and/or one wife is almost considered to be outdated. Yet it is the Christian way, and God's way, that we seek to honour Him by living according to the plans He has given to us in His Word, the Bible. When marriages fall apart, it opens the door for all kinds of emotional, spiritual

and physical problems that beset families from thereon. Our countries are paying a huge price for the breakdown of love and marriage today. We need to humble ourselves more often by saying, *"I'm sorry, Dear; please forgive me."*

7. Religious Submission to the Righteousness of God:

"Brethren, [with all] my heart's desire and goodwill for (Israel) I long and pray to God that they may be saved. I bear them witness that they have a [certain] zeal and enthusiasm for God, but it is not enlightened and according to [correct and vital] knowledge. For being ignorant of the righteousness that God ascribes (which makes one acceptable to Him in word, thought and deed), and seeking to establish a righteousness (a means of salvation) of their own, they did not obey or submit themselves to God's righteousness" (Romans 10: 1-3, AMP.).

- Are we prepared to have our beliefs tested?
- And if found wanting, are we prepared to change and submit them to the principles of the Scriptures?

So many people today are religious without being righteous, because they are still trying to interpret God's will according to the Old Covenant ***"which could never take away our sins"*** (Hebrews 8, 9 and 10, especially Hebrews 10:7-14).

There have been many abuses with regards the subject of Submission and Obedience, and it is very important to realize that we will not be able to go through life without encountering some of these abuses. The overriding motivation with submission and obedience must be love and loyalty to God before loyalty to people – regardless of their position. If an authority figure uses his/her authority in an un-Scriptural manner, then we must seek God as to His will in such a matter. Many people submit to everything from their leaders and become so subjective that they are unable to fulfil the purpose of God for their lives. In some cases it becomes a matter of ***"blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into the ditch"*** (Matthew 15:13-14). Loyalty to church and leaders before loyalty to God can actually take us away from the will of God.

When we are confronted with such decisions as to whether to submit or not, we need to have the wisdom and timing of God if we are going to question a leader's authority. This will create all kinds of suspicion and distrust against us. One can be made to feel very isolated and alone when we take such a stance. For me, on one occasion, I took my stand against other leaders advice, and followed what I believed was the will of God for me. The result was painful – but our lives and ministry stepped up to another level and we are now impacting more people than ever before with the Gospel message of Jesus Christ (see my book, *"God's Call Can Be Fulfilled"*).

Let us, then, see the importance of this subject and seek to walk each day before God fulfilling His will in the area of submission and obedience. If in doubt, always ask yourself the question: ***"What would Jesus do in this situation or circumstance?"***

Other Scriptures for consideration:

1 Samuel 15:22-23

Jeremiah 7:23

Matthew 7:21-27

Luke 8:21

Hebrews 12:6-17

SUBMISSION AND OBEDIENCE

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

15. PRAISE

"This people have I formed ("fashioned, framed") for Myself; they shall show forth ("declare") My praise" (Isaiah 43:21).

THERE IS much emphasis being placed on the subject of praise today and this study is a brief look at what the Bible has to say about it. Many Christians have a struggle in being able to give audible praise to God; therefore a Scriptural basis will be helpful encouragement to break through into those realms that release us to glorify God more.

It is important that we are a praising people – not only at our time of fellowship together but each day of our lives. Even in our times of trial!

WHAT DOES PRAISE MEAN?

Collins English Dictionary states praise as: "(1) the act of expressing commendation, admiration, etc. (2) the extolling of a deity or the rendering of homage and gratitude to a deity. (3) the condition of being commanded, admired, etc., . . . to esteem highly."

In the Christian context of this study, we are looking at our praise to God. "Praise" therefore means "praise, applause, commendation, glory, gratitude, thanksgiving, blessing and speaking well of God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit Comforter." We do this audibly through our lips by speaking or singing praises unto God (See Psalms 95; 96; 113; 117; 138; 146; 148; 149 and 150).

We can give added meaning to our praises to God when we lift up our hands (Psalm 63:4; Psalm 134).

