

A Tool For
Personal Discipleship

*UNDERSTANDING
THE
CHRISTIAN LIFE*

All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Bible.

DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

(Preferably to be used one-on-one, but can also be used in a class setting – or both)
(Estimate about 3-6 months, with weekly 1-1/2 hr. time allotments)

“Understanding the Christian Life”

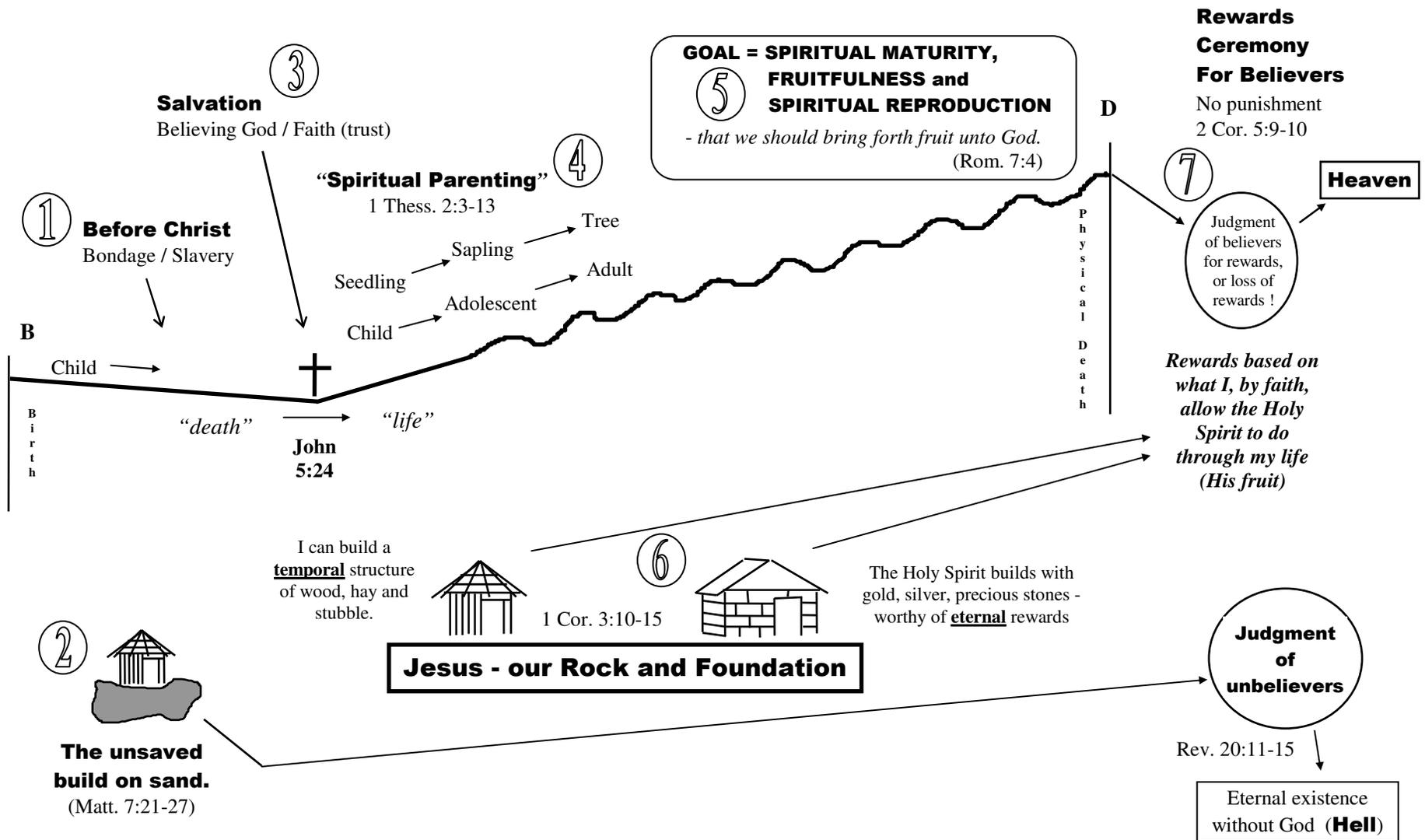
Lesson 1	Getting acquainted / Brief testimonies Introduction to Course Schedule Start into Lesson 1-2 as time allows
Lesson 2	<i>Overview of the Christian Life</i>
Lesson 3	<i>Knowing God</i>
Lesson 4	<i>Salvation</i> <i>Spiritual Anatomy</i>
Lesson 5	<i>The Christian’s Two Natures</i>
Lesson 6	<i>Relating to the Holy Spirit</i>
Lesson 7	<i>Overview of Progressive Spiritual Growth</i>
Lesson 8	<i>Two Natures diagrams / Abiding</i>
Lesson 9	<i>Abiding Principles</i>
Lesson 10	<i>Abiding Principles</i> <i>Abiding Verses</i>
Lesson 11	<i>Three Phases of the Christian Life</i> <i>Daily Walking In and Out of Fellowship</i>
Lesson 12	<i>God’s Sovereignty / Suffering / Trials</i>
Lesson 13	<i>Guidelines for Making Decisions</i>

NOTES: It’s important to make a 13-Lesson commitment – There will always be unexpected illnesses and/or circumstances, but, if possible, please make a 13-Lesson commitment - just between you and the Lord.

Important: Carefully read the weekly assignment **before** each session, and write down questions.

Important: Most believers would greatly benefit from having a personal mentor during this Phase, in addition to the class.

ABBREVIATED OVERVIEW OF THE “NORMAL” CHRISTIAN LIFE



LESSON 1-2 - GUIDE

OVERVIEW OF THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE

Note for discipler: It should usually take about one session to cover this lesson. We want to give the disciple a **preview** of the **normal** Christian life. Briefly explain each component, all of which will be covered later in more detail.

①

Birth to Rebirth – We should each be able to easily identify ourselves as having gone through this period, alienated from God, living in spiritual darkness, and without hope.

②

If a person rejects Christ and dies during this period, he is like a man who has built his house upon the sand, without a foundation. He will go to the **judgment of unbelievers** to spend eternity separated from God. It is important to understand that this judgment has **nothing to do with believers**, only unbelievers.

Matthew 7:24-27 (Jesus said) *Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.*

Revelation 20:11-15 (the apostle John wrote) *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no*

*place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was **not found written in the book of life** was cast into the lake of fire.*

③

The Cross – This event is by far the most important happening in a human's life. From God's perspective the Christian has passed from "death" (without His life) to "life" (the Lord indwelling). From hopelessness to hopefulness.

John 5:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that **heareth** my word, and **believeth** on him that sent me, **hath** everlasting life, and shall **not** come into condemnation; but is passed from **death unto life**.*

④

The New Life – It is important to understand that the event of salvation is the **entrance** into a new life with God, prepared by Him to completely meet our every need, as we fit into **His** design. We are introduced to the concept of fitting into **God's plan** for our time here on earth, which is but a small part of His **eternal** plan for each of us. Two Biblical analogies can illustrate the Christian life: that of a plant growing from a seedling to a tree, and that of a human growing from a baby to an adult. Again, the event of salvation is just the **beginning** of the new life of learning to walk with God. During this period of time it is **very important** for a new believer to be **discipled** ("**spiritually parented**").

1 Thessalonians 2:7-13 ... *But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*

⑤ The Intended **Objective** (Goal) – Just as we would expect a healthy sapling to grow into a fruit-bearing tree, and a healthy infant to grow into an adult and become a parent, so God’s intention is to make of a healthy spiritual infant a **spiritually mature and fruitful** Christian.

⑥ **God’s Foundation** and **My Building Options** – God has laid a Foundation, Jesus Christ, which represents my salvation. This is equally true for **all** believers. However, **each** of us individually has a choice as to how we will build **on** that Foundation. The buildings represent **the use of my resources (time, energy, possessions)** during my physical life here on earth. If **I allow** the Holy Spirit, as the Master Building Contractor, to use my resources, **He** will use those building materials to **create for me** an **eternal** structure of gold, silver and precious stones. That which **I deny** Him use of will produce a structure of wood, hay and stubble.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 (Paul wrote) *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. **If** any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a **reward**. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer **loss**: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

⑦ These verses speak of a future **rewards ceremony** called The Tribunal of Christ (or The Judgment Seat of Christ), at which time each believer will **individually** appear before Jesus Christ to be rewarded (**for eternity**) for what he/she has **allowed** the Holy Spirit to do through their life while living here on earth. There should be **no fear of punishment** at this event, although each of us needs to be aware of the potential for **loss of eternal rewards**, since all that is wood, hay and stubble will be turned into worthless ashes. It is important to note that **no unbeliever** will be present at this event.

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 *Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

Matthew 6:20-21 *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: **For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also**.*

KNOWING GOD

God desires for me to grow in my understanding of Him. From birth until I received Christ as my Savior, I formed habits of worldly understanding.

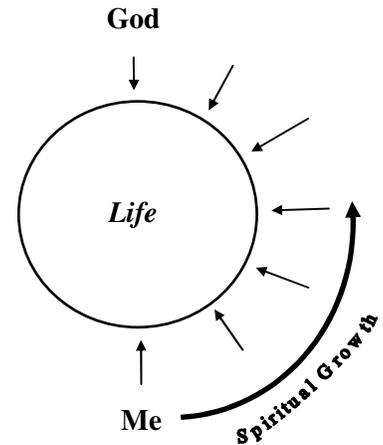
Now He wants to gradually transform my understanding of Him so that I increasingly view life from His perspective. A godly perspective produces godly behavior. It does not please God if I simply attempt to change my outward behavior without allowing Him to transform my inward thinking.

If I want my relationship with God to grow, I need to make conscious choices to seek Him wholeheartedly, in much the same way that a marriage relationship needs to be nurtured.

To not hinder God's work in and through me, I need to maintain an open, honest and teachable attitude towards Him. Since He alone really knows me, my role is to willingly allow Him to make the appropriate changes in my understanding. Jesus is the visible picture of God's character, and the One in whose image God will mold me, as I allow Him.

God desires for me to know Him intimately, in a way that goes beyond mere knowledge "about" Him.

His perspective of life should increasingly become **my** perspective of life.



Godly behavior is the natural outcome of His continuing inward transformation of my convictions

"... for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

1. MY ATTITUDE

a. God desires for me to grow in my understanding of Him, to know His heart.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: 24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son . . .

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

Ephesians 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

b. In order to grow I need to actively pursue a closer relationship with Him.

Psalm 63:1 *O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee*

Proverbs 2:1-5 *My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and lifest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.*

Matthew 7:7 *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

1 Peter 2:2-3 *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

2. GOD'S WORD

TRUTH DOES NOT ORIGINATE FROM ME, OR FROM ANY OTHER HUMAN, BUT ONLY FROM GOD HIMSELF. THEREFORE, ALL "PERCEIVED TRUTH" MUST BE COMPARED TO, AND VERIFIED BY, GOD'S WORD – THE BIBLE.

a. One way God transforms me is through His Word. His Word is trustworthy.

Psalm 119:89 *For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.*

Matthew 24:35 *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

John 17:17 *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (See also Psa. 119:160)*

Romans 15:4 *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

Ephesians 4:21 *... the truth is in Jesus;*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

1 John 5:6 *... And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.*

b. God's Word should become as essential as food in my daily life.

Deuteronomy. 6:6-9 *And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." (See also Deut. 11:18-21)*

Job 23:12 *Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.*

Psalm 119:16 *I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.*

Psalm 119:103 *How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*

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

c. Memorization and meditation on His Word will help me to grow.

Psalm 1:1-3 *Blessed is the man that . . . his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

Psalm 119:11 *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

Psalm 119:97 *O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.*

Psalm 145:5 *I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.*

Colossians 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

d. God's Word is like a light shining into my life, disclosing the secrets of my heart and helping me to see myself as God sees me.

Psalm 119:105 *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path..*

Psalm 119:130 *The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*

Romans 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Hebrews 4:12-13 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

e. God alone gives understanding of His Word. Even though many portions may appear difficult to understand, as I am honest and open to Him, He will reveal His Word to me as I have need.

Deuteronomy 29:29 *The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

Luke 24:45 *Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,*

1 Corinthians 2:12-14 *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

2 Peter 3:15-16 *(Peter wrote) ... "our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood. . ."*

. . . Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

(Psalm 73:23-26)

3. PRAYER - CONVERSING WITH GOD

We should think of Prayer as an intimate conversation with our Creator and Master, who is majestic in His creation and control of the universe, while at the same time so loving and caring that he wants to be involved in the most minute details of my life.

I should approach God with a reverent awe, always conscious of the fact that His accessibility is only due to the merit of His Son, not a result of any goodness on my part. We should count it an extreme privilege to approach the God of all creation.

As in any conversation, listening is a major component. Occasionally my time with God will consist mostly or entirely of contemplating and listening to Him as He speaks to my heart or reveals to me something new. He wants me to look to Him with expectation.

One way of honoring God and giving Him His rightful recognition in my heart is by actively seeking and accepting His priorities. This will necessitate forming the habit of not giving Him the leftovers of my time, energy and possessions, but rather offering Him the best of my resources.

a. Conversation with God will be enhanced by a heart preparation, an honest assessment of my priorities, and an awareness of His majesty.

Psalm 5:3 *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.*

Psalm 37:7 *Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: ...*

Psalm 119:147 *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word.*

Proverbs 3:5-6 *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Isaiah 50:4 *... he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.*

Matthew 6:31-34 *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

Luke 10:38-42 *... he (Jesus) entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

Ephesians 2:18 *For through him (Jesus) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father..*

Colossians 3:2-3 *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

Hebrews 4:15-16 *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

1 Peter 5:6-7 *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

b. Prayer includes adoration, thanksgiving (gratitude), and praise.

Psalm 145:2-3 *Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.*

Psalm 146:1-2 *Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.*

Daniel 6:10 *... Daniel ... went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God.*

Ephesians 5:19-20 *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;*

Philippians 4:6-7 *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

Colossians 4:2 *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

c. Prayer includes confession, reconciliation and forgiveness of others.

Psalm 32:5 *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. ... (See Psa. 66:18)*

Proverbs 28:13 *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

Matthew 5:23-24 *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

Mark 11:25 *And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.*

Romans 12:18 *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

1 John 1:9-10 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

d. Prayer includes supplications, requests for my personal needs.

Proverbs 2:6 *For the LORD giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.*

Matthew 6:5-8 *. . . But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, . . . for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*

Matthew 6:25-34 *. . . Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on . . . But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

James 1:5 *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

e. ***Prayer—Battle in "The Secret Place"***

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

—Matthew 6:6

Jesus did not say, "Dream about your Father who is in the secret place," but He said, ". . . ***pray*** to your Father who is in the secret place. . . ." Prayer is an effort of the will. After we have entered our secret place and shut the door, the most difficult thing to do is to pray. We cannot seem to get our minds into good working order, and the first thing we have to fight is wandering thoughts. The great battle in private prayer is overcoming this problem of our idle and wandering thinking. We have to learn to discipline our minds and concentrate on willful, deliberate prayer.

We must have a specially selected place for prayer, but once we get there this plague of wandering thoughts begins, as we begin to think to ourselves, "This needs to be done, and I have to do that today." Jesus says to "shut your door." Having a secret stillness before God means deliberately shutting the door on our emotions and remembering Him. God is in secret, and He sees us from "the secret place"—He does not see us as other people do, or as we see ourselves. When we truly live in "the secret place," it becomes impossible for us to doubt God. We become more sure of Him than of anyone or anything else. Enter into "the secret place," and you will find that God was right in the middle of your everyday circumstances all the time. Get into the habit of dealing with God about everything. Unless you learn to open the door of your life completely and let God in from your first waking moment of each new day, you will be working on the wrong level throughout the day. But if you will swing the door of your life fully open and "pray to your Father who is in the secret place," every public thing in your life will be marked with the lasting imprint of the presence of God.

