

His Grace
My Faith



By Rhonda Pethoud

A Primer For New Christians
(and others who want to believe)

To the two generations of women who believed
and taught me to believe as well;
my mother and my daughter -
- thank you.





His Grace My Faith

A Primer for New Christians
(and others who want to believe)

His Amazing Grace, explained in simple language, will help you build and use your faith as you embark on your personal journey to study the infallible, inerrant and inspired Word of God.

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INTRODUCTION

This little book was originally written for my sisters, to help them on their walk with God. As I was preparing to print it for them, I believed I was led by the Holy Spirit to copyright the work and publish it as an e-Book with the hope of reaching more people than only my three sisters. I make no claim at all that I am an authority; that what I've studied is in any way the complete truth about the Bible, or that there isn't much, much more to learn. I claim only that I have humbly attempted to put forth a small amount of information as I understand it, as to the Grace of God and the difference it makes in our lives.

I am merely opening the door for you; I pray you will enter in and study the Word on your own to reveal the wonder of God in your life.

Rhonda Pethoud

About me:

I am 62, retired from business and live in Southern California near my daughter, her husband and their three children.

Foreword

"Believe" to have a firm religious faith; to accept something as true, genuine or real; to have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy or ability of something; to consider to be true or honest; to accept the word or evidence of; to hold an opinion; to be astounded at (something). *Merriam Webster Dictionary*

"Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world." 1John 4:17

I'm writing this for all of you. I wish I'd had something like this to use as a springboard for my study of the Bible – I spent years of my life in church and no one ever told me these things. If they were ever mentioned, I had no idea how it applied to my life. You shouldn't use it as a replacement for your own study, it is merely meant as a way for you to have some basic understanding before you begin your own journey. I'm not "there" yet – but I thank God I'm not where I used to be. I practice every day trying to remember that I'm not the one in charge, God is. Familiarize yourselves with the words, "Thy will be done" – because it is only by the Grace of God that we will achieve anything in this life.

I don't mean to project that what I've written here makes me an authority on the subject, or that it could contain error. I believe what I've written represents what I've learned to this point and nothing more, and that what I've written is a true interpretation of scripture and biblical principles. I'm sure there are people who will disagree with what I've written, but I tried to back everything up with scripture references. I can't do more than that. I am not an evangelist, just a child of God who wanted to share what I've learned with others.

The Ten Commandments

- 1. Thou shall have no other gods before me.**
- 2. Thou shall not make unto thee any graven images.**
- 3. Thou shall not take the Lord thy God's name in vain.**
- 4. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.**
- 5. Honor thy mother and thy father.**
- 6. Thou shall not kill.**
- 7. Thou shall not commit adultery.**
- 8. Thou shall not steal.**
- 9. Thou shall not bear false witness.**
- 10. Thou shall not covet thy neighbors house, wife or possessions.**

Exodus 20:1-17

Definitions

Before I begin, I want to give you a few definitions that explain some things you might read or hear – I didn't know what some meant and the depth of my ignorance was such that it kept me from finding out what they meant far too long. Here's some help:

Anointed: That which is blessed by God or causes us to worship God; God's blessing or grace upon someone or something. Anoint means, to pour oil over or smear something with oil. In the OT, people believed that the ceremonial pouring of oils on someone gave them God's blessing.

Apostasy: A falling away of believers from the church; a total desertion or departure from one's religion or principles. Rebellion from the Truth; An apostate is someone who once believed but then rejected the truth of God.

Babylon: The City in ancient Egypt ruled by King Nebuchadnezzar where they erected a tower to the heavens so the people could be "like" God. In their arrogance, they believed they could ascend into heaven and rule with God. It was after they built the Tower of Babel that God scrambled their languages to thwart their efforts. This story appears in Genesis 11; an excellent story about pride and the lust for power.

Baptism: The act of being immersed in water or have water sprinkled over your head and having a priest or pastor pray over you. This is an outward act to show others that you are serious about your beliefs. I do not personally believe that it is necessary to be baptized in order to be saved, otherwise how would the thief who was crucified next to Jesus be with Him that day in paradise? He wasn't baptized. I think it's a personal decision – if you want to be baptized, do it. The ceremony of baptizing children is an act of faith on the part of the parents – giving their children to God, so to speak, and promising to raise them as believers. I think it's a beautiful thing and parents should do it, but this ceremony does not save the child. Babies are not born with a burden of sin; each of us is born with a sin nature – the ability to choose sin – but we are not "saved" by baptism and baptism does not erase the sin nature or "original sin". There is no power in the water, the only power is in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone has to make a conscious decision on their own to believe in Jesus Christ or not – and those who do not will suffer the consequence. Baptism does not do this for you, and it isn't the water that washes away your sin, it is the blood of Jesus who died on the Cross that atones for the sin of man. Baptism was widely used before Jesus to wash away sin; when Jesus died on the Cross, this no longer became necessary as believers are now all partakers of Christ. Romans 6:3. Being a believer is a requirement for the act of baptism if you choose to do it; babies can't choose, therefore they are covered by the Blood of Jesus until such time as they can understand salvation, then they too, must choose to believe. Baptism is a transliteration of the Greek word "bapto" which means to immerse – we, as believers, are "baptized" (immersed) into Jesus Christ, not by water but by the blood. This is why the object of our faith is on what Jesus did on the cross.

Christ: This is not Jesus' last name, it is a title. "Jesus, The Christ", is like saying, Jesus, our Lord and King. It is also said as, the Lord Jesus Christ, or simply, Jesus Christ. However you say it, it means, The Chosen One or The Messiah; the One sent by God to be King and Deliverer. Also used as a common, blasphemous expletive that God warned against in the Third Commandment.

Condemnation: the liability for punishment of a crime; specifically, the lies of the devil who tells us we are a failure or at fault for our sins and cannot be redeemed.

Conviction: of God, or Godly sorrow that leads to repentance. The feeling that leads us to repent and receive forgiveness from God.

Crucifixion: The barbaric act of nailing someone alive to a tree to execute them; in such a manner the weight of their body ultimately suffocates them.

Doctrine: This is a set of truths or what people believe, that is taught by a group of people, usually a church. (Doctrine should ALWAYS and ONLY be reflected by scripture. If a doctrine cannot be proven by scripture, it is not of God and is false doctrine.)

The Epistles: Books of the New Testament (New Covenant): Usually, epistles are letters written to church leaders in different regions. Paul wrote to the Romans, the Hebrews, the Colossians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Galatians, the Corinthians and the Thessalonians among others. The Apostle Paul is credited with writing most of the New Testament as he received it by revelation from God, and the thirteen epistles he wrote are called the Pauline Epistles.

The "Fear of God."

This does not mean we are to be in fear OF Him, or afraid of Him; it means we are to revere Him and obey Him; worship and praise Him, be awestruck by Him, eternally grateful to Him and be in constant adoration of Him. We are to live our lives in such a way that what we do, say and project to others gives praise and glory to God. People should want to be like us because we have the living God on the inside and we are showing that to the world – Jesus died for us so we can strive to be like Him. Note the word, "strive"... being a Christian does not mean we think we're perfect, it simply means we believe in Christ and Him crucified. We're trying to be more like Him every day. Make no mistake, God will pour out His wrath upon those who disobey, but those who believe have nothing to fear.

Gospel: The teaching or revealing of Christ and Him crucified; the too good to be true news of Jesus Christ.

Justified: By His sacrifice on the cross, we are forgiven and perceived by God as if we never committed a sin.