15 HEBREW AND GREEK WORDS:

The word "praise" is translated from 15 Hebrew and Greek words as follows (in alphabetical order), together with their meanings of praise and including some other English words translated from the same words. This will help you to see the closeness of the meanings of some words and also show something of the vastness of the subject of praise:

Aineo: meaning "to praise" (used 9 times).

Ainesis: "praise," (used one time – Hebrews 13:15).

Ainos: "praise," (used 3 times – Matthew 21:16; Luke 18:43).

Arete: "courage, excellency," (used one time – 1 Peter 2:9). Also translated 4 times as "virtue."

Barak: "to bless, declare blessed; with a quiet voice" (used 3 times – Judges 5:2; Psalm 72:15). Also translated approximately 284 times "bless, blessed" and 5 times "salute."

Doxa: "glory" (used 4 times – John 9:24; John 12:43; 1 Peter 4:11). Also translated 144 times "glory," 6 times "honour", 4 times "praise", 2 times "dignity" and once as "worship" (Luke 14:10).

Epaineo: "to give praise to," (used 4 times – 1 Corinthians 11:2, 17, 22). Also translated once "command" and once "laud" (Romans 15:11); and

Epainos: "praise, commendation," (used 11 times – Romans 2:29; Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14; Philippians 1: 11, 1 Peter 1:7 to name a few). (2 variations).

Eulogeo: "to speak well of," (used 1 time – Luke 1:64). Also translated 40 times "bless, blessed."

Halal: "to praise, to boast; let your soul rejoice" (used 106 times – 1 Chronicles 16:4; 1 Chronicles 23:5; Ezra 3: 10-11; Nehemiah 5:13; Psalm 22:22, 23, 26; Psalm 63:5; Psalm 69:30,34; Psalm 113:1, and Psalm 150 are a few sample Scriptures). It is also translated one time "celebrate" (Isaiah 38:18).

Hillulim: "Praises, thanksgiving," (used 1 time– Leviticus 19:24). Also translated once "merry" (Judges 9:27).

Humneo: "to hymn," (used 2 times – Acts 16:25; Hebrews 2:12). Also translated 2 times "sing a psalm."

Mahalal: "praise" (used 1 time – Proverbs 27:21, KJV).

Shabach: "to praise, glorify, shout for joy" (used 5 times – Psalm 63:3; Psalm 117:1; Psalm 145:4; Psalm 147:12; Ecclesiastes 4:2). Also translated 2 times "and glory, triumph." And

Shebach: "to give praise," (used 5 times – Daniel 2:23; Daniel 4:34, 37; Daniel 5:4,23). (2 variations).

Tehillah: "to praise, psalm, you can sing along" (used 56 times – Exodus 15:11; Deuteronomy 10:21; 2 Chronicles 20:22; Nehemiah 9:5; Psalm 9:14; Psalm 22:3, 25; Psalm 33:1; Psalm 40:3; Psalm 51:15; Isaiah 60:5, 18; Isaiah 61:3, 11 to name a few). The prophetic song comes from "Tehillah."

Todah: "confession, thanksgiving, sacrifice of praise" (used 4 times – Psalm 42:4; Psalm 50:23; Psalm 56:12; Psalm 100 title). Also translated 18 times "thanks giving," 3 times "thank offering," 3 times "company of them that gave thanks," 2 times "confession" and 2 times "sacrifice of praise" (Jeremiah 17:26; Jeremiah 33:11).

Yadah: "to stretch out the hand, confess, let your hands be raised" (used 53 times – Genesis 29:35; 2 Chronicles 7:3, 6; Psalm 9:1; Psalm 22:3; Psalm 28:7; Psalm 118:19, 21, 28; Isaiah 12:1, 4; Jeremiah 33:11 are a few samples). Also translated 32 times "give thanks" (Psalm 107:8, 15, 21, 31, NKJV) and 16 times "confess."

Zamar: "to give praise (speak or sing), play for Him a song" (used 31 times – 2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 7:17; Psalm 9:2, 11; Psalm 21:13; Psalm 47:6, 7; Psalm 68:4, 32; Psalm 108:1, 3; Psalm 149:3 are a few examples). Also translated 15 times "sing, sing forth and sing psalms."