(Taken from *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers – Aug 23. (c) 1935 by Dodd Mead & Co., renewed (c) 1963 by the Oswald Chambers Publications Assn., Ltd., and is used by permission of Discovery House Publishers, Box 3566, Grand Rapids MI 49501. All rights reserved.)

f. Prayer includes intercession, requests for the needs of others.

2 Corinthians 1:8-11 (Paul wrote of his afflictions in Asia) *... we despaired even of life: . . . but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; **Ye also helping together by prayer** for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons **thanks may be given by many on our behalf.***

Ephesians 6:18-20 (Paul wrote) *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication **for all saints**; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

Colossians 4:12 *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always **labouring fervently for you in prayers**, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

**g. Prayer is continual, anytime; but should also include special times set apart.
It pleases God when we seek His direction for appropriate times and places.**

Psalm 55:17 Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.

Psalm 119:62 At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee . . .

Psalm 119:164 Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.

Daniel 6:10 ... Daniel ... kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

Romans 12:12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

1 Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing.

Note on 1 Thess. 5:17 “Continual prayer is not prayer that prevails without any interruption, but prayer that continues whenever possible. Paul was speaking of maintaining continuous fellowship with God as much as possible in the midst of daily living in which concentration is frequently broken.”¹

4. [Our Daily Bread](#) – (September 19, 2004)

Informing God

We cannot tell God anything He doesn't already know. When we pray, we simply put into words what He's been aware of all along.

That doesn't make prayer unnecessary; rather, it encourages us to pray. We find relief in talking to Someone who knows us and our situation fully. It's a comfort to know that God's response arises not from information we give Him, but from His perfect knowledge of our circumstances. He knows all conditions—past, present, future—that bear on our well-being.

"Your Father knows," Jesus said in Matthew 6:8. He knows our thoughts, our intentions, our desires; He is intimately acquainted with all our ways (Psalm 139:3). He knows the anguish of our heart, the strain of continual frustration, the enemies inside and outside that war against our souls.

So, can we presume to dictate the time and terms of our deliverance from trials or adversity? Can we say our way is better, more likely to develop our soul? No, we cannot teach God anything. He alone knows the way to bring us to glory. Out of all possible paths, He has chosen the best, the route most adapted to who we are and what He has in store for us.

We cannot teach God knowledge, but we can love and trust Him. That's all He asks of us. —David Roper

*The answer God may choose for me
Is sure to be the best,
So may I always thankful be,
And in His goodness rest. —D. De Haan*

God knows the end from the beginning, so we can trust Him with everything between.

Our Daily Bread, ©2004 RBC Ministries--Grand Rapids, MI 49555. Reprinted by permission.

¹ Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.

5. CONCLUSION: As I trust God, I can always be assured of His love, knowing He will only act toward me in my best interest, even though at times it may appear otherwise. For Him to do otherwise would be contrary to His character.

Psalm 34:15 *The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*

Psalm 37:4-5 *Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*

Psalm 86:5 *For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*

Psalm 145:18-19 *The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.*

Jeremiah 10:23 *O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*

1 John 5:14-15 *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

***Knowledge of the Bible is good,
but intimately knowing God is better!***

(Jesus said) ... And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. (John 17:3)

SALVATION PRINCIPLES

Like physical birth, spiritual birth is the entrance into a new life. The purpose of this lesson is to explain some things that happen to a believer at conversion. Obviously there are other principles and truths that can be added.

1. MERCY & GRACE

“*Mercy*” = When I am not given what I deserve.

“*Grace*” = When I am given what I don’t deserve.

Illustration of Speeding Ticket -

“*Good fortune*” - if you’re not caught.

“*Justice*” - if you’re caught and given a ticket.

“*Mercy*” - if you’re caught, but not given a ticket.

“*Grace*” - if you’re caught, given a ticket, but the officer pays the fine.

2. THE APOSTLE PAUL DESCRIBES WHAT I WAS LIKE BEFORE GOD SAVED ME, AND WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR ME. (Discuss terminology as needed.)

Romans 3:10-12 *As it is written: As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Romans 5:6-10 *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

Ephesians 2:1-9 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

Ephesians 2:12 *That at that time ye were without Christ, . . . having no hope, and without God in the world:*

Eph. 4:17-19 . . . understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God . . .

3. GOD'S PRINCIPLE OF SUBSTITUTION

a. God's grace was evident even when Adam and Eve first disobeyed Him.

Genesis 2:15-17 *And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

2:25 *And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*

Genesis 3:

:6-7 *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.*

:8-12 *And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*

:13 *And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*

:20 *And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.*

:21-24 *Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*

Adam & Eve were given one commandment, which they disobeyed. Then they tried to make themselves acceptable to God - represented by the fig leaf cover-up. They each blamed someone else. They got what they deserved - Justice. Then God gave them what they didn't deserve - Grace - represented by His animal substitute. An innocent animal's life was sacrificed as a result of their sin. This animal sacrifice was a representation of the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross for the sin of the entire human race.

b. The Passover - another picture of Christ's substitutionary sacrifice.

Exodus 12:1 *And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,*

:12-13 *For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token*

upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

:21-22 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.

:23 For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

:24-27 And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

:29-30 And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

1 Corinthians 5:7 ... For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

The Israelites were in slavery to the Egyptians. A lamb was killed as a substitute.

Wherever there was blood the inhabitants of the house were spared from God's judgment.

When the Lord saw blood on a doorpost, He could say, "Judgment has already been here".

c. Jesus Christ's sacrifice as our "Substitute" was God's plan for our salvation.

Isaiah 53:4-6 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

4. I HAVE BEEN SAVED BY HIS LOVE, NOT BECAUSE I AM DESERVING.

John 6:37 (Jesus said) All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

John 6:44 (Jesus said) *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Romans 3:10-12 . . . There is none righteous, no, not one: . . . there is none that seeketh after God.

Romans 4:4-8 *Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth [attributes] righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*

Ephesians 1:3-8 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;*

Titus 3:3-8 *For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, . . .*

5. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “RELIGION” AND “CHRISTIANITY”?

“Religion” worldwide teaches that there is something you can do to make yourself acceptable before God. “Christianity” teaches that only what Christ has done on your behalf is able to make you acceptable before God.

John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

Acts 4:12 *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

6. JESUS GAVE AN OVERVIEW OF SALVATION. (John 5:24 - a great verse to memorize)

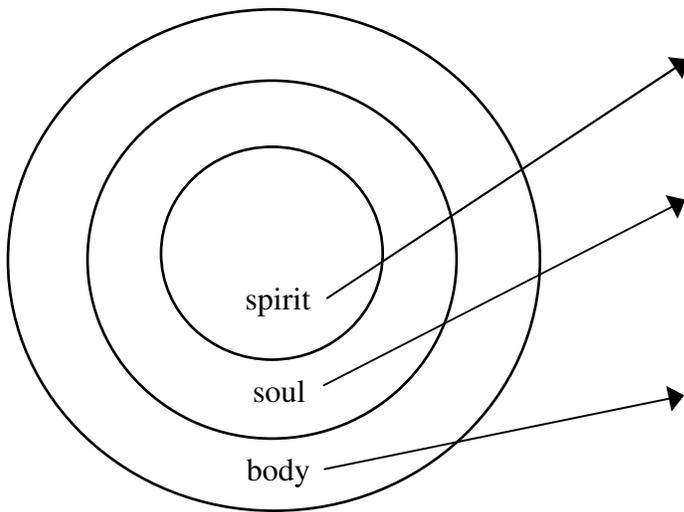
Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Eternal life is not an object, but rather an endless quality of existence with God.

THE SPIRITUAL ANATOMY OF A CHRISTIAN

- 1. Man was a unique creation of God, set apart from the rest of His creation. Man alone was given a “spirit”, through which he can know God.**

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. Genesis 2:7



spirit - God awareness. We interact with God through our spirit.

soul - self awareness. Personality, reasoning, emotions, mind, will, etc. “the heart.”

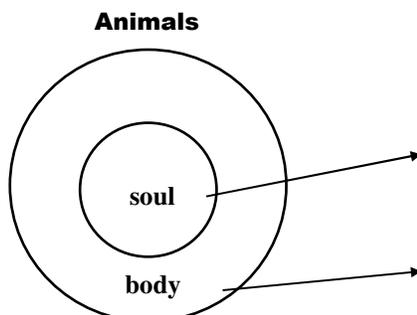
body - world awareness. We interact with the physical world through our body senses.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Romans 8:16 *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

- 2. The entire animal kingdom is limited in scope, without a “spirit”, and thus without an awareness of God. (Gen. 2:7 refers to man alone)**

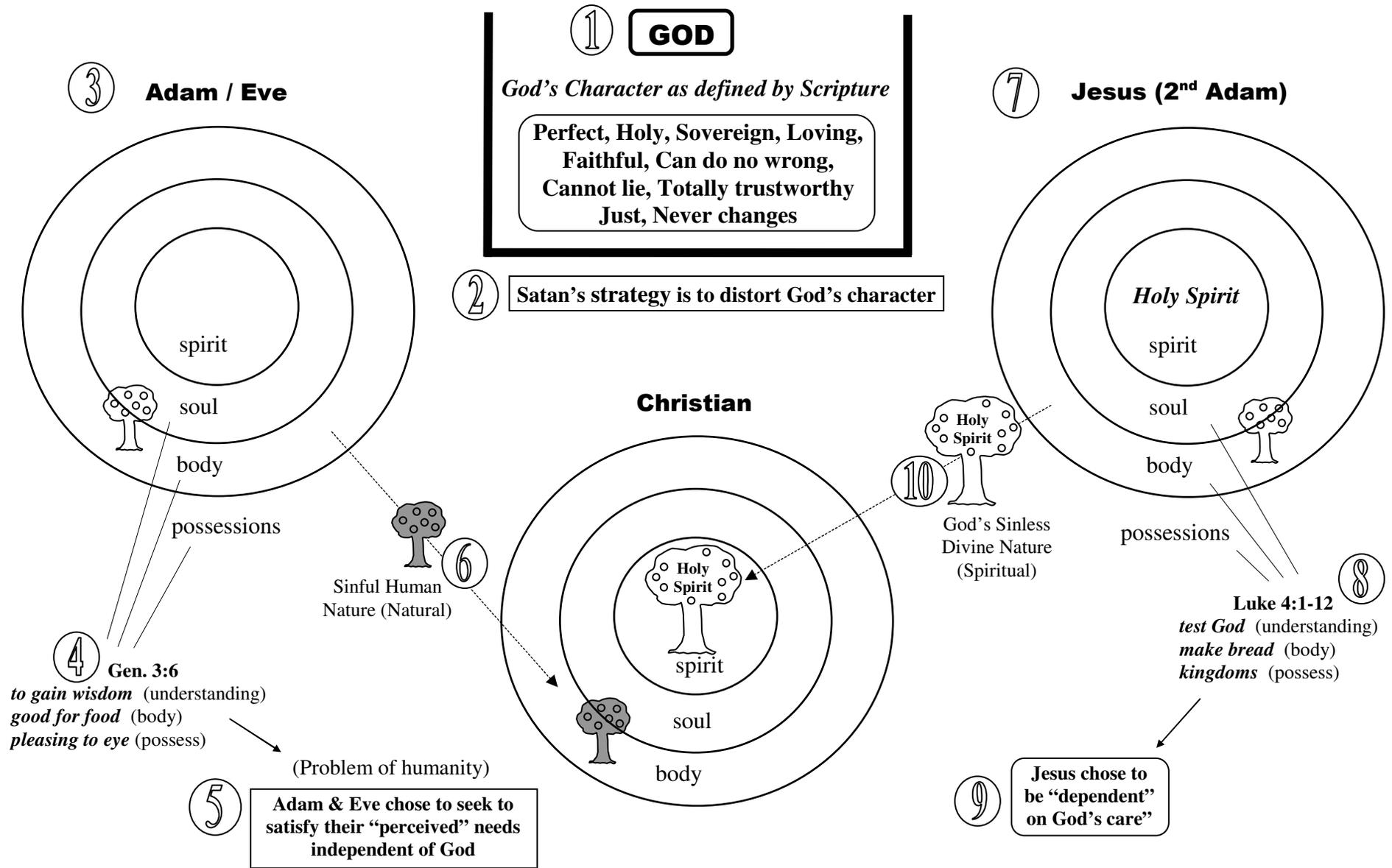


No awareness of or interaction with God.

soul - Varying degrees of instinctive personality, emotions, mind, will, etc.

body - world awareness. They interact with the physical world through their body senses.

HOW I RECEIVED MY HUMAN NATURE & GOD'S DIVINE NATURE



ORIGIN OF THE TWO NATURES - GUIDE

The main purpose of this lesson is to help clarify the events which have led to our present condition as a **believer having two natures**. A number of foundational Biblical principles will be introduced which should help us to more easily understand other truths as they are presented in subsequent lessons.

① **The Character of God** --- It is important to understand the significance of Biblical terms that describe His attributes. As we allow the Holy Spirit to speak **through His written Word**, His attributes will be reinforced. **Important: The main purpose of presenting God's attributes is to demonstrate how reasonable it is to trust Him.** Reason out that if God's character is as portrayed in the Bible, then it is very **logical** to trust Him completely, and very **illogical** to not trust Him. There is **no** reasonable logic for a resistance to yielding to Him. The corrupted human nature is rebellious to God and will **always** oppose Him. A major reason for distrusting God is our tendency to impute to God **our** character. If God were like us then it would be quite **reasonable** to distrust Him.

Deuteronomy 32:3-4 ... ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

*He is the **Rock**, his work is **perfect**: for all his ways are judgment: a **God of truth** and without iniquity, **just** and **right** is he.*

Job 34:10 . . . **far be it from God**, that he should do **wickedness**; and from the Almighty, that he should **commit iniquity**.

Hebrews 6:18 ... it was impossible for God to lie, ...

1 John 4:16 ... God is love; ...

Malachi 3:6 For I am the LORD, I change not; ...

② **Satan's strategy** --- is to persuade people that God is **not trustworthy**, by undermining their confidence in **God's character**. **Example:** In Genesis 3:1-5 he sought to instill doubt, insinuating that God is a liar, suggesting that God did not have their best interest at heart, and implying that He was withholding that which in some way would be good for them. If God did not love them, how then could He be trusted?

Genesis 3:1-5 *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, **hath God said**, Ye shall not eat of **every** tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, **Ye shall not surely die**: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then **your eyes shall be opened**, and ye shall be **as gods, knowing** good and evil.*

③ When Adam and Eve were created they were made **perfect**, as was all creation. They were complete and **totally** satisfied, not lacking in any way. Everything they did was in total harmony with God's character. Death did **not exist** before that time.

Romans 5:12 *Wherefore, as **by one man** sin entered into the world, and **death by sin**; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 *For since by man came **death**, ... For as **in Adam all die**, ...*

4 5

Adam and Eve believed Satan's lie about God's character and ate the fruit, choosing to pursue self-satisfaction "**independent**" of God. The choice to live independent from God was evident in **three areas** - (1) the **human understanding** (to gain wisdom), (2) the **appetites of the body** (good for food), and (3) **possessions** (pleasing to the eye). (Temptations also fall into one of these three areas.) It is important to see this "**predisposition toward independence**" as the "**root**" **problem of humanity** and one of the driving forces behind the global and individual resistance to God.

Genesis 3:6 *And when the woman saw that the tree was good **for food**, and that it was pleasant **to the eyes**, and a tree to be desired to **make one wise**, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

6

Every person born into the **human race** inherits the sinful human nature (*pictured as a dark tree*) of Adam, through their father. Every human from birth is at odds with God's character.