Pagan: One who worships that which is not of God. All ancient religions have roots in paganism, including Christianity. People worshipped many different types of “gods” and some still do – some ancient Greeks made a good living selling little idols to the people and they didn’t want their livelihood interrupted. This is one reason why so many Greeks were reluctant to receive the Gospel message. Abraham’s family were idol-worshippers as well. When God spoke to Abraham and told him to “go forth from your country and from your relatives...” He was instructing Abraham to get away from the idol-worshippers so He could show Abraham how to have faith and He would later raise Abraham up to be the father of all nations. Read about Abraham beginning in Genesis 12. After Moses brought the Israelites out of Egypt, God sent Moses up the mountain to receive the 10 Commandments to give people a list of rules to live by so they would know what was good and what was evil. The first Commandment is, Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods Before Me and the second is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. These mean, don’t love anyone more than you love God and don’t worship your man-made idols, they are nothing and can do nothing for you. Only God can direct your path.

Prophecy: sometimes, a prediction. Other times, prophecy in the Bible is a course correction or a warning of what will happen if people stray from the direction God intended. Only God decides through whom He will speak.

Protestant: This is a name given by the Pope during the Reformation in the 16th century, to a group of people led by Martin Luther, John Calvin and others who protested the practice of the Catholic Church “selling” indulgences. Protestants are now one of the three major branches of Christianity; Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant. Protestants include many religious denominations including Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal, Baptist, Presbyterian and the United Church of Christ.

Psalm: a sacred song or hymn; songs or hymns of praise to God contained in the Book of Psalms, most written by David. Some of the poems were also written by Abraham, Moses and others, and were collected by David.

Rapture: The gathering of the “church” (those who are believers in Christ). It is prophesied that Jesus will again return to earth and will gather His faithful believers who will be taken to heaven to dwell with Him for eternity. The word “rapture” does not appear in scripture, however the meaning comes from a Greek verb “harpazo” which means, “caught up” or “taken away” and also possibly from the Latin “raptus” which means, “a carrying off”. The meaning has been refined in English to our word, rapture; you’ll find the actual text about the “rapture” event in 1Thessalonians 4:17.

Religion: This is, simply put, an organized system of beliefs. "Religion" is bound by rules, sacraments and traditions. God did not send Jesus to us so we could have religion, He sent Jesus to save the world from it. "Christianity" is the true walk with Jesus by faith in His sacrifice on the cross. Believers who become so entrenched in the Law, or in what they call today, legalism, tend to overlook the very nature of Jesus that God wanted us to see. The Law – the Old Testament or Covenant beliefs – were given so people could understand that they needed a Savior.

Repent (Repentance) To repent is to ask God for forgiveness of our sin; the act of being sincerely sorry for sin we have committed and asking God to forgive us. Repentance is required to take part in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross: until we understand that it is only by our repentance (asking for forgiveness) through FAITH in the GRACE of God that we are forgiven. We ask forgiveness for our sins and believe that through God's grace He will forgive us, because of the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross on our behalf. Jesus' death overcame the sin nature of man so that the sin nature would no longer have dominion over us: now we can live expectantly, knowing that when we do sin, we can ask forgiveness and be assured that every sin for which we repent is forgiven and we can once again be in fellowship with God. This is why it is so important to pray daily, "forgive me my debts, as I forgive my debtors." Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Resurrection: Jesus' ascension to heaven after the crucifixion; representative of Jesus' absolute victory over the death that awaits all mankind and the assurance that man will live with God for eternity, IF THEY BELIEVE in Jesus' sacrifice.

Righteousness: Being in right standing with God, accomplished for all by Jesus on the Cross. The Holy Spirit leads us in right paths by gently whispering to us what is good for us and what is not. The world defines this as your conscience; Jesus said "he that hath an ear to hear" (Mark 4:9) because He knew that the Holy Spirit is available to guide us in every decision we make. If we learn to be sensitive to the leadings by the Holy Spirit, we can know we are doing right things and that our lives are on right paths. Romans 5:17 (Expositor's Bible) explains, "For if by one man's offense death reigned by one (*Adam's fall*); much more they which receive abundance of Grace (*not just "Grace," but "Abundance of Grace"; all made possible by the Cross*) and of the Gift of Righteousness (*Righteousness is a Gift from God which comes solely through Jesus Christ, and is received by Faith*) shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ. (*This proclaims the Believer "reigning" even as death has reigned, but from a position of much greater power than that of death.*) Our righteousness, purchased for us by Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, promises us eternal life in heaven. Hallelujah!

Sanctified: The purification process by the Holy Spirit after justification through faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross. The urgings of the Holy Spirit lead us into more and more purity to be more and more Christ-like.

Satan: A divinely created being, an angel; once God's most beautiful angel who became so enamored with his own beauty, consumed with self-adoration and pride, that he demanded to be equal with God. God subsequently cast him from heaven to the earth, where he gathers followers to him, believing that one day he will defeat God in the battle of Armageddon. (Spoiler alert: God wins.) Also refers to the legions of demons that assist Satan with his attempts to prevent us from hearing the Truth.

Sin Nature: The natural state of man; the nature of man, brought about by the original sin of Adam when Adam and Eve gave up their God-given authority to Satan, thereby condemning man to death after this life. Some have taught that this "original sin" burdens every man, but the bible teaches that no one is born burdened with sin, this is a misunderstanding of the truth. We are born with a sin nature – the result of God removing the protection and ability He gave Adam and Eve to resist sin. Once that protection was removed, man had to choose for himself whether or not to sin, and there was no way for him to atone for the sins he committed, other than by the animal sacrifices offered up to God (the animal blood was a "cover" for the sin man committed, while man learned that he needed a Savior). The ACT of sin is an outward expression of the sin nature of man; it is a choice one makes to commit sin. Galatians 5:17-21 explains that we fight against it, knowing what the right thing to do is, but we don't do it. The sin nature must be cast out through the Holy Spirit, and this can ONLY occur by belief in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Jesus overcame the sin nature of man by replacing the protection originally given to Adam and Eve; now that fellowship has been replaced and we can live knowing the Holy Spirit will guide us to live rightly. We must continually cast out wrong thoughts placed in our minds by Satan and repent of sins we have committed, not through the power of our own will, but by the power and authority of Christ Jesus placed in us through Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross. Now it is no longer animal blood that covers our sin, it is the blood of Jesus, shed for each of us, that atones for the sin of mankind.

Trinity: The Triune God; The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. Also referred to as the Godhead. Tri-une, meaning: tri, or three; une, or unity. Man is also a triune being, created with a spirit, soul and body.

Worship: Give praise to and focus attention on – there are many ways to worship, but we're not supposed to focus our main attention on anything above God. "the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil" 1Tim 6:10. Could there be other things people worship, other than money?

A **Covenant** is a promise.

A **Testament** is the Will of God.



"Call to Me and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know." Jeremiah 3:33

Part One

Let's start with this simple truth:

Everything in the Bible has meaning, there is nothing written in the Bible that is extra or meaningless. There are some people who think they can pick and choose from Scripture and dismiss the entries they don't understand or with which they might disagree. Some people take out the hard stuff. This is wrong; the bible clearly states nothing should be added to nor taken away from the Word.

("And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the holy city and from the things that are written in this book." Rev 22:19)

I suggest everyone reads the "English Bible History" here:

<http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/>

This site goes into detail about how the Catholic church controlled the Scripture through the 1500's because it was written in Latin, and commanded anyone who was in possession of the bible in any other language be burned along with all copies of the translated works they could find. This site explains why. There is information on many versions and bible translations on this site. Also recommended is Young's Literal Translation, which explains the original manuscript's intent.