From the above we can see that the word "praise" is used extensively in Scripture – in fact over 300 times – plus a host of similar meaning words. Surely God's people are called to be a people of praise: that is, with our lips we give thanks, blessing, glory, honour, confession and song unto Him daily. Praise the Lord!

DAVID THE PSALMIST

David was a great praiser of God and he is most likely more known than anyone else for his ability to motivate his will and mouth to give praise to his Lord.

The Psalms are full of tremendous expressions unto God and His goodness, mercy, honour, victory, etc. This is just a little of what he declared:

Psalm 9:1-2 (KJV) ~ *"I will praise ("yadah") You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvellous works. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise ("zamar") to Your name, O most high."*

Psalm 34:1-3 (KJV) ~ *"I will bless ("barak") the Lord at all times: His praise ("tehillah") shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast ("halal") in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad ("to rejoice"). O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt ("lift up") His name together."*

Psalm 35:28 (KJV) ~ *"And my tongue shall speak ("to meditate, utter") of Your righteousness and of Your praise ("tehillah") all the day long."*

Psalm 56:4 (KJV) ~ *"In God I will praise ("halal") His Word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me."*

Psalm 56:12 (NKJV) ~ *"Vows made to You are binding upon me, O God; I will render ("complete") praises ("todah") to You."*

THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHES US TO PRAISE GOD

The New Testament often quotes from the Psalms. Hebrews 2:12 is an example (Psalm 22:22):

Saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise ("humneo") to You."

Praise is tied in with victory. When Paul and Silas were beaten up and thrown into jail, the Bible tells us: ***“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God . . .”*** (Acts 16:25). Their prayers and praises released the miracle of God that brought about their leaving prison, as well as the salvation of the jailer's household.

WE DO NOT PRAISE GOD ENOUGH!

When we praise God, we must praise Him from the heart. It is not to be an empty, noisy expression of trying to show others we are “spiritual.” If it is not from the heart, God is not impressed. Neither will He be able to inhabit (“dwell in”) our praises (Psalm 22:3).

WHAT IS PRAISE?

- **Praise is to God** – Psalm 68:4, 32 (“zamar”); Psalm 78:4 (“tehillah”); Psalm 118:28 (“yadah”); Jeremiah 17:14 (“tehillah”); 1 Peter 4:11 (KJV) (“doxa”).
- **Praise is unto the Lord's name** – 2 Samuel 22:50 (“zamar”); Psalm 7:17 (“zamar”); Psalm 9:2 (“zamar”); Psalm 18:49 (“zamar”).
- **Praise is a declaration** (“a putting before others”) **of the Lord** – Isaiah 42:12 (“tehillah”).
- **Praise is what God has fashioned us for** – Isaiah 43:21 (“tehillah”); Jeremiah 33:6-11 (“tehillah”); Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14 (“epainos”); 1 Peter 2:9 (“arete”).
- **Praise exalts God's glorious name** – 1 Chronicles 29:10-13 (“halal”).
- **Praise acknowledges the goodness of God** – Psalm 54:6 (“yadah”).
- **Praise is an acknowledgement of the Lord's mercy** – 2 Chronicles 7:6 (“halal”).
- **Praise is the name of the gates of the Lord** – Isaiah 60:18 (“tehillah”).
- **Praise is an entrance into God's courts** – Psalm 100:4 (“tehillah”).
- **Praise is a response to God's Word** – Psalm 56:4, 10-11 (“halal”).
- **Praise is a garment** – Isaiah 61:3 (“tehillah”).
- **Praise is pleasant** – Psalm 135:3 (“zamar”); Psalm 147:1 (“zamar”).
- **Praise is comely** (“becoming, beautiful, right” – Psalm 33:1 (“tehillah”); Psalm 147:1 (“zamar”).
- **Praise is an expression of the mouth** – Psalm 109:30 (“halal”).
- **Praise is a sign of opened lips** – Psalm 51:15 (“tehillah”).
- **Praise is a congregational thing!** – Psalm 22:22-25 (“tehillah”); Psalm 35:18 (“halal”); Psalm 149:1 (“tehillah”); Hebrews 2:12 (“humneo”).
- **Praise is associated with peace offerings** – 2 Chronicles 31:2 (“halal”).
- **True Praise is a sign of a teachable spirit** – Psalm 119:171 (“tehillah”).
- **Praise is a response to the miracles of Jesus** – Luke 18:43 (“ainos”).
- **Praise is a means of sealing a vow before God** – Nehemiah 5:13 (“halal”).
- **Tested faith brings praise to God** – 1 Peter 1:7 (“epainos”).
- **Praise is an every day duty** – 2 Chronicles 8:12-15 (“halal”); 2

Chronicles 30:21 ("halal").