Genesis 5:3 *And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in **his own likeness**, after **his image** ...*

7

Jesus was born into the human race, but **without** a sinful human father. As the **second Adam**, He was born with the same **sinless** human nature that Adam had before he fell. The righteous character of Jesus, as seen in His life, is what God had originally intended for Adam.

1 Corinthians 15:45-46 *The first man Adam was made a living soul; the **last Adam** was made a **quickening spirit**...*

Romans 5:19 *For as by one man's disobedience many were made **sinners**, so by the obedience of one shall many be made **righteous**.*

8 9

Jesus was tempted in the **same three areas** as Adam, but Jesus chose to entrust Himself into God's care instead of believing Satan's enticement to seek to live independent of God.

(**Hebrews 4:15**; Matthew 4:1-11)

10

Upon believing, the new believer is born into the **spiritual race**, and receives the divine nature in **the Person of the Holy Spirit**. **Important:** The sinful human nature can **never** be improved. (See Gal. 5:17 below)

John 3:3,6 *Jesus answered ... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God... That which is **born of the flesh** is flesh; and that which is **born of the Spirit** is spirit.*

Romans 7:14-25** *... For I know that in me (that is, **in my flesh**), **dwelleth no good thing**: ... I find then a law, that, when I would do good, **evil is present with me**. For I delight in the **law of God** after **the inward man**: But I see another law in **my members**, warring against the law of **my mind**, and bringing me into captivity to the **law of sin** which is **in my members** ... So then with the **mind** I myself serve the **law of God**; but with the **flesh** the **law of sin**.*

Gal. 5:16-23 *This I say then, Walk **in the Spirit**, and ye shall not fulfil **the lust of the flesh**. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are **contrary the one to the other**. ... Now the **works of the flesh** are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: ... But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

HOW TO RELATE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Note to discipler: Each point in this lesson introduces an important concept that the disciple needs to consider and clearly understand early in the Christian walk. As you cover each point, help the disciple to recognize the consequences of not understanding that concept; for example, what would be the typical result of not thinking of the Holy Spirit as a Person? Explain how Jesus was limited by a physical body, but the Holy Spirit is “omnipresent”.

1. I SHOULD INTERACT WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A PERSON, FOR HE IS GOD HIMSELF. I SHOULD NOT THINK OF HIM AS JUST A “MOTIVATION”, OR AN “INFLUENCE”, WITHOUT PERSONALITY.

Acts 5:3-4 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

1 Corinthians 2:10-11 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Job 33:4 The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

The Holy Spirit is a Person. He is not an influence, or a force, or an inspiration, but God Himself. He is like a best Friend, yet so much more. My relationship with Him is in many ways to be similar to a good spousal relationship. What are the implications of such a relationship? Respect? Communication? Interaction? Nurturing? How would you treat a “force”?

2. HE LIVES IN ME, HIS TEMPLE. HE OWNS ME (WHETHER I BELIEVE IT OR NOT). HIS OWNERSHIP DOES NOT BECOME TRUE AFTER I BELIEVE IT.

1 Corinthians 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

God's ownership of the Christian is a factual truth, which is not dependent on the believer's acknowledgment of it. I do not bestow ownership, I can only acknowledge and act upon what He states to be already true. New believers will typically not be resistant to this truth, because they don't have preconceived ideas of God's expectations. In contrast, older believers tend to accept this truth intellectually, but be resistant to the implications. What are the implications of ownership? What rights or authority are generally understood to be conveyed by ownership?

3. HE IS THE SEAL (DEPOSIT, GUARANTEE, EVIDENCE) THAT I AM GOD'S CHILD

Rom. 8:9, 14-16 ... Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. ... For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. ... The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.. (See also 2 Corinthians 5:5)

Galatians 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Ephesians 1:13-14 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

1 John 4:13 ... we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. (See 1 John 4:13)

The Holy Spirit is God's evidence of my salvation. We should actively seek after the Holy Spirit and be open to His guidance and instruction. A disciple should grow increasingly more dependent on the Holy Spirit and increasingly less dependent on a discipler. A disciple should increasingly recognize the Holy Spirit's promptings in his everyday life.

4. HE HAS A PLAN FOR EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE. HE WANTS ME TO LEARN TO FOLLOW AND OBEY HIM. HE DOES NOT EXPECT TO FOLLOW MY PLAN.

Psalm 139:16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

Jeremiah 10:23 O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

John 14:16-17 (Jesus said) And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: ...

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 16:13-15 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. ...

1 Corinthians 2:9-14 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: ... Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.....

A disciple needs to fit into God's plan for his life. God wants me to follow Him, He does not want me to view Him as my Servant, fitting into my plans and assisting me whenever I determine I need His help. I should feel free to make tentative daily and future plans, while always being mindful that He may want to change my plans.

5. HE INTERCEDES TO THE FATHER FOR ME AND TEACHES ME TO PRAY.

Romans 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ... he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Ephesians 2:18 For through him [Jesus] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Ephesians 6:17-18 ... Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Jude 20 But ye, beloved, ... praying in the Holy Ghost,

A disciple needs to maintain a continual active communication with the Holy Spirit, through conversational prayer, reading and studying the Word, listening to teachings, etc.

6. HE BAPTIZED ME INTO THE UNIVERSAL BODY OF CHRIST, WITH ALL TRUE BELIEVERS. (REFERS TO "SPIRITUAL" BAPTISM, NOT TO WATER BAPTISM).

Matthew 3:11 (John the Baptist said) *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

A disciple needs to understand his oneness with all members of the universal Body of Christ, the one and only true Church, bonded together by the Holy Spirit. This "unity" is based on Jesus Christ and His Truth . . . The Bible is the final authority, not man's opinion.

7. HE WANTS TO USE ME TO TESTIFY ABOUT JESUS TO UNBELIEVERS.

Mark 13:11 *But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.* (Matthew 10:19 / Luke 12:11)

John 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

John 16:8-11 ... he (the Holy Spirit) will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ...

Acts 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

The Holy Spirit desires to use His children to attract **unbelievers** to a believing faith in Jesus Christ. This should be through **spoken words** as well as the **example** of a life yielded to Him. St. Francis of Assisi is quoted as saying – “preach the gospel – and if necessary use words”.

8. HE WANTS TO USE THE SPIRITUAL GIFT(S) HE HAS GIVEN ME FOR OTHERS.

Mark 9:35 ... [Jesus] saith unto them, *If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and **servant of all**.*

Romans 12:4-8 *For as we have many members in **one body**, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one **members one of another**. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether **prophecy**, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or **ministry**, let us wait on our ministering: or he that **teacheth**, on teaching; Or he that **exhorteth**, on exhortation: he that **giveth**, let him do it with simplicity; he that **ruleth**, with diligence; he that sheweth **mercy**, with cheerfulness.*

1 Corinthians 12:4, 7-11 *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ... But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to **every man** to **profit withal**. ... But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to **every man** severally **as he will**.*

Phillipians 2:3-4 *Let nothing be done through **strife** or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each **esteem other** better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of **others**.*

1 Peter 4:10-11 *As **every man** hath received **the gift**, even so **minister** the same **one to another**, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: **that God in all things may be glorified** through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

Each disciple is unique in the plan and purposes of God. The Holy Spirit wants to produce **interaction** and **involvement** between believers. (Jesus said “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have **love one to another**.” - John 13:35) He wants to minister **to other believers through me**. He doesn't want me to simply be focused on how others can meet **my** needs. Discuss the concept of **spiritual reproduction**; i.e., **investing** my resources (time, energy, possessions) in other believers to help them toward spiritual maturity and fruitfulness.

Important: In the physical human body each member functions to serve the body, not the body to serve the members.

9. HE ALONE CAN PRODUCE SPIRITUAL LIFE IN AND THROUGH ME.

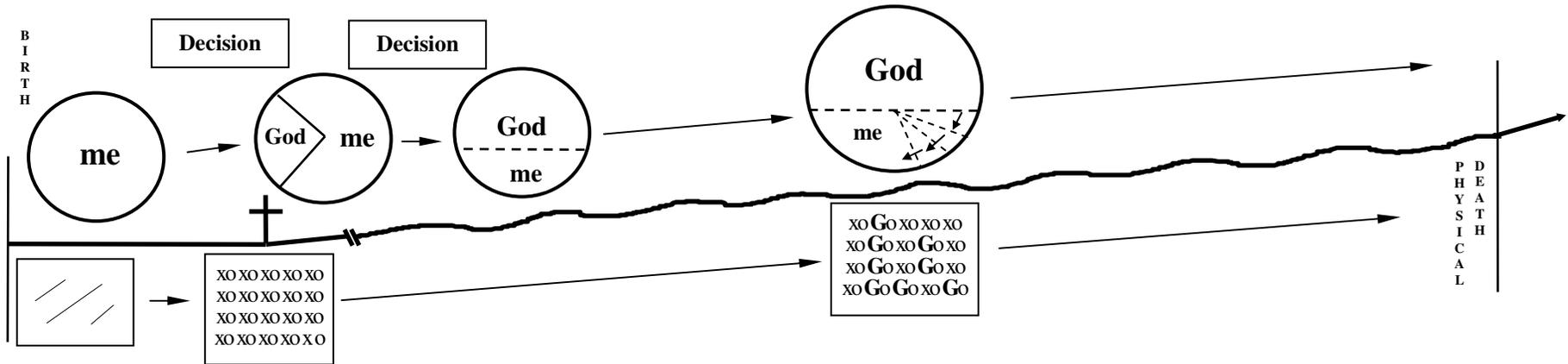
John 6:63 (Jesus said) *It is **the spirit that quickeneth**; the flesh profiteth **nothing**: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

2 Corinthians 3:6 ... *the letter killeth, but **the spirit giveth life**.*

Ecclesiastes 3:14 *I know that, **whatsoever** God doeth, it shall be **for ever**: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.*

Anything of eternal value **must** have its **origin** in the Holy Spirit. I am, and will continue to be, tempted to rely on myself until I leave this body. The disciple needs to be aware of this **tendency**, so as not to feel that he is somehow abnormal.

THE NORMAL PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHRISTIAN



CONSIDER: Surrender consists of two parts. First there is a decision to surrender the will (an acknowledgment of His ownership of my life and the obvious implications of the Master-servant relationship, that is, His “Lordship”). This decision is then followed by the daily process of yielding up areas of my understanding and behavior. The Holy Spirit seeks my cooperation in allowing Him to transform me into an increasingly mature and fruitful Christian.

CONSIDER: A ONE-TIME SURRENDER OF THE “WILL” PRECEDES A PROGRESSIVE YIELDING UP OF “BEHAVIOR”.

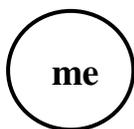
CONSIDER: “INWARD TRANSFORMATION” WILL PRODUCE “OUTWARD BEHAVIOR CHANGES”.

“True surrender is not simply surrender of our external life but surrender of our will -- and once that is done, surrender is complete. The greatest crisis we ever face is the surrender of our will. Yet God never forces a person's will into surrender, and He never begs. He patiently waits until that person willingly yields to Him. And once that battle has been fought, it never needs to be fought again.

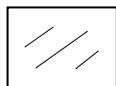
Jesus says, "If you want to be My disciple, you must give up your right to yourself to Me." And after you surrender -- then what? Your entire life should be characterized by an eagerness to maintain unbroken fellowship and oneness with God.”

(Excerpts from Oswald Chambers - My Utmost for His Highest – Sep. 13)

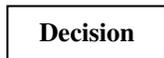
LET'S PROGRESSIVELY GO THROUGH THE ABOVE DIAGRAM TOGETHER.



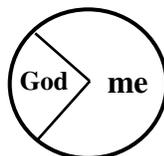
This circle represents the unbeliever.



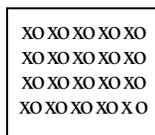
At birth our mind was like an empty blackboard.



Through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, the unbeliever must recognize his/her hopelessness, and make a “**decision**” to call out to the Lord for forgiveness and salvation.



The new believer receives eternal life (an **event**) and the Lord begins to dwell in the believer in the Person of the Holy Spirit. During this phase it is natural for the new believer to be focused on “external behavior”.

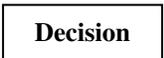


This graphic represents the understanding about life, values, etc. that has been acquired from birth to conversion as a result of the influence and learning from parents, peers, media, culture, etc. That understanding does not disappear at salvation. The believer now needs to learn to walk with the Holy Spirit as a habit. **The function of discipleship is to facilitate that process.**

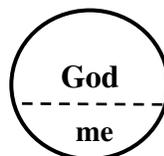
Note: Much of this understanding is contrary to God, but He alone can correctly manage the process of transformation.

Note: X = Understanding that is contrary to God

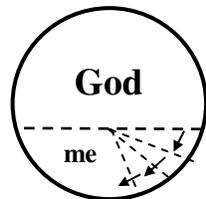
O = Understanding that is not necessarily contrary to God



In order for spiritual growth to continue the believer has to come to an agreement with the Lord as to **who** is best capable of managing the growth process. **Preferably this takes place at conversion,** but unfortunately in many cases it is not understood and accepted, until later. Typically, there are three motivations that will help the Christian to make the decision to accept the Biblical Master-servant relationship. They are: 1) **Persecution,** 2) **Crisis,** and 3) **Personal discipleship.**



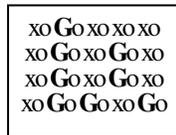
This graphic represents the believer who has made the decision to yield up his independence, and has acknowledged to the Lord His rightful Lordship of Christ over his life. He understands that God alone is capable of overseeing his life.



THE GROWTH PROCESS: As I allow Him, God will use His Word and circumstances to gradually illuminate areas of my understanding that He wants to alter. This process is called “Sanctification” (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:22-24) **“Spiritual growth” is the process in which God’s perspective of life is increasingly becoming the Christian’s perspective.** God does not want the Christian to be a mindless robot, but rather a companion who increasingly enjoys fellowship with Him.

*“As a Christian is **transformed in his mind** and is made more like Christ, he comes to approve and desire God’s will, not his own will for his life. Then he discovers that God’s will is what is good for him, and that it pleases God, and is complete in every way. It is all he needs. But only by being renewed spiritually can a believer ascertain, do, and enjoy the will of God.”*¹

Note: G = Represents areas of understanding that God has changed to His perspective.

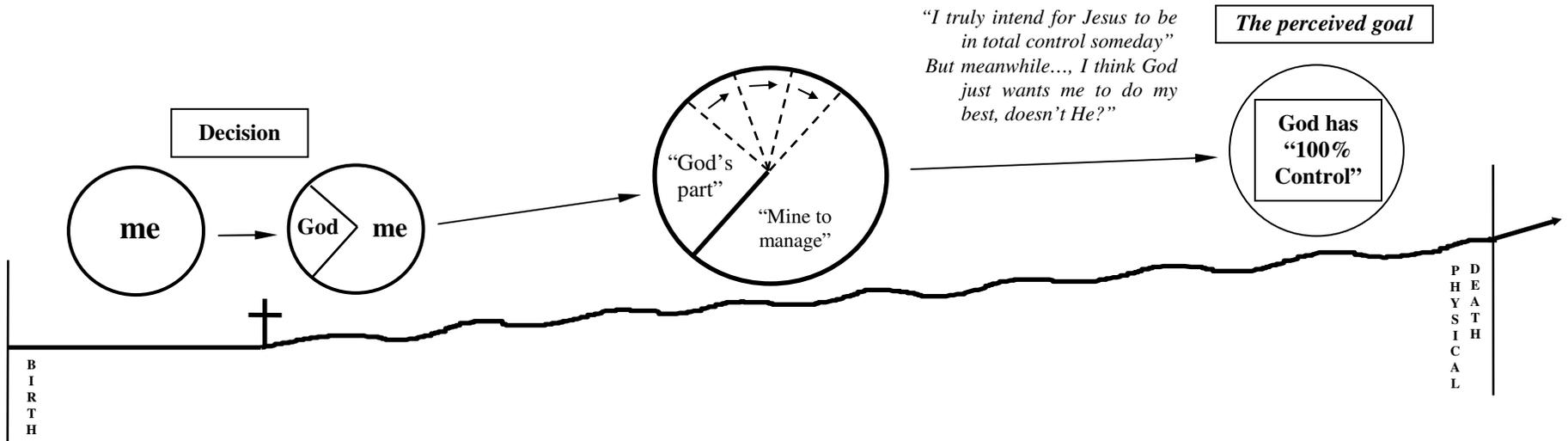


¹ Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.