Today, the King James Version bible (KJV) represents the closest translation to the original Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament. It is a monumental effort to translate word-for-word and many people who study Greek and Hebrew find discrepancies in all the texts. However, in my opinion, most others are "interpretive" and rely too heavily on opinion as to what the text means. The bible warns us about false teachers, so it's very important to stay away from phrase-interpreted versions and others that stray from the actual text. I sometimes compare the text of the KJV with the New King James and the New American Standard, and I use expositor editions, several of which are available online, to compare and explain texts. Type "expositor's bible commentary" into your browser and you'll find many options. Jimmy Swaggart's Expositor's Study Bible is also available in an app on iTunes that you can add to your iPad or iPhone.

Ancient Jewish wisdom reveals that every number in the bible means something; every name, every word, every order of every sentence has a deeper meaning. That's why it's so very important not to use paraphrased or interpretive editions of the Bible, you have to use the King James *translation*, because it was translated from the original manuscripts, not just paraphrased into modern language.

For example, the number 4 is representative of the earth, 5 means grace, 6 means man, 7 is completeness, 10 is God's number for perfection and 12 has to do with government. The number 12 is the same number of precious stones that the priests wore on the Ephod so they could communicate with God. 12 is also the number of different kinds of precious stones in the foundation of the Holy City described in the Book of Revelation, and the number of tribes that came from the twelve sons of Jacob, now known as the Twelve Tribes of Israel. These are symbolic of government. In addition, we must remember that the Bible was written 2000 years ago, as inspired by God, by people of that era. The Bible was written by divine revelation in the language of the day. Many Old Testament people were farmers or growers or shepherds, therefore lots of the references were written with examples of their lifestyle in mind and many of the references are made with Jewish customs in mind because they were mostly Jews. It's helpful to have some understanding of Jewish customs in order to fully understand Old Testament text, but since I don't, I go to www.youneedarabbi.com. Rabbi Lapin is committed to teaching ancient Jewish wisdom as it is related in the Bible. The New Testament, written largely by the Apostle Paul, was intended for the Greeks, or a gentile audience, who had not studied the OT as most Jewish families did. However, there is no need to continue to observe the old law and Jewish traditions because Jesus fulfilled all the requirements for mankind forever. The current Hebraic movement is in error by observing the feasts and selecting bits and pieces of Jewish tradition because putting your faith in these things is an affront to the sacrifice Jesus made for *you*.

It is dangerous for an individual to believe that they are getting closer to God by observing a feast or other micro-observances of Jewish law because the law has already been fulfilled by Jesus' sacrifice. To have faith in anything except His sacrifice on the cross assumes His sacrifice was not enough – Galatians 3:28 instructs us that faith through Christ is the only way to be accepted by God. I pay attention to Jewish traditions for the purpose of context in the bible. I don't celebrate or recommend celebrating any Jewish customs as that would take focus away from Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Jesus IS the feasts. He IS the Sabbath rest.

All names have meaning, and parents usually name their children with much thought beforehand. Jewish names are no different; for example, the Hebrew meanings of the names of my own grandchildren are, "Grace", "He will add", and "My God is an oath".

In Luke 3, there is a (descending) list of names giving the genealogy of Jesus. While I haven't studied this completely, I do know that if you read the list ascending so that you're beginning with Adam (Luke 3:38) to Noah (Luke 3:36) which is to say, Adam being the first and follow his bloodline to Noah - the meaning of those ten names would read like this: Man – Appointed – Mortal – Sorrow – The Blessed God – Shall Come Down – Teaching – His Death Shall Bring – The Despairing – Comfort & Rest. I find this amazing! It's just one of the many layers in the bible for us to discover.

In the story of Joseph beginning in Genesis 37, we know the name "Joseph" means, "God will add". Joseph's jealous brothers sold him into slavery and he ended up in prison in Egypt. But Joseph was faithful to God and served Him from prison, and God did not abandon him. When Joseph was promoted to Viceroy of Egypt, the king could not have someone with a Hebrew name in that capacity, so the king gave Joseph a new name: "Zapneth-pannea" which means, "life more abundant".

Joseph could now be known as, "God will add - life more abundant". Then, in Genesis 48 we learn that Joseph named his two sons Manasseh which means, "God made me forget my trouble and all my father's house" and Ephraim, which means, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction". Studying the layers in the Word of God is meant to be a lifetime endeavor. Chuck Missler repeats the ancient maxim attributed to St. Augustine this way: "The New Testament in the Old Testament, concealed; the Old Testament in the New Testament, revealed." And it's true! There is nothing more simple, nor more complex. God placed layers in the Word so that we could discover them and to keep us seeking Him. Sign up for free email messages, they can be very helpful. I get a daily message from Blue Letter Bible, David Jeremiah, Time of Grace and a weekly update from Koinonia House. I have the Daily Scripture app on my iPhone as well.

There are those who believe that the Book of Revelation is revealed in the Book of Exodus. Israel represents the "church", which is the body of those who believe in Jesus Christ; their exodus from Egypt is a shadow of the Church's exodus from earth and that the parting of the Red Sea is a shadow of how God will supernaturally separate the body of Christ (believers) from the unbelievers. The Hebrew bible is entirely prophetic.

The unblemished lamb represents Jesus (there are 29 references to "the Lamb" in the Book of Revelation); the fact that each Israelite had to bring their own personal lamb to the Passover feast and take part in its sacrifice, then put the blood over their doorway is a shadow foretelling of the personal relationship we have with Jesus, and that we are saved by His blood.

1Thessalonians Chapter 4 explains the gathering up, or “rapture” of believers and means that believers will be gathered to Christ in the air prior to the Great Tribulation. Many theologians believe we are living in the time of the 3rd chapter of Revelation right now – which means, the Rapture could occur at any moment. Below is a transcript of a synopsis of **end time events** I heard Donnie Swaggart give on the Frances and Friends program on the SBN network from Feb. 18th, 2015, transcribed to the best of my ability from their archived programs:

“After the Church is raptured, at some point after, no one knows how long, ten nations will arise and come into power out of the 28-30 present day nations that made up the old Roman Empire. This is the beginning of the Great Tribulation. From these ten nations the anti-Christ will come to power and will have perfect dominion over those nations and will seek world wide dominion. Mark of the beast or death in those nations; no one will be able to buy or sell without it. Nations of the world will align themselves with him; the anti-Christ will negotiate a 7 year non aggression peace treaty among Israel and Muslim nations that surround Israel; this treaty will allow Israel to tear down the existing Dome of the Rock which is the 3rd most holy place in Islam at the site of the old Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and build a new temple. Israel will accept the anti-Christ as their Messiah. At that point the Jewish priesthood will be re-instituted; animal sacrifices will resume. Other Nations of the world will object to the animal sacrifices. At the midpoint of 3.5 years the anti Christ will enter the Holy of Holies and demand that all worship be toward him, that's when all Israel will know they have been deceived by the anti-Christ and that they have accepted a false Messiah. (This is the Abomination of Desolation; Matthew 24:15, Daniel 8:9-14 and Daniel 10 among others) The anti-Christ will intend to destroy Israel at this point but tidings from the East will come from nations who do not want his influence. War will break out with nations who will wage war against the anti-Christ. Jesus Christ will bring the saints (saved individuals) back with him at the 2nd coming and will defeat Satan in the (bloody) battle of Armageddon.” (Parenthesis mine)

The U.S. may or may not be involved, there is no specific scriptural reference to the US. While millions will come to Christ during this period, 1/3 of the world's population will die in the Great Tribulation (Revelation 9:18) The entire population of China would be less than a third of that total 1/3. After the church is raptured, many will understand what just happened and will accept Christ as their Savior (although it may cause them to lose their physical life because Christians will be badly persecuted in those days.) However, some religions are teaching that a person could be saved even after they take the mark of the beast. This is not scriptural – Revelation 19 clearly tells us that once someone takes the mark of the beast they are lost – taking the mark means they have given themselves over to the worship of the anti-Christ, and there is no means of redemption from it once an individual takes the mark.