- Sometimes praise is a sacrifice to God – Jeremiah 17:26 ("todah"); Jeremiah 33:11 ("todah"); Hebrews 13:15 ("ainesis").
- Praise was a command of David, the man of God – Nehemiah 12:24 ("halal").

WHAT DOES PRAISE DO?

- Praise blesses God – 1 Chronicles 16:34-36 ("halal").
- Praise glorifies God – Psalm 50:23 ("todah").
- Praise acknowledges the creation of God – Psalm 148 ("halal").
- Praise causes God to inhabit ("indwell") His people – Psalm 22:3 ("tehillah").
- Praise releases God to exalt the praise of His saints – Psalm 148:14 ("tehillah").
- Praise releases the hand of God to defeat the enemy – 2 Chronicles 20:19-22 . . . v.19 ("halal"); v.21 ("halal and "yadah").
- Praise responds to God's mighty acts – Psalm 150:2 ("halal").
- Praise glorifies God for winning the battle – Judges 5:2-3 ("barak").
- Praise causes us to triumph – Psalm 106:47 ("tehillah").
- Praise declares the change in our life, causing others to fear and trust in the Lord – Psalm 40:1-3 ("tehillah").

WHO ARE TO PRAISE THE LORD?

- The soul that is alive praises God! – Psalm 119:175 ("halal"); Psalm 146:1-2 ("halal" and "zamar"); Isaiah 38:19 ("yadah").
- They who dwell in God's house – Psalm 84:4 ("halal").
- The saints – Psalm 145:10 ("yadah").
- The servants of the Lord – Psalm 113:1 ("halal"); Psalm 135:1 ("halal"); Revelation 19:5 ("aineo").
- *"The people who shall be created"* – Psalm 102:18 ("halal").
- The assembly of the elders – Psalm 107:32 ("halal").
- All God's hosts – Psalm 148:2 ("halal").
- Mankind should praise Him! – Psalm 107:31 ("yadah").
- The poor and needy – Psalm 74:21 ("halal").
- Young men – Psalm 148:12-13 ("halal").
- Maidens – Psalm 148:12-13 ("halal").
- Old men – Psalm 148:12-13 ("halal").
- Children – Psalm 148:12-13 ("halal"); Matthew 21:16 ("ainos").
- All judges of the earth – Psalm 148:11-13 ("halal").
- Princes – Psalm 148:11-13 ("halal").
- Kings of the earth – Psalm 138:4 ("yadah"); Psalm 148:11-13 ("halal").
- The Gentiles – Romans 15:9-11 ("aineo").
- Jerusalem is to praise God – Psalm 147:12 ("halal").
- Zion – Psalm 147:12 ("halal").
- Angels – Psalm 148:2 ("halal").
- All Gentiles – Psalm 67:3, 5 ("yadah"); Psalm 99:2-3 ("yadah"); Psalm 117:1 ("halal"); Psalm 148:11-13 ("halal").
- All nations – Psalm 117:1 ("halal").

- **One generation to another** – Psalm 145:4 ("shabach").
- **The disciples of Jesus** – Luke 19:37 ("aineo"); Luke 24:53 ("aineo"); Acts 2:47 ("aineo").
- **The shepherds praised God at the birth of Jesus** – Luke 2:20 ("aineo").
- **A multitude of the heavenly host** – Luke 2:13-14 ("aineo").
- **The healed man** – Acts 3:8-9 ("aineo").
- **God's works praise Him** – Psalm 145:10 ("yadah"); Isaiah 25:1 ("yadah").
- **Every one who has breath should praise the Lord!** – Psalm 150:6 ("halal").
- **Those converted to God through our *"arising and shining"*** – Isaiah 60:1-6 ("tehillah").