THE COMMON MISCONCEPTION OF “PROGRESSIVE SURRENDER”

THIS DIAGRAM REPRESENTS THE ABNORMAL PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHRISTIAN.

CONSIDER: Many Christians view their relationship with God as depicted here. A critical error is to attribute to God authority (Lordship) over only a designated part of my life, as if He had not bought all of me. This view of the Christian life usually results from a lack of personal discipleship and/or an unwillingness to surrender one’s will to His Lordship.



CONSIDER: If “Lordship” is presented in the context of a “process of incremental surrender” of external behavior the perceived implication is made that a “totally outwardly obedient” life is the logical evidence of that “total surrender” being attained. Typically the believer sees himself in charge of overseeing that process, and this leads to cycles of frustration and discouragement, since who ever considers himself totally obedient?

CONSIDER: If “Tithes and offerings” are presented as “God’s share”, the perceived implication is that I have a “right” to manage the rest of my material wealth. If “Time” for attendance at church functions, Bible Reading, etc. is understood to be God’s part, then is not the rest of my hours mine to manage?

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRECEDING PERSPECTIVE:

1. It tends to result in a Christian perceiving God as a threat; such as:

- a. “What will He ask me to do that I can’t do, or don’t want to do?”
- b. “What will He keep me from doing that I want to do?”
- c. “What will He take away from me that I hold dear?”
- d. “Will God fail me if I entrust this to Him?”

2. The Christian views himself/herself as being in charge of the process of spiritual growth, making the determinations as to what can and should be yielded up to the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Christian sets down the rules and limits. This perception is typically based on **pride**, an inflated view of one’s own discernment and capabilities, and a distorted understanding of God’s character.

CONSIDER: **There is no reasonable logic for rejecting His yoke of Lordship.** A lack of acceptance is typically based on: 1) a fear of the unknown, 2) an unwillingness to relinquish perceived control, 3) an unwillingness to leave a comfort zone, or 4) an over-estimation of one’s own capabilities to determine and manage their future.

Jesus said: “*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*” (Matthew 11:28-30) **Jesus did not say, “learn about Me, and if you like how I do things, then take My yoke!”**

CONSIDER: The real question is, **Is God trustworthy?** If God were like you or me, we would have good reason to be fearful.

One should ask: Does God love me? If God’s character is as described in the Bible, and if He promises to do only that which is in my best interest, what then do I have to fear? Did He not design me? Did He not give me life? Does He not maintain my very existence? Who besides God knows what will really satisfy me? Does not He alone know what is best for me? Does not He alone know how He wants to shape my life and use me for His eternal purposes?

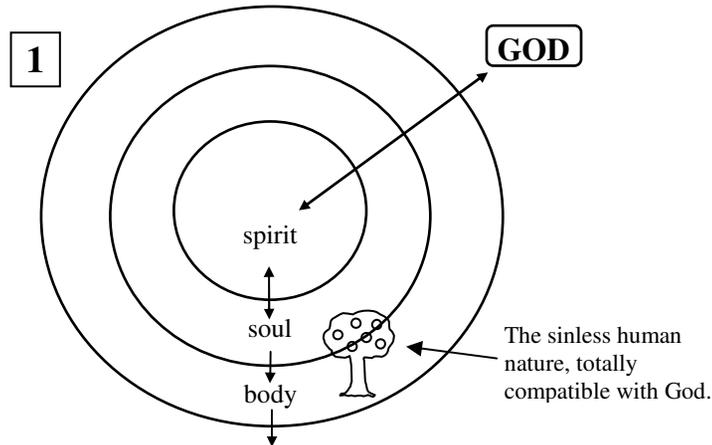
CONSIDER: God’s **ownership** of the Christian is a factual truth, which is **not** dependent on the believer’s acknowledgment of it. I do **not** bestow ownership, I can only **acknowledge** and **act upon** what He states to be already true. **New** believers will typically not be resistant to this truth, because they don’t have **preconceived** ideas of God’s expectations. In contrast, **older** believers tend to accept this truth intellectually, but be resistant to the implications. What are the **implications** of ownership? What rights or authority are generally understood to be conveyed by ownership? A disciple needs to understand that he lives in a spiritual **“kingdom”**, not in a spiritual democracy.

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. 1 Cor. 6:19-20

If God’s intention were to do you harm or mistreat you, do you really think He needs to wait for your permission?

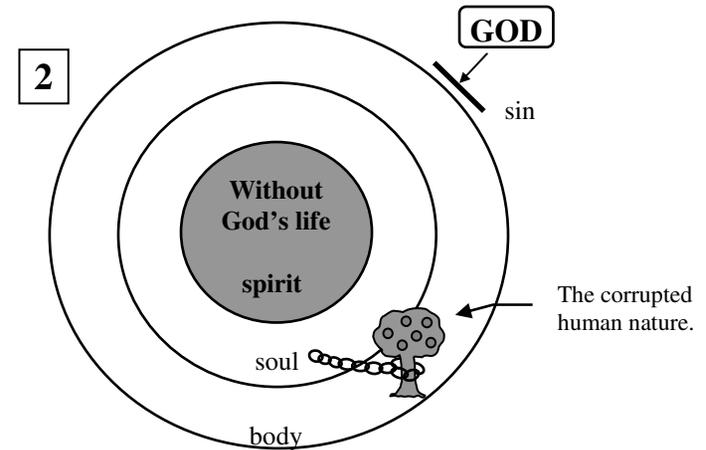
OVERVIEW OF THE TWO NATURES

Adam - before he sinned (Jesus - while on earth)



All behavior was in total harmony with God's character, totally pleasing to God.

All unbelievers



Their works (fruit) have no life (eternal), are imperfect (flawed), and therefore unacceptable to God.

Gen. 1:27 *God created man in His own image, ...*
 Gen. 2:7 *...the LORD God...breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (only said of man)*
 Gen. 1:31 *... God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. (no imperfections, nothing lacking)*
 Rom. 5:14 *... Adam ...who is the figure of him that was to come.*
 1 Cor. 15:45 *... The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam (Jesus) was made a quickening spirit.*
 Phil. 2:5,7 *... made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*
 Heb. 4:15 (Jesus) *... was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

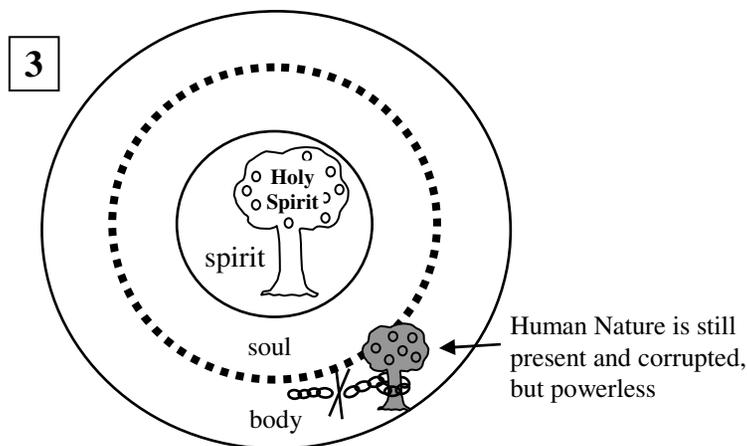
Rom. 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*
 Rom. 3:10-12 *... There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God ... there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*
 Rom. 8:8 *... they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*
 1 Cor. 15:22 *For as in Adam all die, ...*
 Eph. 2:12 *... having no hope, and without God in the world.*

Thought: God can only accept that which is perfect (100%, without blemish). Nothing that originates from the human nature has that quality. The unbeliever is devoid of His life. Only God alone can produce anything of eternal value.

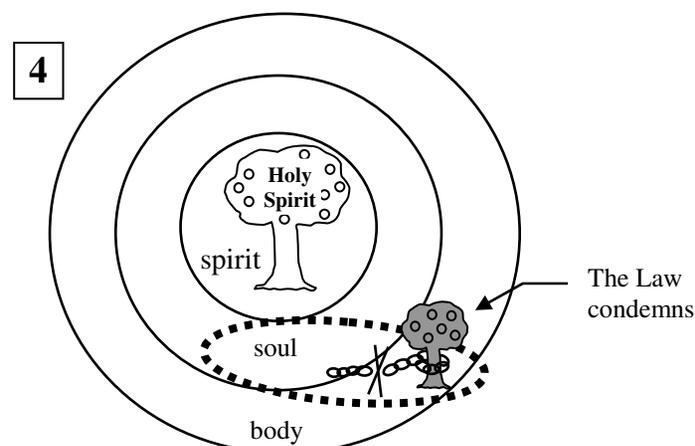
 = The sinless human nature, totally compatible with God.

 = The sinful human nature, corrupted and incapable of producing fruit that is acceptable and pleasing to God.

The condition of “abiding” in fellowship with the Holy Spirit
(The “normal” Christian life) (“Walking in the Spirit”)



The condition of “not abiding”, having an unresolved issue(s) with the Holy Spirit. (“walking in the flesh”)



All that I allow the Holy Spirit to do through me is eternal and rewardable at the judgment seat of Christ (gold, silver, precious stones).

All that does not originate from the Holy Spirit is temporal, without His life and not rewardable (wood, hay, stubble).

Galatians 5:16 ... Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Galatians 5:22-23 ... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law..

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: ...

John 15:4-5 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me...for without me ye can do nothing.

Note: The circular “dotted line” represents the “conditional” aspect.

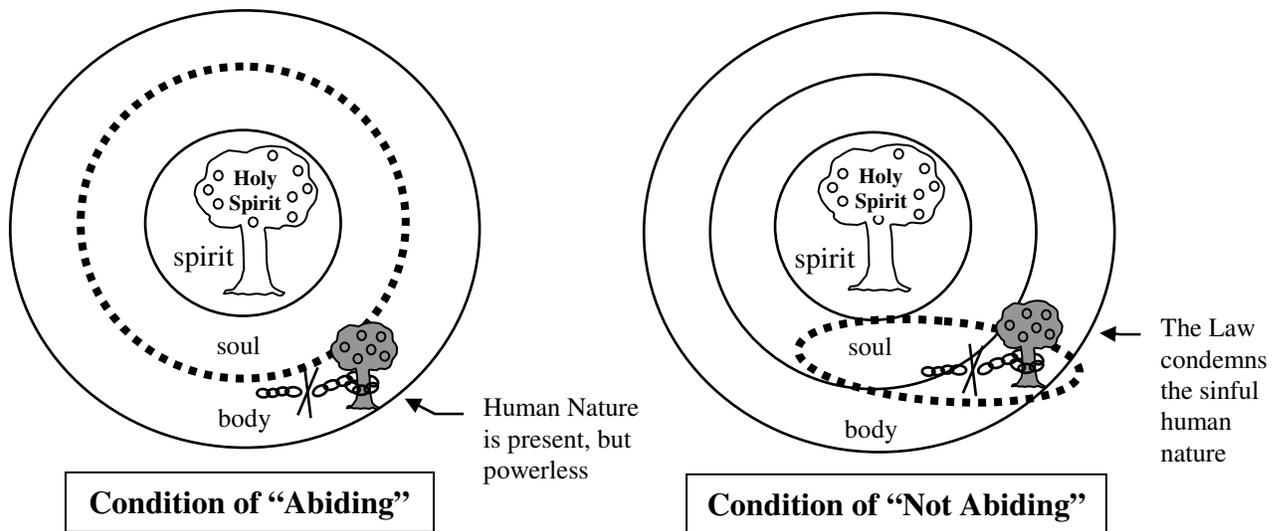
Thoughts:

Even though I am walking in fellowship with the Holy Spirit (#3), and have no unresolved issues, not all that I do originates with Him, or is even pleasing to Him. As I allow Him to grow and mature me, He will increasingly have more freedom to bear His fruit. If I find myself out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit (#4), it is by my choice. I do not need to be out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit any longer than I choose to be. Restoration to the condition of abiding fellowship (#3) will take place immediately upon confession of the offense(s) for which the Holy Spirit is holding me accountable. We have freedom in Christ ... not independence.

How can I know if I’m out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit (#4)? Usually symptoms indicate an ailing body. Similarly look for “on-going” spiritual symptoms of the sinful nature, such as: **Stumbling, Striving, Impatience, Lack of peace, Frustration, Sense of defeat, Dissatisfaction, Complaining, Worry, Anxiety, Anger, Irritability, Addictive behavior, Critical or Judgmental attitude, etc.**

“ABIDING” PRINCIPLES TO HELP ME MAINTAIN CONTINUAL FELLOWSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

“To Abide” simply refers to the moment-by-moment experience of walking in fellowship with the Holy Spirit; that is, without any “unresolved” offenses that are disrupting that fellowship (communion).



Note: The circular “dotted line” represents the “conditional” aspect.

1. WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT FOR ME TO ABIDE ?

- a) God is looking for **available vessels**. God has eternal purposes that He wants to complete in and through my life. While I am abiding in fellowship, the Holy Spirit is free to produce His fruit through me as a **usable** vessel. At any given moment I can **allow** myself to become **unusable** through my unwillingness to remain in fellowship with Him. I should picture myself as an instrument, a vessel, a water glass, etc. A vessel’s main function is to be **available** and **usable** by its owner, not to perform on its own. Is God as the Potter free to use me **at any moment** as He chooses? (Romans 6:13,19; 2 Corinthians 4:6-7; 2 Timothy 2:20-21)
- b) We tend to focus on **performance**, but this lesson is not about **doing**, but rather about **being**. What I do is a **result** of what I am being. What is the function of a branch? To **be**, or to **do**? (Jesus said) *“I am the vine, **ye are the branches**: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same **bringeth forth** much fruit: for without me ye can do **nothing**.”* (John 15:5)
*... for **out of** the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* (Matt. 12:34)
- c) It will help to look at this lesson as if it were entitled **“How To Live In Continual Harmony With My Spouse”**, because the clearest **model** God has given us is His designed Husband - Wife relationship. Examining the husband - wife model (or a close friendship) will give me many insights into my relationship with the Holy Spirit.

2. IT MAY HELP TO THINK OF ABIDING AS HAVING THREE DIMENSIONS:

W

WIDTH could refer to the “daily” aspect of abiding. I need to view my relationship of abiding in fellowship with the Holy Spirit as only encompassing “**TODAY**”. Yesterday’s issues should have already been dealt with, and I need to believe God’s promises that His grace will be sufficient for tomorrow’s issues, as they become “today’s” issues.

a. The Lord promises to meet our “daily” needs.

Matthew 6:8-11 ... Give us this day our daily bread..

Exodus 16:4-30 Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, ...he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack;...

Psalms 68:19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, ...

b. I am told to take up my cross daily, anything greater can be overwhelming.

Luke 9:23 ... If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

c. Thoughts to consider.

I must pursue the habit of keeping “short accounts” with the Holy Spirit, that is, I need to consciously choose to quickly acknowledge (confess) any unresolved conflict when I have offended Him. The missionary Hudson Taylor stated, “We should never be conscious of not abiding in Christ” (*Hudson Taylor’s Spiritual Secret*). The same holds true for fellowship with my spouse, or a close friend. We are told in Eph. 4:26-27: ... “let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil.” Paul stated in Acts. 24:16: *And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*

Important: The Holy Spirit alone determines when I am being held accountable for offending Him, not me. Likewise, listening to the offended spouse (or friend) is usually the quickest first step to restoring fellowship.