God has made possible every redemption opportunity for mankind, but some will still ignore Him and take the mark of the beast. Those people will not be saved for eternity, they will be cast into the lake of fire, along with Satan. It is their choice to follow Satan or follow God. The bible tells us that no man knows the day or hour when Christ will return, but instructs us to be watchful and remain faithful. It is also why we must remember to pray for Israel, and pray that our leaders do what is right for Israel. Pray for America too, and read Revelation 8 and 9. Be ready, NOW.

Read the story of Jacob and Esau in Genesis 25; on the surface, this story is about two brothers in conflict. Digging deeper, this is a message about the conflict between good and evil in all of us and symbolizes conflicting dimensions of power and authority, struggling between God and our flawed human nature. Read also the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4 and study the story to understand why one's offering was accepted and the other was not.

Anyone who thinks the Bible is just a crutch for weak individuals to lean on is so wrong – it takes real intelligence and an open mind to grasp most of this, and guys like Chuck Missler are super smart. I'm barely scratching the surface. Missler's book, "Learn the Bible in 24 Hours" is a masterpiece.

The secular world will tell you that Jesus doesn't exist and you can't prove He lived, etc.. But you can. There are over 300 prophecies in the OT about how Jesus would be born, where he would be born, that he would be born of a virgin, that he would be born of the tribe of Judah, how he would die and what specific injuries he would suffer – not only that, but historians of Greek, Roman and Jewish origin have written extensively about Jesus, thereby proving His existence. Our own modern calendar is based on BC (Before Christ) and AD (After Death). Proving Jesus lived and died is historical information that is available in many places, not only in the Bible.

Satan and his minions operate solely on fear and deception; causing us to fear or doubt is the only power Satan has left. Satan uses scripture sometimes too, convoluting it just enough to confuse us. Jesus died so that we could have freedom from these types of spirits. When we doubt our faith, Satan finds a way into our minds. That's why we have to be strong in the Lord and USE the Word of God to test those spirits. Believe me, those spirits will not leave you alone – they will twist your thoughts and use your “feelings” against you at every turn. The only way to combat it is to use the Word of God. There is SO much to learn!

“Finally, my Brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.”
Ephesians 6:10

“He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 2Cor5:21

One of my favorites:

“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” James 5:16 NIV

Same verse, (James 5:16) from the King James Version:

“...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

Absolute Authority

Sinful man does not want to be accountable to God; this was evident in the Garden when Adam and Eve first denied God's absolute authority. When they denied God they become responsible for their own life and destiny, thereby denying their Creator. This was exactly the approach used by Satan in tempting Eve: Satan told her, you could be just like God if you ate of that tree. Rather than acknowledge God as their Creator, unbelievers prefer to think they have built the life they live by their own effort. The problem is, man was not created to live without God. Denial of Him results in all sorts of psychological problems that support a multi-billion dollar industry in this country, treating people with drugs and all sorts of therapies for the holes they have in their spirits and trying to feed the hunger they experience for the very thing which they deny. Sadly, what they really need is to understand what Jesus did for them at the Cross.

There are some genuine imbalances and conditions that require drug therapy and believers are thankful that God has placed the desire to learn and study in the hearts of some so that they will become doctors and researchers who can help these people. The believer does not deny science, nor the strides man has and could continue to make in many scientific areas, but to accept a theory as "science" is scientifically false by definition. I have to wonder what amazing things could be possible if scientists were being led by the Holy Spirit and, if they were truly in subjugation to God, how much more man could be helped and healed.

The true triumph of man is recognition that we need Him. God has always had only one way to redemption, through faith; first in Him and the Law and subsequently in the Savior whom He sent to take all sin for all mankind when He was crucified on the Cross. Once we understand that the sacrifice of Jesus makes ALL THINGS POSSIBLE through faith in His act of submission on that cross, our lives can begin to change and be molded into that which God has always meant for us to achieve.

We must be under His ultimate, absolute authority and be willing to be led wherever He has predetermined is our path.

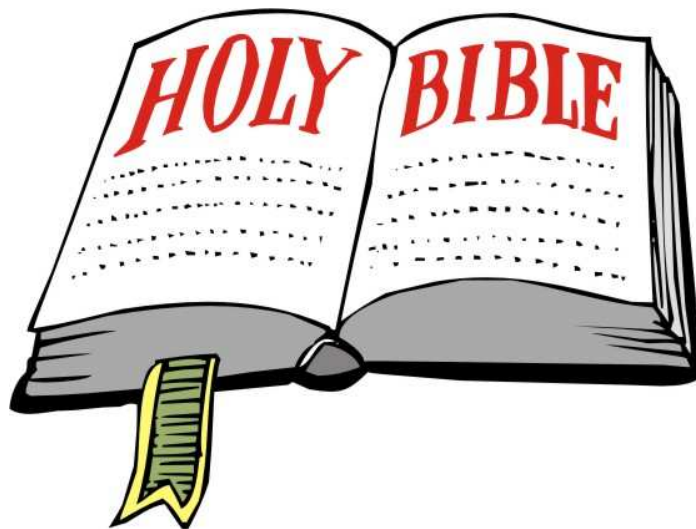
"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

Romans 8:28-30

When Jesus died on the Cross, God sent the Holy Spirit to be with us to lead us and guide us; to be God on earth, in each of us. This is the third part of the Trinity, God as the Holy Spirit. We have to allow the Holy Spirit to enter in, Who sometimes comes quietly, without trumpets and revelation. We need to learn to recognize those moments when the Holy Spirit is speaking to us and learn to respond. This doesn't generally happen overnight, but through a process of Faith (in what Jesus did for us on the Cross); Study of the Word of God, and a willingness to submit ourselves to His authority. This is why it's not enough to simply say the Sinner's Prayer and think that's all you need to do – yes, you'll be saved from eternal death and separation from God if you say that prayer or words to that effect and you mean them sincerely, but ultimately, you're only saved from separation from God at that point – you still need to submit to God's ultimate authority and allow Him to work in your life. If you "get saved" and continue to go along doing your own thing, you haven't yet come to the place where God can direct you, mold you and create in you the heart of Jesus, which is what he wants all of us to achieve, and you're in danger of losing your salvation by ignoring the Holy Spirit. Turning away from the Holy Spirit can eventually dissolve your salvation. By denying the Holy Spirit's input and continuing by our own understanding, all else we do becomes a work of the flesh and we erase that which our faith would have achieved. If we're not walking by faith, we're walking in the flesh – "in the flesh" means, by our own thought process, without the input of the Holy Spirit guiding our decisions. Everything we do, every single day, should be first given over to the Holy Spirit for direction. You will still pray to God the Father, but the Holy Spirit will intercede and direct (think of him as your heavenly lawyer).

I believe in God's absolute authority. Without absolute authority, there can be no basis for good or evil - on what would you plant your moral argument? In my opinion, this is the very root of the problem that our society suffers from today. It seems many don't want to recognize this absolute authority, believing instead that there can be many paths to righteousness. Others simply reject authority of any kind, preferring to go their own way, and still others refuse to acknowledge that Life more intelligent than we are could exist because they can't see it or explain it.

The Holy Spirit is given to believers as the power of God; when we put our faith in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, this gives the Holy Spirit permission to work in our life – we are saved by our confession of faith, then we continue the process through our sanctification by the Holy Spirit.