EVEN CREATION PRAISES GOD

- **The sun** – Psalm 148:3 ("halal").
- **The moon** – Psalm 148:3 ("halal").
- **The stars of light** – Psalm 148:3 ("halal").
- **The heaven** – Psalm 69:34 ("halal").
- **The heavens of heavens** – Psalm 89:5 ("yadah"); Psalm 148:4 ("halal").
- **The waters above the heavens** – Psalm 148:4 ("halal").
- **The earth** – Psalm 69:34 ("halal").
- **The dragons** ("sea serpents") – Psalm 148:7 ("halal").
- **All deeps** ("deep place, the deep sea") – Psalm 69:34 ("halal"); Psalm 148:7 ("halal").
- **The seas** – Psalm 69:34 ("halal").
- **Fire** – Psalm 148:8-13 ("halal").
- **Hail** – Psalm 148:8-13 ("halal").
- **Snow** – Psalm 148:8-13 ("halal").
- **Vapours** ("smoke, vapour") – Psalm 148:8-13 ("halal").
- **Stormy wind** – Psalm 148:8-13 ("halal").
- **Mountains** – Psalm 148:9-13 ("halal").
- **All hills** – Psalm 148:9-13 ("halal").
- **Fruitful trees** – Psalm 148:9-13 ("halal").
- **Cedars** ("a conifer, having spreading branches, needle-like evergreen leaves, and erect barrel-shaped cones") – Psalm 148:9-13 ("halal").
- **Beasts** – Psalm 148:10-13 ("halal").
- **All cattle** – Psalm 148:10-13 ("halal").
- **Creeping things** – Psalm 148:10-13 ("halal").
- **Flying fowl** (birds) – Psalm 148:10-13 ("halal").
- **Every thing that has breath** – Psalm 150:6 ("halal").

HOW DO WE PRAISE THE LORD?

- **With our tongue** – Psalm 35:28 ("tehillah").
- **With our mouth** – Psalm 63:5 ("halal"); Psalm 71:8 ("tehillah"); Psalm 109:30 ("halal"); Psalm 145:21 ("tehillah"); Psalm 149:6; Luke 1:64 ("eulogeo").
- **Through our lips** – Psalm 51:15 ("tehillah"); Psalm 63:3 ("shabach"); Psalm 119:171 ("tehillah").
- **With a loud voice** – 2 Chronicles 20:19 ("halal"); Ezra 3:10-11 ("halal"); Psalm 66:8 ("tehillah"); Psalm 98:4 ("zamar"); Luke 19:37 ("aineo"); Acts 16:25 ("humneo").
- **With a song** – Psalm 27:6 ("zamar"); Psalm 28:7 ("yadah"); Psalm 69:30 ("halal").
- **With a new song** – Psalm 144:9 ("zamar"); Psalm 149:1 ("tehillah").
- **With a whole heart** – Psalm 9:1 ("yadah"); Psalm 86:12 ("yadah"); Psalm 111:1 ("yadah"); Psalm 138:1 ("yadah").
- **With uprightness of heart** – Psalm 119:7 ("yadah").
- **In the beauty of holiness** ("the place or thing of separation unto God") – 2 Chronicles 20:21 ("halal").
- **By an act of our will** – Psalm 56:12 ("todah"); Psalm 57:7-9 ("zamar"); Psalm 104:33 ("zamar").
- **With gladness** – 2 Chronicles 29:30 ("halal").
- **With our glory** ("honour") – Psalm 108:1 ("zamar").
- **With understanding** – Psalm 47:6-7 ("zamar").
- **By lifting up our hands unto God** – Psalm 63:3-4 ("shabach"); Psalm 134 ("bless" is "barak").
- **In the dance** – Psalm 149:3 ("halal"); Psalm 150:4 ("halal").
- **With musical instruments** – 1 Chronicles 25:1-7 ("halal"); 2 Chronicles 5:11-14 ("halal"); Psalm 33:2-3 ("yadah"); Psalm 43:4 ("yadah"); Psalm 71:22 ("yadah"); Psalm 147:7 ("zamar"); Psalm 149:3 ("zamar"); Psalm 150:3-5 ("halal").
- **According to His righteousness** – Psalm 7:17 ("yadah").