During the time I am walking out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit I am forfeiting His intended blessings (eternal fruit), and will probably reap unintended consequences. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption (worthless fruit); ... Galatians 6:7-8*

God promises to meet my needs (Matt. 6:19-21, 25-34). Being concerned, prudent and responsible toward the future is appropriate. But if I allow that “concern” to negatively affect my relationship with the Lord, then “worry and anxiety” can easily become sin. He wants His peace to reign in my heart. *Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: ... Proverbs 12:25*

H

HEIGHT could refer to “an open line of vertical communication” between God and myself. I should jealously guard our fellowship by monitoring our communication moment by moment, being vigilant to not allow anything to disrupt it. I need to form the habit of not just checking on it from time to time at my personal convenience. It is a 24-hour per day, 7-day per week relationship.

Thoughts to consider.

I am told to **pray continually**. *Rejoice evermore. **Pray without ceasing**. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* (1 Thess. 5:16-18) “Continual” prayer is not necessarily conversation without any interruptions, but prayer that continues whenever possible. The adverb for “**continually**” was used in Greek of a hacking cough. Paul was speaking of maintaining continuous fellowship with God as much as possible in the midst of daily living in which concentration is frequently broken. (Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.)

The **husband-wife relationship** will also deteriorate unless it is **consciously** nurtured. (Ephesians 5:25-32)

Caution: Busyness can easily be a trap, causing me to **neglect** the Holy Spirit. Both the Holy Spirit and my spouse will be offended if I carelessly disregard them. Neglect often conveys unimportance. If I will ask Him, the Holy Spirit will **always** be faithful to reveal to me any unresolved problems between us. Never allow what you are **doing** to become more important than your fellowship with Him.

D **DEPTH** could refer to my deepening relationship with the Lord, getting to know Him, as in a marriage. The concept of “**spiritual growth**” and the “**maturing process**” imply that there are many things presently in my life that are displeasing to God. Even though the Lord is aware of those many displeasing aspects of my character, He only holds me accountable for those issues that He wants to deal with **today** as He matures me.

a. Illustration.

I can look at the air in a room and it looks relatively pure (**my** perspective). If a ray of light should appear, an innumerable number of dust particles would suddenly be visible (**God’s** perspective). Even though God sees my human nature as totally corrupted and unholy if compared to His holiness, He sees me “in Christ”, and He only holds me accountable for the issues (dust particles) that He is presently bringing to my attention. The dust particles existed, even though I was not yet conscious of their existence. My responsibility is to be attentive to the Holy Spirit so that He can easily show me what areas of my understanding and/or behavior He wants to change. He will never burden me with more than I can handle.

God deals with me according to my **maturity level** (just as good parents do with their children) and my willingness to learn from Him. *He hath not dealt with us **after our sins**; ... he remembereth that we are **dust**.* (Psa. 103:10, 14)

b. As I allow Him, God prunes me so that I will bear **more eternal fruit**.

God’s process of making my life more fruitful is described as “**pruning**”. ... *every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may **bring forth more** fruit.* (John 15:2) Pruning is usually not enjoyable, but always results in more fruitfulness if I allow God to finish His project. An area of my life that appears to me to be beneficial or harmless, may from God’s perspective be distracting or harmful, and a hindrance to what He wants to do in my life. God determines what needs to be pruned. My responsibility is to be teachable and attentive to Him, careful to not allow my “good” things to rob me of God’s “best”. (e.g. Martha – Luke 10:38-42)

c. **Caution: Don’t be surprised by the sinfulness of your human nature.**

As we grow spiritually, we will increasingly see our human nature as God sees it. Flaws become more visible as they are more exposed to light. The closer we are to God the more abhorrent our human nature will become to us. (...*all things that are reprov’d are made **manifest by the light**, ... Eph. 5:13)*

3. PREVALENT MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE CONDITION OF ABIDING

- a) **At salvation** I was put into the condition of abiding fellowship with the Lord, by virtue of Jesus' righteousness, **not** because I deserve it. Now, as a believer, I cannot keep myself in the condition of abiding through my own efforts. My goal should be to please Him, and to be sensitive to Him in order to not allow any issues that He brings to my attention to continue unresolved. Those unresolved issues can disrupt my fellowship, as in human relationships.

God's greatest concern about your sin is not the degree to which it falls short of His standard of righteousness for you, but rather the **disruption** it causes in His fellowship with you, and the consequent **hindrance** it causes as He seeks to accomplish His purposes in and through you. "**Avoiding sin**" should not be the primary focus of your Christian walk, but rather **maintaining a continual abiding communion** with Him. The writer of Hebrews tells us: ... *let us **lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and **let us run** with patience the race that is set before us, **Looking unto Jesus***** ... (Heb. 12:1-2)

- b) There is a prevalent misconception that the condition of abiding is somehow "**attained to**", when in reality it is the **birthright** of every child of God. Abiding does not speak of having achieved a certain level of maturity. Did you as a child have to **earn** the privilege of being in fellowship with your parents? God has made provision for **every** Christian to habitually live in harmony with Him **without extended periods** of disrupted fellowship (communion). Abiding is not restricted by my lack of knowledge, past experiences, or personal limitations, but only by my **unwillingness** to acknowledge and confess unresolved issue(s) that are hindering God from blessing me and using me as He desires. The Biblical "normal" Christian life is one of **habitually** abiding; to not habitually abide is **abnormal**. (2 Peter 1:3-4)
- c) My natural tendency is to **categorize** "acts of behavior" and build for myself a mental list of "**do's**" and "**don'ts**". It seems easier to follow a "list" of perceived expectations than to be continually attentive to the Holy Spirit as He leads me. I need to form the habit of carefully looking at each choice and judging if it is pleasing to Him at this moment. What I tend to consider "insignificant" may be very significant to Him. It will help me to consider "sin" as "**anything that is displeasing to God**".

Example: I could ask the question, "can reading the Bible be sinful?" Imagine yourself resting on a riverbank reading your Bible. You hear a child frantically struggling against the current as he is being swept downriver. You continue faithfully reading your Bible. Shortly a mother appears and asks if you've seen her child. You tell her that you would have saved the child if you hadn't been occupied. You can imagine her response (and God's). This may seem extreme, but it points out the danger of "categorizing" acts of behavior.

John 5:30 (Jesus said) ... *I seek not mine own will, but the **will of the Father** which hath sent me.*

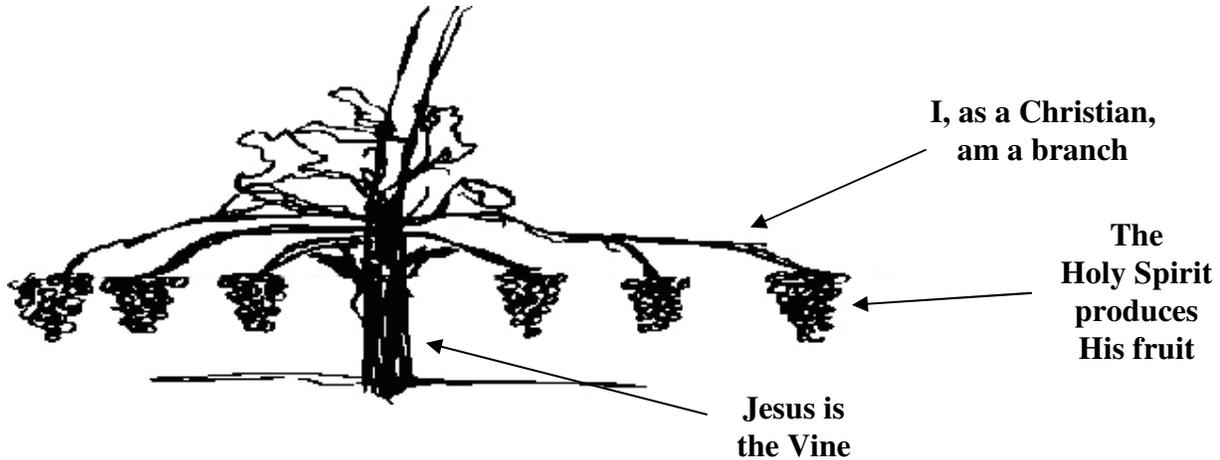
2 Corinthians 5:9 *Wherefore we labour, that ... we may be **accepted of him**.*

Ephesians 5:8-10 ... *walk as children of light: ... **Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.***

Romans 14:23 ... ***whatsoever** is not of faith is sin.*

VERSES RELATED TO “ABIDING”

1. AS I AM “ABIDING” I AM DEPICTED AS A FRUIT-BEARING BRANCH ON A TREE.



John 15:1-6 (Jesus said) *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

:7-11 *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

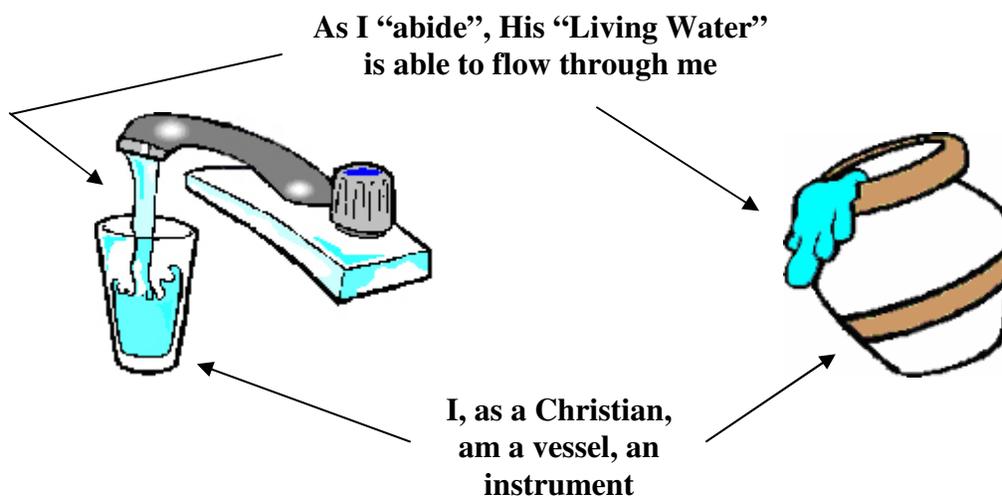
:12-16 *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

Does the branch produce the fruit, or is the branch simply a conduit (instrument, vessel) through which the life of the Vine flows?

2. A. AS I AM “ABIDING” I AM DEPICTED AS A VESSEL, AN INSTRUMENT.

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. (2 Tim. 2:20-21)



A “faucet” with “living” water can be a useful illustration. Although the water pressure is always constant, the “on-off” feature has to be maintained in the “On” position for the water to freely flow. During the time I am not in abiding fellowship with the Holy Spirit the on-off feature is in the “Off” position.

B. AS I AM “ABIDING”, I ALLOW GOD’S “LIVING WATER” TO FLOW THROUGH ME AS THROUGH A SERVING VESSEL. (SEE ALSO EZEKIEL 47:1-12)

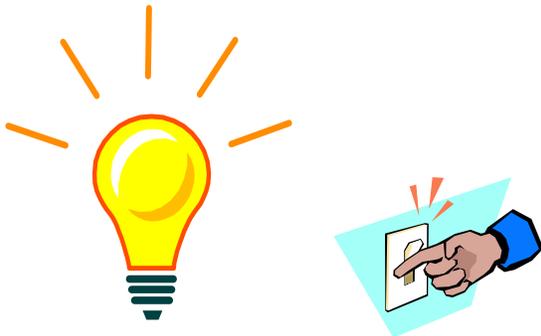
Jeremiah 2:13 ... *Me, the fountain of living waters, ...* (see also Jeremiah 17:13)

John 4:14 (Jesus said) ... *whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

John 7:37-39 ... *Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

James 3:8-12 *But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.*

3. A. AS I AM “ABIDING”, I AM DEPICTED AS A VESSEL THROUGH WHICH GOD’S LIGHT IS ABLE TO SHINE.



The *electricity* represents GOD’S LIFE flowing through me.
The *bulb* represents ME as a Christian.
The *light* that is given off represents the Fruit of the Holy Spirit
As I remain in communion with the Holy Spirit (*connected, light switch “On”*), I am allowing His life (*electricity*) to increasingly flow through me (*bulb*), which He will then use to influence and attract others (*light*).

Matthew 5:14-16 (Jesus said) *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*
2 Corinthians 4:6-7 *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*
Philippians 2:15 *... the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;*

B. AS I AM “ABIDING”, I AM WALKING IN THE LIGHT OF GOD’S PRESENCE.



1 John 1:5-10 *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

1 John 2:8-11 *... the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.*

John 8:12 *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

4. GOD HAS DESIGNED THE ON-GOING HEALTHY COMMUNION BETWEEN A CHRISTIAN HUSBAND AND WIFE TO BE A PICTURE OF THE ON-GOING COMMUNION BETWEEN THE HOLY SPIRIT AND A CHRISTIAN. IF I AM IN DOUBT AS TO HOW I SHOULD RELATE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, I CAN ASK MYSELF HOW SHOULD I RELATE TO A SPOUSE (OR TO A CLOSE FRIEND)?



Ephesians 5:22-33 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.. (see also **John 17:11, 21-22**)

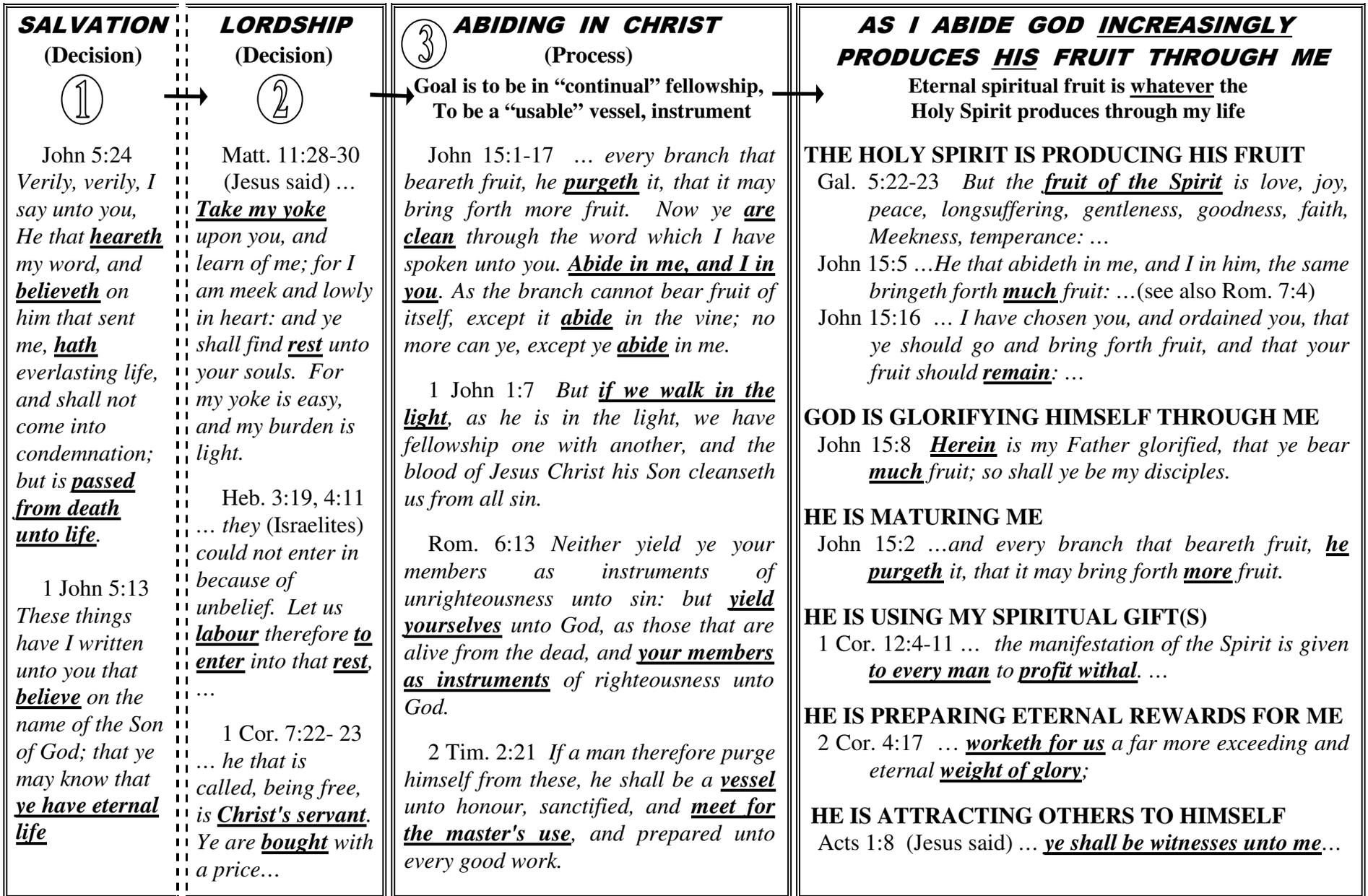
Genesis 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