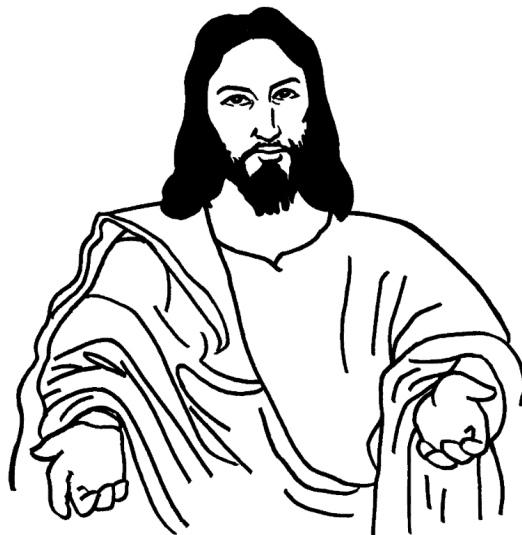


FAITH

Jesus was the fulfillment of Jewish prophecies from the Old Testament. There are many, many verses that prophesy the coming of the Messiah, the One True King. Read the 10th chapter of Hebrews, for this explains that the daily animal sacrifices were insufficient for salvation; a savior was required.

Jesus' existence and bloodline was decided before the beginning of the world. God planned to use Jesus as Redeemer because He already knew Adam would not keep all the commands. Jesus had to BE man, to redeem man; He had to be that perfect man that none of us could be, in order to be worthy of God's acceptance of Him as a sacrifice for the sin of mankind. Because God loved and wanted all people to be included, He sent Paul to minister to the Gentiles after Jesus' death. Proof that Jesus is the Messiah that was prophesied about in the Old Testament is available; one has to reach for it. I pray that Jews everywhere will reach out for the truth; that Catholics will come to understand that their faith should be in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, and that all those who desire a deeper relationship with God will study His Word for direction.

"And you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." John 8:32



One must understand that God set His commands and rules forth to give all mankind a peaceful, lovely life. They all work together for our benefit, not to keep us from having fun or enjoying life. God wants everyone to enjoy every good gift He can give, but those who refuse spoil the good ebb and flow that God meant for us to have. We can't pick and choose which of the precepts we will obey and reject the rest. He gave us free will – it is by our own will that we decide to obey or not – and when we do, we are promised His Grace, Peace and Power for our life now, as well as in eternity.

I believe this is at least partly the reason why non-believers can't comprehend the Bible or understand the meaning of its words and then they reject it as meaningless folklore; they don't have the benefit of the Holy Spirit to guide them to all truth. Revelation of the Word can only come by and through belief in God and in the finished work of Jesus on the Cross. The Holy Spirit receives authority to work in us through our faith in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. The Holy Spirit cannot work in us until we believe.

Unbelievers often say that the Bible is filled with horrible stories of a god who kills people; bloody battles prevail all over the bible and a good and kind god would not allow this to happen. Unfortunately this is history, not just biblical history, and war is how civilizations and kingdoms were won and lost since the beginning of time. Also, the times in the bible when God instructed that people be killed were rare, and it was only done when there was no other way to control the rampant pagan practices and sinful behavior of man before it spread to the entire world. When you read about what was going on prior to God's intervention with those battles, you can begin to understand why God felt it necessary to intervene. There were daily human sacrifices going on, sacrifices of children; bestiality was rampant as well as pedophilia; idol worshipping and every kind of perverse behavior one can imagine was permeating the culture.

Because these cultures passed along their practices to their children, God felt it necessary to end the entire bloodline in order to try and rid the earth of all that evil. The peaceful, lovely life God wanted for His people was in jeopardy. But remember, in His mercy, God also made provision for the little children in those evil cultures who had not yet reached the age of accountability – those children are now in heaven with God.

I encourage anyone who does not understand the history of those events to read the books by William Federer. He is an American historian and writer as well as a former evangelical pastor (he had his own tv show before the US economy crashed) and puts all those bloody battles and why they were fought into Christian perspective. Federer also does a radio broadcast and daily email called, "American Minute". Wars are fought over land and power; this is true now and it was true all the way back to the battles described in the Old Testament. Look at ISIS today; they are committed to gaining ultimate power in the world to advance their theology worldwide. Muslims want to institute Sharia law right here in the United States because they believe Sharia law as a ruling government is more powerful than our own Constitution. Federer also wrote a book about understanding the Qur'an of Islam.

All are given free will, and sometimes that free will causes people to go so horribly wrong that they commit heinous acts against others. Some of us stare at the news broadcasts in utter disbelief when we hear of the acts that some people commit. Sometimes the sadness is unbearable and our hearts are broken for what we've heard that some people are capable of, often with no remorse or guilt. None of this is biblical. God is not giving orders for people to commit crimes against each other or sacrifice children or animals - all of God's vengeance and judgment against people ended when Jesus died on the cross to atone for man's sin. God's final judgment will come, but His time has not yet come.

To those who believe that a good and kind God would not allow war – God does not want war, but He does encourage battle against evil. He also does not want us to sin against Him and each other, but we do it anyway. I believe God weeps over what fallen man does to one another, and I believe His heart is broken every time He sees someone do something evil. Evil is not subjective – the knowledge of evil was placed in our DNA the day Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge. We all inherently know what evil is. Look at tv shows, video games, music and movies today and tell me you don't know what evil looks like. Can someone harm a child or an innocent animal and NOT know they are doing something evil? No. They choose to do it anyway, and for this, God weeps. Psychology would have us believe there are reasons for this behavior, but that is wrong and not biblical. Evil acts are a choice.

God doesn't want us to prefer power and greed, but many people do; He doesn't want us to kill unborn children, but people do it, more than a million babies a year are aborted in this country, more than ***55 million since 1973!*** (Think about that for a moment!) Now, those responsible for abortions are even selling the organs of the aborted babies for profit. Long ago when abortion laws were put in place we didn't have such wonderful in-utero imaging capabilities; now we know beyond all doubt that these are babies; human beings, not just a mass of useless tissue. Abortion is murder – man can make all the laws he wants, but that won't change how God views it.

God is not in favor of a lot of things man does, that's the entire reason why He sent His Son to die for our sins on the cross – *so we can be redeemed to Him in spite of the awful things we have done.* We need only repent and receive forgiveness.

God said, let Us create man in Our image (note the Trinity reference) and His greatest hope for mankind was that we would live peaceably with one another and be able to enjoy all the beauty and gifts He provided.

Man was not able, because of our sinful nature, lust, pride and free will. Adam and Eve were the first sinners, and every person since then was born with a sinful nature. (See my explanation of sin nature in the "Definitions" section at the beginning of this book.) However, God is eternal; He is still good and kind; it's man who has failed God. **That's why we need Jesus.** When we sin, we are committing a moral act against God's will. The punishment of our sin has always been and will always be, eternal death and separation from God. We need to be forgiven. We owe a debt that can never be repaid, it has to be forgiven. Jesus atoned for all our sins through His death on the cross.

Once we repent and ask God to forgive us, He will. After that, we must continually seek His kingdom and try to follow His commandments and DO what it says in the bible to do. When we fail and sin again, if we sincerely repent He will forgive us – we need to sincerely try not to do it again. All your sins are forgiven once you become saved, but that's not a "get out of jail free" card. You have to turn away from sin and repent daily, taking responsibility for your sin and asking God to forgive you.

"And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear (obedience); knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who, through Him, believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him Glory, so that your Faith and Hope are in God." 1Peter1:17-21

Jesus was foreordained before the foundation of the world; God had this plan from the beginning of time to send Jesus to be our Redeemer. In addition, He gave each of us the measure of faith: "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Romans 12:3 To each of us, He gave THE measure of faith. That means, we each have the same amount of faith. You don't have just a little, you have THE MEASURE that God gave everyone. The part we have to learn is, how to USE the faith we have already been given.