WHERE DO WE PRAISE THE LORD?

- **In God's sanctuary** – Psalm 150:1 ("halal").
- **In His courts** – Psalm 100:4 ("tehillah").
- **In the Church** – Hebrews 2:12 ("humneo").
- **In the gates of righteousness** – Psalm 118:19-21 ("yadah").
- **In the assembly of the upright** – Psalm 111:1 ("yadah").
- **In the congregation** – Psalm 22:22-25 ("tehillah" and "halal"); Psalm 35:18 ("halal"); Psalm 111:1 ("yadah"); Psalm 149:1 ("tehillah"); Hebrews 2:12 ("humneo").
- **Among the people** – Psalm 108:3 ("yadah").
- **Among much people** – Psalm 35:18 ("halal"); Psalm 57:9 ("yadah").
- **Among the multitude** – Psalm 109:30 ("halal").
- **Among the nations** – Psalm 108:3 ("yadah").
- **Upon our beds** – Psalm 149:5.
- **Among the heathen** ("Gentiles, unsaved nations") – 2 Samuel 22:50 ("zamar").

- **Even before false gods!** – Psalm 138:1 ("yadah").
- **Even in prison** – Acts 16:25 ("humneo").
- **In the firmament ("expanse") of His power** – Psalm 150:1 ("halal").

WHY DO WE PRAISE THE LORD?

- **Because He is good** – Psalm 135:3 ("halal"); Psalm 136 ("thanks" in this Psalm is "yadah"); Jeremiah 33:11 ("yadah").
- **Because the Lord is great** – 1 Chronicles 16:25 ("halal"); Psalm 48:1 ("halal"); Psalm 96:4 ("halal"); Psalm 145:3 ("halal").
- **For His lovingkindness** – Psalm 138:2 ("yadah").
- **For His truth** – Psalm 138:2 ("yadah"); Daniel 4:37 ("shebach").
- **Because God's Word and Name are greatly magnified** – Psalm 138:2 ("yadah").
- **Because He is worthy to be praised** – 2 Samuel 22:4 ("halal"); Psalm 18:3 ("halal").
- **Because His mercy endures forever** – Psalm 136; Jeremiah 33:11 ("yadah").
- **For His wisdom** – Daniel 2:23 ("shebach").
- **For His might** – Daniel 2:23 ("shebach").
- **For the help of His countenance ("face")** – Psalm 42:5,11 ("yadah").
- **Because it is a good thing** – Psalm 92:1 ("zamar"); Psalm 147:1 ("zamar").
- **Because He brought us out of an horrible pit** – Psalm 40:2-3 ("tehillah").
- **Because He brought us out of the miry ("muddy, boggy") clay** – Psalm 40:2-3 ("tehillah").
- **Because our soul has been released out of prison** – Psalm 142:7 ("yadah").
- **Because He has set our feet upon a rock** – Psalm 40:2-3 ("tehillah").
- **Because He has established our goings** – Psalm 40:2-3 ("tehillah"); Psalm 57:7 ("fixed" is "established") ("zamar"); Psalm 108:1 ("zamar").
- **Because we are fearfully and wonderfully made** – Psalm 139:14 ("yadah").
- **For answered prayer** – Daniel 2:17-23 ("shebach").

WHEN ARE WE TO PRAISE THE LORD

- **David praised the Lord seven times a day** – Psalm 119:164 ("halal").
- **All the day long** – Psalm 44:8 ("boast" here is "halal," meaning "to praise greatly").
- **From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same** – Psalm 113:3 ("halal").
- **When we learn His righteous judgments** – Psalm 119:7 ("yadah").
- **When our tongue is loosed** – Luke 1:64 ("eulogeo").
- **At midnight!** – Acts 16:25 ("humneo").
- **When suffering for Christ's sake** – Acts 16:25 ("humneo").
- **For ever** – Psalm 44:8 ("yadah"); Psalm 45:17 ("yadah"); Psalm 52:9 ("yadah").