1 Corinthians 6:16-17 ... But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

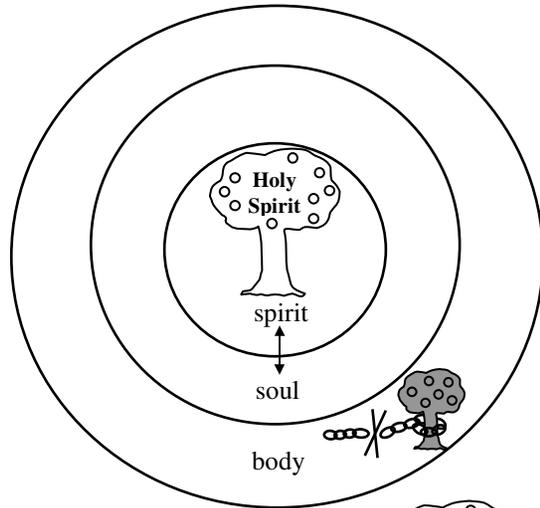
Colossians 3:18-19 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

1 Peter 2:18 – 3:7 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: ... Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands ...Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

THE 3 MAJOR PHASES OF THE NORMAL HEALTHY CHRISTIAN LIFE



LIVING DAILY IN (OR OUT OF) FELLOWSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT



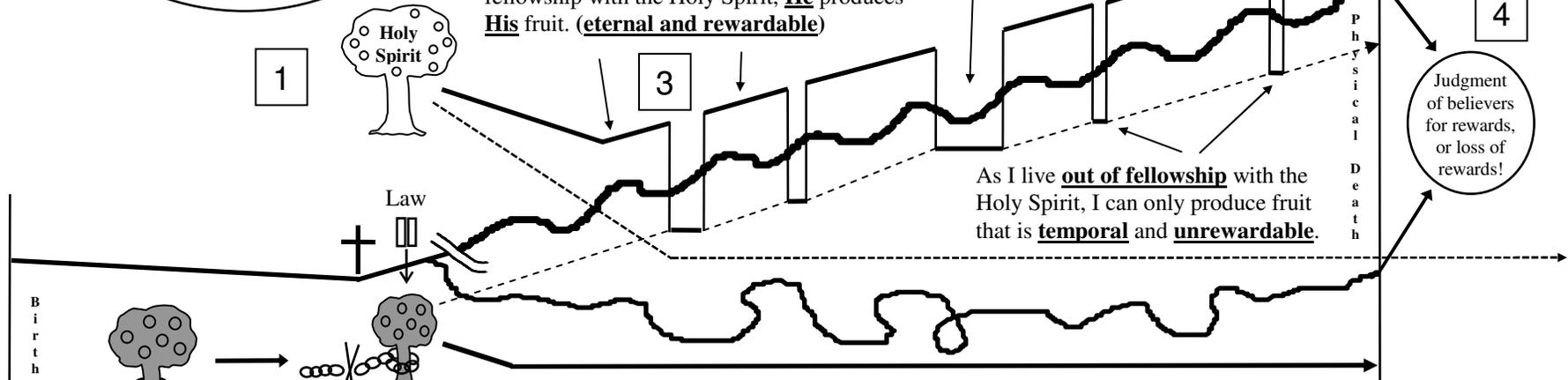
1	2	3	4
Gal. 5:22-23 John 7:38-39 James 3:9-12	Mk. 7:20-23 John 6:63 Rom. 8:5-8 Gal. 3:1-3 Gal. 6:7-8	Eccl. 3:14 John. 15:1-17 Rom. 7:7-24 Gal. 5:13-26 2 Peter 1:3-8	1 Cor. 3:10-15 2 Cor. 5:9-10

King David is a classic example of living out of fellowship for about a 9-month period. (2 Sam. 11:1-5, 12:1-14)

The "**Normal** Christian Life" - As I abide in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, **He** produces **His** fruit. (**eternal and rewardable**)

As I live **out of fellowship** with the Holy Spirit, I can only produce fruit that is **temporal and unrewardable**.

Judgment of believers for rewards, or loss of rewards!



Bound to the sinful Human Nature

Set free 2

In these believers the human nature will reign until either the issue of Lordship is resolved (usually through a God-orchestrated crisis), or physical death occurs. They are described in the parable of the sower as being distracted, **not maturing**, resulting in **not** bearing eternal rewardable fruit, until which time they choose to acknowledge His authority over their life, and begin to "abide". Although saved, they can lose all rewards. *If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer **loss**: **but he himself shall be saved**; yet so as by fire..* (1 Cor. 3:15)

The sinful human nature (i.e. the carnal nature) is incapable of producing eternal fruit.

HARDSHIPS, SUFFERING & GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Jesus clearly tells me that I cannot be His disciple unless I make the commitment to follow Him. (See Matthew 10:38, Matthew 16:24, Luke 14:27, John 12:26) Quite regularly, as I follow Him, He will cause me (or *allow* me) to encounter circumstances that I will perceive as unpleasant and often beyond my human ability to cope. The purpose of this lesson is to help me understand the process in which every circumstance, even those that appear insignificant, whether good or bad, pass through God's permissive will. He uses every circumstance in His process of transforming me into a holy and useful vessel, through which He can accomplish His eternal purposes.

A Christian who does not understand the significance of God's sovereign control over all circumstances will typically respond with complaining, blaming, self-pity, anger or bitterness. It pleases God when I choose to cooperate with Him by acknowledging to Him my acceptance of what He has designed for me, and seek His direction for the appropriate and godly response, as well as for any lessons He may want me to learn.

- 1. Is God in absolute control over all that happens in the universe and on earth? Does there exist some person or force that can somehow affect God's sovereign power? Does He always do what is right? Can God do wrong? Can He make mistakes? Is He totally trustworthy?**

Deuteronomy 32:4 *He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.*

Psalm 18:30 *As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: ...*

Proverbs 21:30 *There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD.*

Job 34:12-16 *surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment. ...*

Isaiah 46:11 *... yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.*

Daniel 4:35 *And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

- 2. Is God in absolute control over all the circumstances and details of my life? (Read and contemplate Psalm 139 together.)**

Acts 17:25 *... he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;*

Job 34:14-15 *If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.*

Jeremiah 1:5 *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; ...*

Jeremiah 10:23 *O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*

Proverbs 16:9 *A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.*

Proverbs 19:21 *There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.*

Jeremiah 29:11 *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*

Matthew 6:25-27,34 *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? ... Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.*

Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

1 Corinthians 10:13 *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

3. God tells me in His Word that I should consider hardships and suffering to be a “normal” part of my Christian experience here on earth. Hardships and suffering should not be assumed to be an indication of God’s displeasure. Nor can I assume that His blessings always imply my faithfulness. He is a loving God, and He takes care of His children even when they are displeasing.

Note: Let us define “difficulties” as “anything that I personally find unpleasant”. We all find physical suffering to be undesirable, however, because of our diverse personalities, we can have very differing reactions to most circumstances. (One person may watch or participate in a sport, or other activity, and find it exhilarating, while another would view it as a totally unpleasant experience.)

a. Here are two examples of believers who were suffering poverty from the world’s perspective, but they were rich before God. They were not being punished, but were temporarily poor so God could make them eternally rich.

Luke 16:19-31 *There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ... Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. ...*

Mark 12:41-44 *And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.*

b. The apostle Paul did not view hardships as something unusual. In fact, the following long list of hardships are things that transpired while Paul was in the center of God's will, seeking to please Him as His servant.

Acts 9:15-16 (God said of Paul) ... *Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*

2 Corinthians 6:4-10 (Paul wrote) ... *as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

2 Corinthians 11:23-27 ... *in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

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

Acts 16:22-40 *And the multitude rose up together against them (Paul and Silas): and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. ...*

c. Neither did the other apostles find hardships and suffering to be unusual.

Acts 5:40-41 ... *they (Jewish leaders) had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*

1 Corinthians 4:9-13 *For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, ... ; we are weak, ... we are without honor. we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are*

buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

Revelation 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

d. Neither should I find it unusual when I encounter hardships and suffering.

John 15:18-21 (Jesus said) ... I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Acts 14:22 ... we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Philippians 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

1 Thessalonians 3:2-4 (Paul wrote to the Thessalonian believers) ... And sent Timotheus, ... to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

2 Timothy 1:8 ... be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

1 Peter 2:20-21 ... if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (see also 1 Peter 3:13-17)

1 Peter 4:12-16 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: ... Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed: but let him glorify God on this behalf.

1 Peter 5:10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

Romans 8:35-39 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

4. GOD TYPICALLY ALLOWS SUFFERING FOR ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- To teach me to trust *Him*. (see a.)
- As a result of my own disobedience, neglect or carelessness. (see b.)
- To build character into my life. (see c.)
- To help me understand the needs of others. (see d.)
- To glorify Himself, and to cause others to see Him through me. (see e.)

a. God allows me to suffer in order to demonstrate His faithfulness, power, and sufficiency, and at the same time to help me to recognize my personal weaknesses. (A deliverance, of necessity, requires something to be delivered “from”)

2 Corinthians 1:8-9 (Paul wrote) ... *our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:*

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 ... *there was given to me (Paul) a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

b. Some suffering is brought about as a result of my own disobedience, neglect or carelessness. Even then, God is faithful and loving and will use my situation as a teaching experience for me.

Hebrews 12:6-11 *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ... we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

c. God uses suffering and hardships to build character into my life and to shape me into a usable and holy vessel in His hands. He alone knows what influences and circumstances will best enable Him to bless me and use me for the purposes that He has designed for my remaining time here on earth.

Romans 5:3-4 ... but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

James 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect (mature) and entire, wanting nothing.

Hebrews 5:8-9 (speaking of Jesus) Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; ...

1 Peter 4:12-16 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: ...

d. Sometimes God uses suffering to help me identify with the suffering of others in order to be able with sincere compassion to be helpful to them.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 (Paul wrote) ... Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

Hebrews 2:10,17-18 For it became him, (God the Father), ... in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain (Jesus) of their salvation perfect through sufferings.. ... 17-18 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, ... For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

1 Peter 5:9-10 (Peter wrote) Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

e. Sometimes God allows me to pass through hardships in order for Him to shine through my life in a greater way. (A light is most visible and significant in the darkness.)

Matthew 5:14-16 (Jesus said) Ye are the light of the world. ... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

John 9:1-3 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

Acts 16:22-34 *And the multitude rose up together against them (Paul & Silas): and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.*

5. Following God will sometimes require a release of things I hold dear, in order for Him to replace them with what is better and will have eternal benefits for me and others (e.g. comfort, material belongings, health, etc.).

Matthew 5:11-12 (Jesus said) *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

Luke 21:1-4 *And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.*

Acts 4:32-35 *And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.*

Romans 8:17-18 (Paul wrote) *... if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

Hebrews 11:17-19 *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: ...*

Hebrews 11:24-27 *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible..*

1 Peter 1:6-7 *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

6. My responses to His designed circumstances are an indicator of my willingness to accept what He has planned for me and to entrust myself into His care.

a. Jesus shows me by example what my attitude and response should be.

Matthew 26:51-53 *And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?*

John 19:9-11 *... (Pilate) saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above:*

Heb 5:8 *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;*

Heb 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

1 Peter 2:19-23 *For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. ... if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:*

b. The apostle Paul chose to entrust himself into God's loving care.

Acts 20:22-24 *...And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 ... he (God) said unto me (Paul), My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Philippians 3:10 That I (Paul) may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Philippians 4:12 I (Paul) know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

c. Job had learned that he could entrust himself into God's sovereign care. In one day God allowed Satan to take away almost all Job possessed, including his children (Job 1:4-19). Then God allowed Satan to severely afflict Job's physical health (Job 2:1-8). Yet Job's response pleased God.

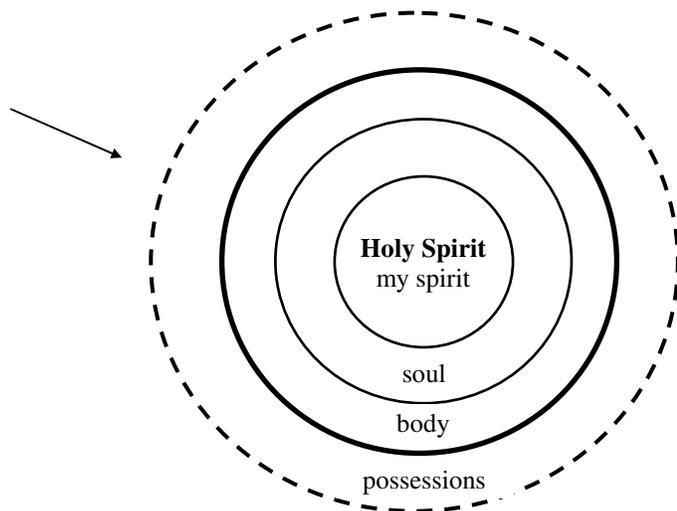
Job 1:1-3 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

Job 1:20-22 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped. And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Job 2:7,8,10 So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. ...he said ... shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

God's
"hedge"
of
sovereignty

Job 1:9-10 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? ...



- d. Let us look at Joseph's response to the hardships that God allowed - His jealous brothers hated him and sold him to foreign traders, who took him to Egypt (Genesis 37:2-36). Then he was falsely accused of attempted rape, and innocently suffered in prison (Genesis 39:1-40:23 and Psalm 105:17-19).

Joseph spoke of God's faithfulness and sovereignty to his brothers.

Genesis 41:52 ... God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

45:5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

45:8 So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: ...

50:19-20 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

CONCLUSION: God is worthy of my trust. I can always count on Him to do what is in my best interest. When I stand before Him in heaven, and understand what He was doing in my life here on earth, I will have no regrets for the times when I trusted Him fully. He does not desire for me to look at hardships with solemn resignation, neither to pursue suffering for its own sake, but rather with childlike faith to accept what comes from a Father who loves me beyond human understanding. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. (1 Peter 4:19)

Psalm 33:18-21 Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.

Psalm 34:4-8 I (David) sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. ... This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

Romans 8:31-32 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

7. [Our Daily Bread](#) – (March 21, 2005)

A Bumpy Road

When people tell me life is hard, I always reply, "Of course it is." I find that answer more satisfying than anything else I can say. Writer Charles Williams said, "The world is painful in any case; but it is quite unbearable if anybody gives us the idea that we are meant to be liking it."