Jesus' Sacrifice

The "Sacrifice" we refer to when we talk about Jesus' death on the Cross means that Jesus sacrificed His life for ours. God sent Him to be born like a man, raised by human parents, experience every temptation known to man AND YET remain faithful to God's Law. He is the only man to have ever done this, past, present or future. God knew that man would not be able to keep the Law – laws which would guarantee the peaceful, lovely life He wanted all people to enjoy – so He allowed man to try, and fail; knowing all along that man would fail. His experiment with Adam and Eve had already solidified His belief that man wouldn't be able to have free will and completely control it. Man (all people, throughout the history of the world) would need a Savior – a Kinsman-Redeemer - to restore his right standing with God from the inevitable sin he would commit. (The Book of Ruth explains the role of Kinsman-Redeemer in the ancient culture, and Jesus as the Kinsman-Redeemer is mentioned in the Book of Revelation.) Jesus was raised like any other man until he reached an age when God wanted Him to start his ministry, about 30 years old. For the next three years, Jesus traveled all over, preaching and teaching; He did miracles and performed many acts of healing to show the people that He was indeed the Son of God. Jesus appointed twelve disciples; men who believed in Him and were willing to go out and teach even more people about Jesus. (God appointed the Apostle Paul; no one should assume the title of Apostle or Prophet as only God can appoint it.) In these twelve, Jesus placed the ability to perform miracles just like He did, and they spread out over the land, teaching and preaching for the Glory of God. Some Jewish leaders were upset by this, calling Jesus' ministry blasphemous to God. They couldn't understand that the Savior described by the prophets in the Old Testament could have arrived; they thought Jesus was not being truthful about who He was. Because of their unbelief, they wanted Jesus to pay the ultimate penalty for what they thought was blasphemy. The accusation, trial and subsequent crucifixion of Jesus had already been prophesied in the Old Testament in Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22.

Every Word Of That Prophecy Came True.

Jesus was turned over to Pontius Pilate, tried for blasphemy and sentenced to death. Roman soldiers beat him severely and made Him carry His own cross to the crucifixion site on the hill at Calvary. They affixed a crown made of thorny branches to His head in mockery of His claim that He was the Son of God. They pierced His side with a spear and nailed his arms and legs to the cross. Jesus was not murdered as some preachers teach: He willingly gave His life for ours, to assure our place in eternity. Speaking of his own life, Jesus said, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. " John 10:18

The wounds to Jesus' body represented Peace & Blessing (head), Abundance (hands), Healing (stripes on His back), Victory over Satan (feet) and the Living Water (pierced side) – As Jesus died on that cross, His last word was, "**Tetelestai** (tay-tell-EST-eye). Translated from Greek this means, "It Is Finished". (John 19:30)

His purpose on earth had been fulfilled and the issue of salvation was sealed for all time. Man now had a way to fellowship with God Himself, a way to be forgiven for his sins, and a way to have life with God forever!!

At the very time Jesus died, a great earthquake caused the curtain at the altar (in Jerusalem) to be torn in two, representing the removal of any barrier between us and God. (Note: the curtain weighed about 2,000 pounds and was 4" thick, it was impossible to tear it by the available means of the time.) Jesus did not come to nullify the Law or abolish it, but to show that the Law had been fulfilled by the coming of the One who could keep the Law. The favor of God and the blessing of God comes as a GIFT by the death of Jesus on the cross.

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you. Not as the world gives, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 11:14

The Peace attained by Jesus in spite of what He knew He had to do – His Sacrifice on the Cross – is now available to all mankind. Through the mercy of God in sending His son Jesus to die on the cross for our sin, we are all forgiven of sin and we are all invited to partake in life eternal.

This is His Grace.

God is the one who makes things we are believing for, happen; we are the ones who have unwavering faith in His promises when we speak TO the problem. The Jeremiah Study Bible explains it this way: "Hope that is centered in God is contrary to the world's hope." Grace is the gift of forgiveness; faith is how we appropriate the grace.

"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." James 5:15

As you read through the New Testament, circle the many times you see the words, "and Jesus healed them", or similar words. The fact is, Jesus healed EVERYONE who was willing to believe that He could and would heal them; His finished work on the Cross allows you and I and every other believer to access the same degree of faith that Jesus possessed. We aren't *asking* for the blessings, we are *thanking* God in advance for them. It's not necessarily true that God will heal your broken body and make you perfect physically if you are suffering. Although He CAN and sometimes DOES, God is sovereign and we don't always know the WHY. Sometimes the healing you receive comes in the form of mental acceptance of the infirmity itself, and the ability to move forward in your life *with* the affliction, and stop railing against it.

I've wrestled with this concept for a long time, because on it's face it seems to make it "our fault" because we don't believe enough if we aren't receiving God's blessings. How do we reconcile the fact that we aren't appropriating the blessings Jesus died for us to have, and how do we reverse this type of thinking?

Infirmity is generally caused by 3 main things:

Sin – things we do to ourselves or are the result of our own sinful behavior such as alcoholism, smoking, drug abuse, sexually promiscuous behavior, etc.

Satan's influence – we live in a fallen world and we are under attack all the time; we yield to the temptations of the natural world and there are often consequences.

Natural effects – Defects from birth, accidents, the heinous and atrocious evil acts of man, germs, aging; A lot of these things are man-made – for example, if you use a chain saw incorrectly, you could end up without an arm. Nobody can blame God for that.

This I know: It's not God's will for you to be infirm or ineffective, He wants all of us to be triumphant and victorious regardless of our limitations, and even if we do not see that victory in this life, we WILL see it in the eternal life to come.

The same might be applied to financial prosperity. Have we consistently made bad decisions with regard to money in our lifetime? Certainly there are things that happen that are outside of our control and sometimes it takes a long time to reverse those effects. Usually, our problem is that we are battling unbelief at the same time we're trying to have faith. Read the story in Mark 9 about the father who wanted his son to be healed; "Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" Mark 9:24

To do nothing and wait for God to move is a mistake. Rabbi Lapin wrote a book entitled, "God Wants You To Prosper". In it, the Rabbi explains the prosperity principles that have been used by Jews for centuries. Not once did he mention, sit on your sofa clutching a lottery ticket while you regale God with all your laments about being poor.

I'm sure He doesn't want people gambling away their Social Security or pension checks either, because all these things are works-based (things that we do under our own power, not blessed by God) and they are not borne of belief in God's provision. I believe God does want us to prosper, but He also wants us to work hard and observe biblical principles of fairness and kindness toward others, among other things.

We take a step by faith in God and that works out so we take another step with more faith in God, and another, and so on. However, if we sit around waiting for God to move and we do nothing, I think it's a pretty sure bet that He can out-wait you. Therefore, I think the answer is, building on the measure of faith we have been given to counteract our unbelief. If we build on our faith to the degree that we are constantly, consistently seeking God, studying the Word and thanking Him for His presence in our lives and His protection over ourselves and our loved ones, we will be able to access the healing and deliverance that Jesus showed us was possible and overcome our unbelief. (Now, go back and read that last sentence again. It is imperative that we understand this.)

God's purpose for your life is for you to follow Him, first and foremost. "See ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." Matthew 6:33. Seek ye FIRST the Kingdom of God – that means, get your heart right with God and continually seek Him by reading the Word and studying His blueprint for living. In that way you will come to know what else God wants you to do – you can ask Him to reveal what He wants you to do, but it's most important that you are walking in faith with Him, every day. Then He will show you what else is in store for you. Study the great book of Romans – Paul's letter to the Roman citizens, explaining how to live as a Christian and how to live for God.