It is abundantly clear that God places a high priority on praise. He uses it, both to bless Himself and to bless His people. Through the expression of praise we lift ourselves into a higher realm of relationship with God.

As we come to the last section of this study, let us look at:

WHAT IS GOD DOING WITH PRAISE?

- **God is glorifying Himself through creation praising Him** – Psalm 69:34 ("halal").
- **Through praise God's work of restoration is acknowledged** – Joel 2:25-26 ("halal").
- **God is releasing musicians and music to bring a greater anointing to His people** – 1 Chronicles 25:1-7 ("halal"); 2 Chronicles 5:11-14 ("halal").
- **God is making His people a praise among all the people of the earth** – Zephaniah 3:19-20 ("tehillah").
- **God is causing praise to spring forth before all the nations** – Isaiah 61:11 ("tehillah").
- **God is filling the earth with praise** – Habakkuk 3:3 ("tehillah").
- **Even the wrath of man will one day praise the Lord** – Psalm 76:10 ("yadah").

CONCLUSION

God's people are a people of praise. God's people are a praising people. We have been created to give praise and thanks to our Redeemer in every thing. Let us continue to cultivate praise within our life, that God in all things might be glorified. Praise be to His holy name!

This study has been set out using the King James and New King James Version of the Bible, with the help of "Young's Analytical Concordance" and a "Collins English Dictionary."

The following praise chorus has become a great blessing to those who know it and it is reprinted here to help you in your praise to God:

F
 Todah – sacrifice of praise,
 C
 Yadah – let your hands be raised;
 G7
 Barak – with a quiet voice,
 C C7
 Halal – let your soul rejoice;
 F
 Zamar – play for Him a song,
 C
 Tehillah – you can sing along,
 Gsus F/G
 Shabach – shout for joy,
 Gsus G13 C
 That's seven ways to praise the Lord.
 (Copyright 1983 by Jim Gilbert (U.S.A.).

I trust these Bible Studies have been a great help to you, and will continue to be so.

- Be encouraged to share them with others.

So many of life's problems can be solved today, when we will make and take the time to find God's solutions that are all recorded in the Bible.

"Search the Scriptures," Jesus said (John 5:39). They hold the keys to your life and mine. Yield your life and will over to God and let Him do and be all He wants to do and be in you.

He really does love you – more than anyone else! He is committed to you, to help take you victoriously through life's journey and, at the end, to present you faultless to God with tremendous joy!

Let us finish with the following very encouraging words from the Epistle of Jude:

"Now to Him Who is able to keep you without stumbling, or slipping, or falling and to present [you] unblemished (blameless and faultless) before the presence of His glory – with unspeakable, ecstatic delight – in triumphant joy and exultation.

To the one only God, our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory (splendour), majesty, might and dominion, and power and authority, before all time and now and forever – unto all the ages of eternity. Amen – so be it" (Jude 24-25, AMP.).

God richly bless you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Rodney and Jean Francis

Rodney W. Francis was converted in 1959 at 17 years of age, and sovereignly received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit in the midst of a herd of cows at 18 years of age. There he received the call of God to preach. Doors opened up for him to commence preaching a short time later, and he has been preaching ever since. He is the Founder/Director of The Gospel Faith Messenger, a many-faceted Christian Ministry that reaches out to multiplied thousands of people around the world through Gospel literature, books, manuals, E-Mail ministries, the World Wide Web, 3 Bible Correspondence Courses (free), Equipping Stations (Training of Prophetic Teams), International Training Schools, Prophetic Conferences, Personal Prophetic Ministry, Schools Of The Holy Spirit, Church Meetings, Counselling, Audio Cassettes, DVD's, etc. For more than 50 years (commenced April 1964) this Ministry has impacted multiplied thousands of people in over 205 nations. Today many are discovering their Spiritual Gifts and the joys of hearing and obeying the voice of God through the teachings of The GFM Teams.

Rodney and his wife, Jean, live by faith and the Ministry has a number of dedicated, voluntary workers that enable us to make the financial donations go almost 100% toward reaching people for Christ. Your ongoing prayer support of The GFM Ministry is greatly appreciated.

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Thank you.