The path by which God takes us often seems to lead away from what we perceive as our good, causing us to believe we've missed a turn and taken the wrong road. That's because most of us have been taught to believe that if we're on the right track God's goodness will always translate into a life free of trouble.

But that's a pipe dream far removed from the biblical perspective. God's love often leads us down roads where earthly comforts fail us. Paul said, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Philippians 1:29). When we come to the end of all our dark valleys, we'll understand that every circumstance has been allowed for our ultimate good.

"No other route would have been as safe and as certain as the one by which we came," Bible teacher F. B. Meyer said. "If only we could see the path as God has always seen it, we would have selected it as well." —David Roper

*If some darker lot be good,
Lord, teach us to endure
The sorrow, pain, or solitude
That makes the spirit pure. —Irons*

No trial would cause us to despair if we knew God's reason for allowing it.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Go to <http://www.rbc.org/rtb/4rsn/>

["10 Reasons To Believe In A God Who Allows Suffering"](#)

Our Daily Bread, ©2005 RBC Ministries--Grand Rapids, MI 49555. Reprinted by permission.

"MAKING RIGHT CHOICES, DISCERNING GOD'S WILL"

"GOD WILL ALWAYS GIVE THE VERY BEST TO THOSE WHO LEAVE THE CHOICE WITH HIM"

A. GOD'S GOALS FOR MY LIFE SERVE AS FOUNDATIONAL GUIDELINES:

- 1. God's desire for me is to love Him (demonstrated by my willingness to trust in His character), to grow in my understanding of how to please Him, and to allow the Holy Spirit to transform me into His likeness.
- 2. God loves every person in the world and He has a plan to reach unbelievers with the good news of salvation and to bring believers to spiritual maturity and fruitfulness in Christ.
- 3. God wants me to be willing to let Him use me in His plan, resulting in my being blessed both here on earth as well as eternally in heaven.

B. PREREQUISITES FOR UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WILL.

1. I need to believe that God has His tailor-made plan for my life.

Psalm 139:16 *Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*

Proverbs 16:9 *A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.*

Proverbs 20:24 *Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?*

Jeremiah 10:23 *... the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*

Acts 13:36 *...David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, ...*

2. God wants me to know His will for me, He doesn't want to hide it from me. He may not give me as much evidence as I want, but He gives me enough to intelligently follow Him by faith.

Romans 12:1-2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Ephesians 5:17 *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*

Colossians 1:9-10 *... since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

3. God is sovereign and perfectly able to carry out His will.

Ecclesiastes 3:14 *I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.*

Proverbs 19:21 *There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.*

Isaiah 46:9-10 *... I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:*

Daniel 4:35 *And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

Acts 17:25 *Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things:*

4. I must honestly want to know His will, and prayerfully seek it.

Jeremiah 29:13 *ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.*

Proverbs 2:1-6 *My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.*

James 1:5-8 *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth 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.*

5. Choices that have eternal rewards (that is, inspired by the Holy Spirit) always require a measure of faith, and include a perception of risk. Someone has said, don't ask if something is possible, but rather ask, "is it God's will?", because if it God's will, He will make it possible.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 *... we faint not; ... For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Galatians 3:11 *... "The just shall live by faith."*

Hebrews 11:6 *... without faith it is impossible to please him, ...*

1 Peter 1:6-7 *... now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

6. Choices based on faith may result in sacrifice and/or suffering. There is a price for obedience to His will. Trials ought NOT to be viewed as an enemy.

Luke 21:1-4 *And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.*

Hebrews 5:8 *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;*

James 1:2-4 *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

7. I need to choose to humble myself before God with a submissive attitude, "allowing" Him to teach me and change my priorities, as He deems best.

Psalm 25:9 *The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.*

Psalm 32:8-9 *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.*

Acts 13:22 *... he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.*

C. FOUR FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN MAKING RIGHT CHOICES:

1. THE WORD OF GOD: Does the Bible say something specific about the matter, or present principles related to it?

Psalm 119:105 *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works..*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:*

Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

2. THE PEACE OF GOD: Do I have God's peace?

Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

Colossians 3:15 *Let the peace of God rule (that is: “act as an umpire”) in your hearts, ... and be ye thankful.*

Philippians 4:6-7 *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

- a. <<<CAUTION>>> "Feelings" and "desires" may be deceptive. My natural tendency is not to follow His direction, but rather to be independent. Be honest with yourself! It is often helpful to ask yourself (and God), “Would this be pleasing to God?”.**

Proverbs 16:2 *All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.*

Proverbs 28:26 *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.*

Jeremiah 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

Galatians 5:17 *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

- b. <<<CAUTION>>> I need to confess any known sin.**

Psalms 66:18 *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:*

Proverbs 28:9 *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.*

Proverbs 28:13 *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

James 4:3 *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

1 John 1:5-10 *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

- 3. CIRCUMSTANCES: There is really only "One Circumstance" and that is God. Are circumstances suitable? Are doors opening? Or closing? Finances? (Caution: If not used carefully, credit cards (and/or credit) can be a hindrance to God's freedom to use finances as an instrument to guide me.)**

<<<CAUTION>>> Are the obstacles (problems) a "Trial" or "Direction"? The path of least resistance may not be God's will. Difficulties or suffering do not necessarily prove that I am not in the center of God's will any more than material and comfort blessings prove that I am in the center of His will.

2 Corinthians 1:8-9 (Paul) ... *we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:*

2 Corinthians 11:24-27 (Paul, in the center of God's will) *Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

- 4. SPIRITUAL COUNSEL: I should seek godly and wise counsel. (My spouse may also "balance" me.)**

Proverbs 1:5 *A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:*

Proverbs 12:15 *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.*

Proverbs 15:22 *Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.*

Proverbs 19:20 *Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.*

<<<CAUTION>>> Counsel can be wrong.

Job 2:9 *Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.*

Job 42:7 *the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.*

See also: **1 Kings 13:1-26**

D. TWO DIFFERENT METHODS FOR MAKING CHOICES:

1. **“Active”** - Unless otherwise directed I cautiously move ahead in what honestly appears to be the best direction, consciously trusting God to confirm or to restrain, by either opening or shutting doors. (You can't steer a parked car, or a boat that's tied to the dock.) Note: This is usually the way we seek a spouse or a job, buy a house or a car; that is, things we want.

Psalm 37:23-24 *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.*

Proverbs 3:5-6 *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Isaiah 30:21 *And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.*

Acts 16:6-10 *Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.*

2. **“Passive”** - I "wait" for God to do something special. Too often this is the way Christians seek to know God's will, especially regarding things they may not desire. **HOWEVER**, sometimes, “waiting” is the only thing we can do. If you have any doubt about a direction to pursue, or there is no peace in your heart about it, then you should wait.

Exodus 14:14 *“The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.*

Psalm 27:14 *Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.*

Psalm 37:7 *Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: ...*

Colossians 3:15 *And let the peace of God rule [guide you; be an umpire] in your hearts, ...*

E. A COUPLE OF BASIC QUESTIONS TO ASK MYSELF:

1. *If I could choose one course for my life would it be one of my selection or one of God's selection?*
2. *Do I prefer to know God's plan and purpose for my daily life while I'm still here on earth and am able to act upon it, or would I rather wait until I stand before Christ at the judgment of believers? (2 Corinthians 5:10) It seems reasonable that each of us is going to become aware of His purpose and plan for our life, either here on earth -- or there.*

MAKING RIGHT CHOICES - DISCERNING GOD'S WILL

(Read from bottom to top)

CRITERIA

4. COUNSEL OF SPIRITUAL CHRISTIANS.
3. CIRCUMSTANCES.
2. THE PEACE OF GOD.
1. THE WORD OF GOD.

A SURRENDERED ATTITUDE

4. A WILLINGNESS TO EXERCISE FAITH.
3. AN OPENNESS TO BE CHANGED BY HIM.
2. TO BE PRAYERFULLY SEEKING HIS WILL FOR ME.
1. A DESIRE TO ALLOW GOD TO FULFILL HIS WILL IN MY LIFE.

PREREQUISITES

2. I NEED TO BELIEVE THAT GOD IS SOVEREIGN AND PERFECTLY ABLE TO CARRY OUT HIS PURPOSE AND PLAN FOR MY LIFE.
1. I NEED TO BELIEVE THAT GOD HAS A PERSONAL AND INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN AND PURPOSE FOR MY LIFE.

GOD'S GOALS

3. GOD'S DESIRE IS TO BLESS AND TO USE ME IN HIS PURPOSES, RESULTING IN ME BEING BLESSED BOTH HERE ON EARTH AS WELL AS ETERNALLY IN HEAVEN.
2. GOD LOVES EVERY PERSON IN THE WORLD AND HE WANTS TO USE ME IN HIS PLAN TO REACH UNBELIEVERS WITH THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION AND TO BRING BELIEVERS TO MATURITY IN CHRIST.
1. GOD'S DESIRE FOR ME IS TO LOVE HIM (DEMONSTRATED BY SURRENDER AND OBEDIENCE), TO BE GROWING IN MY UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO PLEASE HIM, AND TO BE LETTING THE HOLY SPIRIT TRANSFORM ME INTO HIS LIKENESS.

The Discipleship Journal Bible Reading Plan

September

New Testament		Old Testament	
▶ LUKE	▶ HEBREWS	▶ PROVERBS	▶ ISAIAH
1. <input type="checkbox"/> 20:27-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 18	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2
2. <input type="checkbox"/> 20:41-47	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:10-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 19:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-5
3. <input type="checkbox"/> 21:1-19	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 19:15-29	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-8
4. <input type="checkbox"/> 21:20-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:10-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 20:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 9-10
5. <input type="checkbox"/> 21:29-38	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 20:16-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-13
6. <input type="checkbox"/> 22:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 21:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 14-16
7. <input type="checkbox"/> 22:14-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:12-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 21:17-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 17-20
8. <input type="checkbox"/> 22:24-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 22:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-23
9. <input type="checkbox"/> 22:31-38	<input type="checkbox"/> 6:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 22:17-29	<input type="checkbox"/> 24-26
10. <input type="checkbox"/> 22:39-46	<input type="checkbox"/> 6:13-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 23:1-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 27-28
11. <input type="checkbox"/> 22:47-53	<input type="checkbox"/> 7:1-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 23:19-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 29-30
12. <input type="checkbox"/> 22:54-62	<input type="checkbox"/> 7:11-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 24:1-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 31-33
13. <input type="checkbox"/> 22:63-71	<input type="checkbox"/> 8:1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 24:23-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 34-36
14. <input type="checkbox"/> 23:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 8:7-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 25:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 37-39
15. <input type="checkbox"/> 23:13-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 9:1-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 25:15-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 40-41
16. <input type="checkbox"/> 23:26-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 9:11-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 26:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 42-43
17. <input type="checkbox"/> 23:32-37	<input type="checkbox"/> 10:1-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 26:17-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 44-45
18. <input type="checkbox"/> 23:38-43	<input type="checkbox"/> 10:19-39	<input type="checkbox"/> 27:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 46-48
19. <input type="checkbox"/> 23:44-49	<input type="checkbox"/> 11:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 27:15-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 49-50
20. <input type="checkbox"/> 23:50-56	<input type="checkbox"/> 11:17-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 28:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 51-53
21. <input type="checkbox"/> 24:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 11:32-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 28:15-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 54-55
22. <input type="checkbox"/> 24:13-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 12:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 29:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 56-58
23. <input type="checkbox"/> 24:28-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 12:14-29	<input type="checkbox"/> 29:15-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 59-61
24. <input type="checkbox"/> 24:36-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 13:1-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 30	<input type="checkbox"/> 62-64
25. <input type="checkbox"/> 24:45-53	<input type="checkbox"/> 13:9-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 31	<input type="checkbox"/> 65-66

November

New Testament		Old Testament	
▶ JOHN	▶ 2 PETER	▶ JOB	▶ EZEKIEL
1. <input type="checkbox"/> 7:37-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3
2. <input type="checkbox"/> 7:45-53	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:12-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-8
3. <input type="checkbox"/> 8:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 9-12
4. <input type="checkbox"/> 8:12-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:10-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 13-15
5. <input type="checkbox"/> 8:21-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:17-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 16
6. <input type="checkbox"/> 8:31-47	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 17-19
7. <input type="checkbox"/> 8:48-59	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:10-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-21
▶ 1 JOHN			
8. <input type="checkbox"/> 9:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-23
9. <input type="checkbox"/> 9:13-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:5-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 9:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 24-26
10. <input type="checkbox"/> 9:26-41	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 9:21-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 27-28
11. <input type="checkbox"/> 10:1-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:12-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 29-30
12. <input type="checkbox"/> 10:11-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:18-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 31-32
13. <input type="checkbox"/> 10:22-42	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:24-29	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 33-34
14. <input type="checkbox"/> 11:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 35-37
15. <input type="checkbox"/> 11:17-37	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:11-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 14	<input type="checkbox"/> 38-39
16. <input type="checkbox"/> 11:38-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:19-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 15:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 40-41
17. <input type="checkbox"/> 11:45-57	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 15:17-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 42-44
18. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:7-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	<input type="checkbox"/> 45-47
19. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:12-19	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 17	<input type="checkbox"/> 48
▶ DANIEL			
20. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:20-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:13-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 18	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2
▶ 2 JOHN			
21. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:37-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 19	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4
▶ 3 JOHN			
22. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 20	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-6
▶ JUDE			
23. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:12-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> 21:1-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 7-8
24. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:18-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 8-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 21:22-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
25. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:31-38	<input type="checkbox"/> 17-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 22	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-12

October

New Testament		Old Testament	
▶ JOHN	▶ JAMES	▶ ECCLES.	▶ JEREMIAH
1. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2
2. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:19-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:12-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4
3. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:29-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:19-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:17-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-6
4. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:35-42	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 7-9
5. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:43-51	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:14-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:16-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-11
6. <input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 12-13
7. <input type="checkbox"/> 2:12-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:13-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 14-15
8. <input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-18
9. <input type="checkbox"/> 3:16-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:11-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 7:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 19-22
10. <input type="checkbox"/> 3:22-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7:15-29	<input type="checkbox"/> 23-25
11. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:7-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 26-29
12. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:15-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:13-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 30-31
▶ 1 PETER			
13. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:27-42	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 32-34
14. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:43-54	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:10-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 35-38
15. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:17-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 39-43
▶ SONG OF SONGS			
16. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:16-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 44-46
17. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:31-47	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:9-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 47-48
18. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:18-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 49
19. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:16-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> 50
20. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:25-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:8-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:8-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 51
21. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:41-59	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:13-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 52
▶ LAM.			
22. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:60-71	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
23. <input type="checkbox"/> 7:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:12-19	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
24. <input type="checkbox"/> 7:14-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8:1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
25. <input type="checkbox"/> 7:25-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:8-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 8:8-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-5

December

New Testament		Old Testament	
▶ JOHN	▶ REVELATION	▶ JOB	▶ HOSEA
1. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 23	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3
2. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:15-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:9-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-6
3. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:22-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 25-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 7-8
4. <input type="checkbox"/> 15:1-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:18-29	<input type="checkbox"/> 27	<input type="checkbox"/> 9-12
5. <input type="checkbox"/> 15:9-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 28	<input type="checkbox"/> 13-14
▶ 15:18-27		<input type="checkbox"/> 3:14-22	
6. <input type="checkbox"/> 15:18-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:14-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 29	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
7. <input type="checkbox"/> 16:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 30	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-3
▶ 16:12-24			
8. <input type="checkbox"/> 16:12-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 31:1-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2
9. <input type="checkbox"/> 16:25-33	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 31:24-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4
10. <input type="checkbox"/> 17:1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 32	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-6
11. <input type="checkbox"/> 17:6-19	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 33:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 7-9
▶ 17:20-26			
12. <input type="checkbox"/> 17:20-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 33:12-33	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-21
▶ 18:1-18			
13. <input type="checkbox"/> 18:1-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 34:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-4
▶ 18:19-27			
14. <input type="checkbox"/> 18:19-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 34:21-37	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3
▶ 18:28-40			
15. <input type="checkbox"/> 18:28-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 35	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-5
▶ 19:1-16			
16. <input type="checkbox"/> 19:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 36:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-7
▶ 19:17-27			
17. <input type="checkbox"/> 19:17-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 14	<input type="checkbox"/> 36:16-33	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3
▶ 19:28-37			
18. <input type="checkbox"/> 19:28-37	<input type="checkbox"/> 15	<input type="checkbox"/> 37	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3
▶ 19:38-42			
19. <input type="checkbox"/> 19:38-42	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	<input type="checkbox"/> 38:1-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2
▶ 20:1-9			
20. <input type="checkbox"/> 20:1-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 17	<input type="checkbox"/> 38:22-41	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
▶ 20:10-18			
21. <input type="checkbox"/> 20:10-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 18	<input type="checkbox"/> 39	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2
▶ 20:19-23			
22. <input type="checkbox"/> 20:19-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 19	<input type="checkbox"/> 40	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-5
▶ 20:24-31			
23. <input type="checkbox"/> 20:24-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 20	<input type="checkbox"/> 41:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-9
▶ 21:1-14			
24. <input type="checkbox"/> 21:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 21	<input type="checkbox"/> 41:12-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-14
▶ 21:15-25			
25. <input type="checkbox"/> 21:15-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 22	<input type="checkbox"/> 42	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-4

The Discipleship Journal® Bible Reading Plan

The *Discipleship Journal* Bible Reading Plan offers special features that will aid you in your journey through the Bible.