We will hear from Him what he wants us to do. Jesus had perfect faith in God –and while none of us can claim that, instead of blaming God when bad things befall us, we need instead to utilize that measure of faith and conquer our unbelief. God is sovereign. We can't explain the contradictions of life and shouldn't focus on them. Focus instead that God's grace is sufficient and that He will give you the strength to endure while you pray for solutions. Perhaps this is a time of testing or development – it's no accident if God has not acted on what you have prayed for. We don't live in our glorified bodies yet, so sickness and accidents are possibilities in this life. True faith doesn't deny reality – you can always pray saying, God I am sick, but I believe that the Lord is my healer. Lord, I'm broke, but I know that God is my provider.

James 1:1-6 "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

Wait... God guarantees that His children will suffer in this life and we're supposed to be joyful about it too? I believe what this really means is, we're to be thankful for what we DO have, rather than focus on what we don't, seek Him daily and be patient while God works in our life. When you really think about all God provides, it's not difficult to be grateful. He knows when you're suffering and He said, "I will never leave you or forsake you" Hebrews 13:5 This means, He is always available to promote peace in your heart, to soothe your bruised spirit and calm your restless mind through the Word and by being sensitive to the Holy Spirit. It doesn't mean that He will immediately take away all your suffering and make you instantly rich, but He WILL give you the battle gear you need to fight those good fights of faith against all the spirits and principalities of Satan's army of fear and deception, and He WILL give you wisdom when you ask for it in faith. Character is developed in times of affliction or stress.

Just like diamonds are created under pressure, God could be preparing you for something we cannot see. Trust in God and allow Him to trust you, knowing that His mercy endures forever. Of course we can still believe for our businesses to be blessed and our infirmities to be healed, and those things do happen for some people immediately, but know that there might be other things God wants you to be doing that you are missing; things that would make your business be blessed or your body to be healed, so you have to pray and ask. Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened unto you. Matthew 7:7.

Sometimes what we learn is, God wants us to learn to live graciously with our affliction and depend upon Him for ALL our needs. Perhaps we learn that we have to work harder or get new training – maybe we are supposed to stop doing a particular thing that is making us poor or sick - seek and you will find, perhaps not what YOU want, but you will find what God wants for you. And always remember, even if you aren't healed or made prosperous in THIS life, you will be, in the next. We have to renew our minds so that we can walk in the spirit – with God, where He dwells in us – constantly receiving direction about which way we should go from Him through the Holy Spirit. This is the only way to cure our unbelief.

"Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction." Isaiah 48:10

Gold and silver are refined, or made pure, by fire. God is saying here, He is refining us, purifying us, in the furnace of affliction. Sometimes it is only by affliction that we can be humbled enough to pray meaningful prayers. We've all heard stories about people who began tithing and miraculously started receiving checks from out of nowhere and all sorts of blessings that they can only attribute to God.

Those things do happen but more often, we learn to be dependent on God for our provision, and we learn to thank Him for it every day. No one can predict a miracle from God – of course they exist, and there's no doubt that God makes good things happen with a mere touch of His hand. Living expectantly also includes being willing to accept God's will for our life. Not what WE want – what God wants for our life. The expectation of good things happening keeps us looking up and thanking Him for what we have right now, for this day. You might find yourself in the midst of something that you never expected or asked for, but in time you realize that God PUT you there for His purpose, and His purpose is always in our best interest as well.

There's a song I learned many years ago when I was a Girl Scout called, "Make New Friends". The lyrics are, "make new friends, but keep the old. One is silver and the other, gold." Is it not true that our friendships are refined as the years pass, ultimately becoming silver and gold? It's the same process with marriages. We are all refined through affliction and over the passage of time, with the things that happen in this life, whether good or bad. When we stand by one another our bonds become stronger as the years pass. This is yet another understanding of God's word – that which God has joined together, let no man set asunder – God meant for us to stand by each other through the trials of life.

The Spiritual controls the physical – get this into your understanding – The Spiritual (God -or- Satan) controls the physical realm. You are the one who decides which it will be. This is the same principle that was taught in the old Indian proverb which explains that there are two beasts battling inside every man; one good and one evil; the one that wins is the one you feed. As a result of Adam's original fall we are born with a sin nature and we can choose to believe in the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross, and that power is able to overcome our sin nature. The Power that is in the Blood of Jesus was shed for us to have victory, healing in the body and deliverance from sin. The sin nature of Man and the Holy Spirit cannot co-exist; one or the other must win the battle. **God will not share His glory with your self-will.** If you refuse to yield to God, He will not intervene in your life. Feed yourself on the Word of God.

All our battles have already been won at Calvary through Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross; victory is a matter of us believing – having faith - in the power of Jesus. Our only job is to believe, and keep believing. **It's not about how you feel – it's about what you believe.** So many people are in bondage to their feelings and that's what we must understand; Satan wants you to be in bondage to your feelings. God wants you to be free of that bondage, and He gives you a Way to do that, through faith in Jesus Christ.

"For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. (*"The "mountain" is used as a symbol, i.e. "mountain of difficulties", etc. God is a Miracle working God and will do so for any of His children, "whosoever"; however, every petition must be predicated as well on the will of God.*) Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, (*One seeking to do the Will of God will want only what God desires*) believe (have faith) that you receive them, and you will have them.(*as is obvious here, the receiving of these things, whatever they might be, requires relationship and that is the key.*) "

Mark 11:23-24 (*Expositor's Bible*)

God is not going to bless something that is against His nature or His will. If what you are asking Him for is diametrically opposed to the Word of God, your pleas will fall on deaf ears. You need to know that what you desire is something God wants for us; that it is not borne of a selfish nature or intended to hurt anyone. I remember reading once about a woman who prayed that her pastor's wife would die so she could marry him. Does anyone really think God would bless something like that? That is what Satan does –he skews our thinking through deception and even uses our prayers to try and separate us from God. Remember, God can read the heart of an individual. Also remember, God will never oppose Scripture. If you're hearing some "direction" that tells you that which opposes the Word of God, it's Satan interfering. That's why we need to know what the Word says; we can't believe what we "hear" unless we know the truth of God's Word. Ultimately, whatever God gives should glorify Him – through a job you're asking for, a marriage you are praying for, healing, or whatever else – giving the glory to God should be the end result.

Losing Your Salvation: If you believe that you've been saved or born again, yet you are actively living a lifestyle that is contrary to God's word, I would have to question your salvation. Did you really mean it when you asked Him to come into your life? Remember, God can read the heart of an individual – He knows if you've been saved or not, and if you have, He is no doubt sending the Holy Spirit to nigger at you about what you're doing that is in direct conflict with His word. If you are hearing the Holy Spirit (in your spirit, not audibly) say "ahem, you're not supposed to be doing that", or "remember what God said about that", or "You need to stop (it) NOW", something to that effect – you need to pay attention. Perhaps the Holy Spirit is sending other people to minister to you about this, and you're finding yourself in increasing numbers of situations where the subject will come up in conversation. At those times you will feel a sense of wrong-doing for your sin. That's the Holy Spirit trying to get your attention.

Or, perhaps some program you see on tv resonates with you and causes you to feel a conviction in your spirit that God was speaking to YOU. All these things are possibilities of how the Holy Spirit will contact you and get your attention about what you're doing that you shouldn't be doing. You cannot continue to live in sin and expect the blessings of God to be upon you. If you make the conscious decision to turn away from God, you are in danger of losing your salvation, if you ever had it to begin with – **the only way we can lose our salvation is to turn away from God.** This is also referred to as the unpardonable sin, or blaspheming the Holy Spirit. It is renouncing our salvation, hardening our hearts or cursing God and declaring that we no longer believe. You may think you're in a situation for which there is no answer or solution, but God always knows what the answer is to your problems. God never gives us something to do without providing the grace with which to do it – you have to step out in faith and believe that God will provide you with a way to be successful.