- By reading from four separate places in the Scriptures every day, you should be able to better grasp the unity of the Scriptures, as well as enjoy the variety of four different viewpoints.
- You can begin at any point during the year.
- To prevent the frustration of falling behind, which most of us tend to do when following a Bible reading plan, each month of this plan gives you only 25 readings. Since you'll have several "free days" each month, you could set aside Sundays either not to read at all or to catch up on any readings you may have missed in the past week.
- If you finish the month's readings by the twenty-fifth, you could use the final days of the month to study the passages that challenged or intrigued you.
- If reading through the entire Bible in one year looms as too large a task, you can alter the plan to meet your needs. For example, you could read the gospels and the wisdom books this year, and the other two categories next year.

In the year ahead, ask God each day to speak directly to you from the Scripture portions you read. Be expectant, and let your continual exposure to God's Word reshape your attitudes and behavior as you gain a better understanding of every part of His written testimony to us.



To subscribe, go to www.discipleshipjournal.com
Or call: 1-800-877-1811 | Or write: P.O. Box 5548, Harlan, IA 51593-1048

The Discipleship Journal Bible Reading Plan

The Discipleship Journal Bible Reading Plan

January

New Testament		Old Testament	
▶ MATTHEW	▶ ACTS	▶ PSALMS	▶ GENESIS
1. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2
2. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:18-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:12-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4
3. <input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-8
4. <input type="checkbox"/> 2:13-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:22-47	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 9-11
5. <input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 12-14
6. <input type="checkbox"/> 3:13-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 15-17
7. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:23-37	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-20
8. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:12-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-23
9. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:18-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:17-42	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 24
10. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 25-26
11. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:13-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 7:1-38	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 27-28
12. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:21-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 7:39-60	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 29-30
13. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:33-48	<input type="checkbox"/> 8:1-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 31
14. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 8:26-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 14	<input type="checkbox"/> 32-33
15. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:16-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 9:1-19	<input type="checkbox"/> 15	<input type="checkbox"/> 34-35
16. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:25-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 9:20-43	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	<input type="checkbox"/> 36
17. <input type="checkbox"/> 7:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 10:1-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 17	<input type="checkbox"/> 37-38
18. <input type="checkbox"/> 7:15-29	<input type="checkbox"/> 10:24-48	<input type="checkbox"/> 18:1-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 39-40
19. <input type="checkbox"/> 8:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 11:1-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 18:25-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 41
20. <input type="checkbox"/> 8:14-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 11:19-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 19	<input type="checkbox"/> 42-43
21. <input type="checkbox"/> 8:23-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 20	<input type="checkbox"/> 44-45
22. <input type="checkbox"/> 9:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13:1-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 21	<input type="checkbox"/> 46-47
23. <input type="checkbox"/> 9:14-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 13:26-52	<input type="checkbox"/> 22:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 48
24. <input type="checkbox"/> 9:27-38	<input type="checkbox"/> 14	<input type="checkbox"/> 22:12-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 49
25. <input type="checkbox"/> 10:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 15:1-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 23	<input type="checkbox"/> 50

February

New Testament		Old Testament	
▶ MATTHEW	▶ ACTS	▶ PSALMS	▶ EXODUS
1. <input type="checkbox"/> 10:21-42	<input type="checkbox"/> 15:22-41	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3
2. <input type="checkbox"/> 11:1-19	<input type="checkbox"/> 16:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 25	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-6
3. <input type="checkbox"/> 11:20-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 16:16-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 26	<input type="checkbox"/> 7-9
4. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:1-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 17:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 27	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-12
5. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:22-37	<input type="checkbox"/> 17:16-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 28	<input type="checkbox"/> 13-15
6. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:38-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 18:1-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 29	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-18
7. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:1-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 18:18-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 30	<input type="checkbox"/> 19-20
8. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:24-43	<input type="checkbox"/> 19:1-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 31	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-23
9. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:44-58	<input type="checkbox"/> 19:23-41	<input type="checkbox"/> 32	<input type="checkbox"/> 24-26
10. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:1-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 20:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 33	<input type="checkbox"/> 27-29
11. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:22-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 20:13-38	<input type="checkbox"/> 34	<input type="checkbox"/> 30-31
12. <input type="checkbox"/> 15:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 21:1-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 35	<input type="checkbox"/> 32-33
13. <input type="checkbox"/> 15:21-39	<input type="checkbox"/> 21:27-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 36	<input type="checkbox"/> 34
14. <input type="checkbox"/> 16:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 22	<input type="checkbox"/> 37:1-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 35-37
15. <input type="checkbox"/> 16:13-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 23:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 37:23-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 38-40
▶ LEVITICUS			
16. <input type="checkbox"/> 17:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 23:12-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 38	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-4
17. <input type="checkbox"/> 17:14-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	<input type="checkbox"/> 39	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-7
18. <input type="checkbox"/> 18:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 25:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 40	<input type="checkbox"/> 8-10
19. <input type="checkbox"/> 18:15-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 25:13-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 41	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-13
20. <input type="checkbox"/> 19:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 26:1-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 42	<input type="checkbox"/> 14-15
21. <input type="checkbox"/> 19:16-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 26:19-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 43	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-17
22. <input type="checkbox"/> 20:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 27:1-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 44	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-20
23. <input type="checkbox"/> 20:17-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 27:27-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 45	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-23
24. <input type="checkbox"/> 21:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 28:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 46	<input type="checkbox"/> 24-25
25. <input type="checkbox"/> 21:12-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 28:17-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 47	<input type="checkbox"/> 26-27

May

New Testament		Old Testament	
▶ MARK	▶ 2 COR.	▶ PSALMS	▶ 1 SAMUEL
1. <input type="checkbox"/> 9:33-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 95	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2
2. <input type="checkbox"/> 10:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:12-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 96	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-5
3. <input type="checkbox"/> 10:17-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 97	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-8
4. <input type="checkbox"/> 10:35-52	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 98	<input type="checkbox"/> 9-10
5. <input type="checkbox"/> 11:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 99	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-13
6. <input type="checkbox"/> 11:12-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 100	<input type="checkbox"/> 14
7. <input type="checkbox"/> 11:27-33	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 101	<input type="checkbox"/> 15-16
8. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 102	<input type="checkbox"/> 17-18
9. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:13-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 103	<input type="checkbox"/> 19-20
10. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:28-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 104	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-23
11. <input type="checkbox"/> 12:35-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 105	<input type="checkbox"/> 24-25
12. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 11:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 106:1-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 26-28
13. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:14-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 11:16-33	<input type="checkbox"/> 106:24-48	<input type="checkbox"/> 29-31
▶ 2 SAMUEL			
14. <input type="checkbox"/> 13:32-37	<input type="checkbox"/> 12:1-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 107	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2
15. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 12:11-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 108	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4
16. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:12-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 109	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-7
▶ GALATIANS			
17. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:32-42	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 110	<input type="checkbox"/> 8-10
18. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:43-52	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 111	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-12
19. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:53-65	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 112	<input type="checkbox"/> 13
20. <input type="checkbox"/> 14:66-72	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:15-29	<input type="checkbox"/> 113	<input type="checkbox"/> 14-15
21. <input type="checkbox"/> 15:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 114	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-17
22. <input type="checkbox"/> 15:16-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:21-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 115	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-19
23. <input type="checkbox"/> 15:33-41	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 116	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-21
24. <input type="checkbox"/> 15:42-47	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:13-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 117	<input type="checkbox"/> 22
25. <input type="checkbox"/> 16	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 118	<input type="checkbox"/> 23-24

June

New Testament		Old Testament	
▶ LUKE	▶ EPHESIANS	▶ PSALMS	▶ 1 KINGS
1. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:1-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
2. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:26-38	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:15-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:9-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-3
3. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:39-56	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:17-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-5
4. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:57-66	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:11-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:25-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-7
5. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:67-80	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:33-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
6. <input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:14-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:41-48	<input type="checkbox"/> 9-10
7. <input type="checkbox"/> 2:21-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:49-56	<input type="checkbox"/> 11
8. <input type="checkbox"/> 2:41-52	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:17-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:57-64	<input type="checkbox"/> 12
9. <input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:25-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:65-72	<input type="checkbox"/> 13-14
10. <input type="checkbox"/> 3:21-38	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:1-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:73-80	<input type="checkbox"/> 15-16
11. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:22-33	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:81-88	<input type="checkbox"/> 17-18
12. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:13-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 6:1-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:89-96	<input type="checkbox"/> 19-20
13. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:31-37	<input type="checkbox"/> 6:10-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:97-104	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-22
▶ PHILIPPIANS			
14. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:38-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:105-112	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3
15. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:12-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:113-120	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-5
16. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:12-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:21-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:121-128	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-7
17. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:17-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:129-136	<input type="checkbox"/> 8-9
18. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:27-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:12-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:137-144	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-11
19. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:33-39	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:19-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:145-152	<input type="checkbox"/> 12-13
20. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:153-160	<input type="checkbox"/> 14-15
21. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:17-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:10-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:161-168	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-17
22. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:27-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:15-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:169-176	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-19
23. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:37-42	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> 120	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-21
24. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:43-49	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:8-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 121	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-23
25. <input type="checkbox"/> 7:1-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:14-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 122	<input type="checkbox"/> 24-25

March

New Testament		Old Testament	
▶ MATTHEW	▶ ROMANS	▶ PSALMS	▶ NUMBERS
1. <input type="checkbox"/> 21:23-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 48	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2
2. <input type="checkbox"/> 21:33-46	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:18-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 49	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4
3. <input type="checkbox"/> 22:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 50	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-6
4. <input type="checkbox"/> 22:15-33	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 51	<input type="checkbox"/> 7-8
5. <input type="checkbox"/> 22:34-46	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 52	<input type="checkbox"/> 9-11
6. <input type="checkbox"/> 23:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 53	<input type="checkbox"/> 12-14
7. <input type="checkbox"/> 23:13-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:12-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 54	<input type="checkbox"/> 15-17
8. <input type="checkbox"/> 23:25-39	<input type="checkbox"/> 6:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 55	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-20
9. <input type="checkbox"/> 24:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 6:15-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 56	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-22
10. <input type="checkbox"/> 24:15-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 7:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 57	<input type="checkbox"/> 23-25
11. <input type="checkbox"/> 24:36-51	<input type="checkbox"/> 7:13-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 58	<input type="checkbox"/> 26-27
12. <input type="checkbox"/> 25:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 8:1-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 59	<input type="checkbox"/> 28-30
13. <input type="checkbox"/> 25:14-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 8:18-39	<input type="checkbox"/> 60	<input type="checkbox"/> 31-32
14. <input type="checkbox"/> 25:31-46	<input type="checkbox"/> 9:1-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 61	<input type="checkbox"/> 33-36
▶ DEUT.			
15. <input type="checkbox"/> 26:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 9:19-33	<input type="checkbox"/> 62	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3
16. <input type="checkbox"/> 26:17-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 63	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-5
17. <input type="checkbox"/> 26:36-56	<input type="checkbox"/> 11:1-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 64	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-8
18. <input type="checkbox"/> 26:57-75	<input type="checkbox"/> 11:25-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 65	<input type="checkbox"/> 9-12
19. <input type="checkbox"/> 27:1-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 12:1-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 66	<input type="checkbox"/> 13-17
20. <input type="checkbox"/> 27:11-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 12:9-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 67	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-21
21. <input type="checkbox"/> 27:27-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 68	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-26
22. <input type="checkbox"/> 27:45-56	<input type="checkbox"/> 14	<input type="checkbox"/> 69:1-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 27-28
23. <input type="checkbox"/> 27:57-66	<input type="checkbox"/> 15:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 69:19-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 29-31
24. <input type="checkbox"/> 28:1-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 15:14-33	<input type="checkbox"/> 70	<input type="checkbox"/> 32
25. <input type="checkbox"/> 28:11-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	<input type="checkbox"/> 71	<input type="checkbox"/> 33-34

April

New Testament		Old Testament	
▶ MARK	▶ 1 COR.	▶ PSALMS	▶ JOSHUA
1. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 72	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2
2. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:9-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:18-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 73	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-5
3. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:21-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 74	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-7
4. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:35-45	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 75	<input type="checkbox"/> 8-9
5. <input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 76	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-12
6. <input type="checkbox"/> 2:13-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 77	<input type="checkbox"/> 13-14
7. <input type="checkbox"/> 2:18-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 6:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 78:1-39	<input type="checkbox"/> 15-17
8. <input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-19	<input type="checkbox"/> 6:12-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 78:40-72	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-19
9. <input type="checkbox"/> 3:20-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 7:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 79	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-21
10. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 7:17-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 80	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-23
11. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:21-41	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 81	<input type="checkbox"/> 24
▶ JUDGES			
12. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 9:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 82	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3
13. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:21-43	<input type="checkbox"/> 9:13-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 83	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-5
14. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 10:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 84	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-7
15. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:14-29	<input type="checkbox"/> 10:14-33	<input type="checkbox"/> 85	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
16. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:30-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 11:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 86	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
17. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:45-56	<input type="checkbox"/> 11:17-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 87	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-12
18. <input type="checkbox"/> 7:1-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 12:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 88	<input type="checkbox"/> 13-15
19. <input type="checkbox"/> 7:24-37	<input type="checkbox"/> 12:14-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 89:1-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 16
20. <input type="checkbox"/> 8:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 89:19-52	<input type="checkbox"/> 17-18
21. <input type="checkbox"/> 8:14-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 14:1-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 90	<input type="checkbox"/> 19
22. <input type="checkbox"/> 8:22-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 14:26-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 91	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-21
▶ RUTH			
23. <input type="checkbox"/> 8:31-38	<input type="checkbox"/> 15:1-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 92	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
24. <input type="checkbox"/> 9:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 15:29-58	<input type="checkbox"/> 93	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-3
25. <input type="checkbox"/> 9:14-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	<input type="checkbox"/> 94	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

July

New Testament	
---------------	--