The Spiritual has the power to bring good or evil upon us, and **it is only by the GRACE of God through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross**, that we are protected from the control of evil but we must first have a relationship with Jesus Christ and believe that He was crucified and died on the Cross for our sins. Only by that belief can our relationship with Jesus bring about victory in our life.

As you read the next passage, imagine yourself as a Roman soldier, clad with the wide belt upon which hangs your battle sword, and the iron helmet upon your head. You'd be wearing the iron breastplate and carrying a sturdy shield. You have "put on the whole armor" preparing for battle. . .



"Finally, my Brethren, be strong in the Lord *(be continually strengthened, which one does by constant Faith in the Cross)* and by the power of His Might. *(This power is at our disposal. The Source is the Holy Spirit, but the means is the Cross.)* Put on the whole armor of God *(not just some, but all)* that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil *(this represents the "stratagems" of Satan)*. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood *(our foes are not human; however, Satan constantly uses human beings to carry out his dirty work)*, but against principalities *(rulers or beings of the highest rank and order in Satan's kingdom)*, against powers *(the rank immediately below the "Principalities")*, against the rulers of the darkness of this world *(those who carry out the instructions of the "Powers")*, against spiritual wickedness in high places *(this refers to demon spirits)*. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, *(the Truth of the Cross)* having put on the breastplate of righteousness, *(the Righteousness of Christ which comes strictly by and through the Cross)* and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; *(peace comes through the Cross as well)* above all, taking the shield of faith *(ever making the Cross the Object of your Faith, which is the only Faith God will recognize, and the only Faith Satan will recognize)* with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one *(this represents the temptations with which Satan assails the Saints)*. And take the helmet of salvation *(has to do with the renewing of the mind, which is done by understanding that everything we receive comes from the Lord, comes to us through the Cross)*, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" *(the word of God is the story of Christ and the Cross)*. Ephesians 6:10-17 (*Expositor's Bible*)

Put on the whole armor of God and *know* you are well-equipped for the battles you face. Victory (in this life and our eternal life in Heaven) has already been guaranteed; you need to claim it through faith in Jesus' finished work on the Cross!

Go to www.bible-knowledge.com where you will find Bible verses for battle, healing and more.

The only path is belief in Jesus' finished work on the Cross and the Word of God. Our Faith in God's Word is the only weapon that stops Satan and his principalities. (Principalities are spirits of Satan who have moved into an area and try to control it)

We have to know the Word, study the Word, get into the Word and USE the Word, through Faith in Jesus Christ. The Word is where the POWER is!

Here are a few weapons; study to find the ones that apply to your Kryptonite:

"no weapon formed against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me" declares the LORD. Isaiah 54:17

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me."
John 14:1

"I can do **all** things through Him who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Ephesians 6:10-13

"He who dwells in the shelter of the most high will rest in the shadow of the Almighty; I will say to my Lord, you are my refuge and my fortress, my God, in Whom I trust."
Psalm 91-1,2

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" Psalm 23:1

"I shall eat in plenty and be satisfied and praise the name of the Lord my God who has dealt wondrously with me; and His people will never be put to shame." Joel 2:26

"For the Lord will make me the head and not the tail, I shall be above only and not be beneath if I heed the commandments of the Lord my God which is commanded me today, and am careful to observe them." Deuteronomy 28:13

"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."
Romans 8:37

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

"But as for me, I say to my Lord, I trust in You. You are my God." Psalm 31:14

"For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."
Habakkuk 2:3

"I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight." Isaiah 45:2

"If God is for us, who could be against us?" Romans 8:31

All these verses are promises from God to protect us, provide for us and give us victory. **The way that God manifests these promises to us is through Jesus Christ on the Cross.** That's why the Object of your Faith must always be on the Cross – the finished work of Jesus – because it is only through Him that one can partake of God's promises.

It is by Jesus' sacrifice that the Word becomes Power in our life.

Here is your blueprint for daily prayer, one you should study for the deeper meanings. Be sure and read the Hebrew explanation of this prayer on the www.hebrew4christians.com website. You will come away with a much deeper understanding of what these words really mean, and what they mean for you.

There are lots of teachings available about the meaning of the **Lord's Prayer**; many of these teachings will help you understand this prayer and how it is meant to impact your daily life. In Matthew 6:9 Jesus said, "In this manner, therefore, pray..." Jesus was telling us to go before God, recognizing His ultimate authority, thanking Him for all the gifts He gives us, asking for His forgiveness for our failures and His protection over evil. I'm not advocating vain repetition, I'm saying you should study this prayer and believe what it teaches with reverence and faith every day for the rest of your life:

"Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done
In earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our debts
As we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil,
For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory,
Forever. Amen. Matthew 6:9-13

[www.hebrew4christians.com/Prayers/The Lord s Prayer 1/the lord s prayer 1.html](http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Prayers/The_Lord_s_Prayer_1/the_lord_s_prayer_1.html)

Use your computer to find lists of bible verses for peace, forgiveness and just about any other topic you can name. Faithful believers have been writing diligently to help you on your walk with God; use these resources well and often so that you grow strong in your faith and in the knowledge of who you are in Christ Jesus.

Being a Christian doesn't mean you won't ever have problems, in fact, you will probably find yourself having more than you did before. **Satan cannot possess a Christian, but he can oppress us.** Satan's influence is alive and well, and there is no doubt that Christians are under attack. Satan isn't going to allow you to read the Word of God and listen to the Gospel message without trying to dissuade you, make you think there's nothing to it, or cause you to doubt what you've heard. You can expect Satan to dredge up things you've long forgiven too, trying to undermine your belief. There's no end to the tactics Satan uses to try to keep Christians from their faith.

Remember, Satan has NO AUTHORITY over you except that which you allow.

If you allow yourself to be convinced that God's word isn't working in your life, it won't. If you allow Satan to convince you that it's a big waste of time to read the Bible and study the Word, it will be. If Satan can whisper in your ear that being a Christian is a fairy tale and the only people who believe are those who need a crutch or aren't smart enough to do something on their own, then you will be one of the people who will never see the Kingdom of God and you are doomed to eternal separation from God Himself. However, if you can resist those kinds of negative messages, the good news is, we have the Word to use as a weapon, and we have the Might and Power of God Himself on our side because we have Faith in Jesus' sacrifice.

I've seen people who say they have faith all their lives yet they live what appears to me to be the life of a defeated Christian. Some people are so enslaved by their emotions and feelings that I believe they haven't yet understood the influence of Satan and what to do about it, and they haven't understood that they live by the GRACE of God through Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross.

But again, you could spend your entire life in church and nobody mentions it, or if they do mention Grace, they don't spend time teaching us how important it is to believe in Grace. The church I went to for years is on it's 4th pastor since I've lived in this area. None of them ever taught it. Many pastors read a verse or two of scripture during their 20 or 30 minute message but they don't bother to explain what it means or how it is supposed to apply to you. If you don't listen to the teachers who are actively teaching the meaning of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, you could be one of those people who never knows. I always felt good after going to church but I wasn't getting what I needed for *life*. I needed someone to tell me how all this applied to my life, and how to use it. That's when I started to read, study and listen.

A few snippets from www.kingdavidstable.com :

"I cannot carry your cross, and you cannot carry mine. We cannot rely upon others to touch God for us, no matter how spiritual or holy they seem to be." (One could also add to this, listening to someone else speak for an hour once a week is not enough to bring you into relationship with Christ Jesus – and that's what you should be striving for; a personal relationship with the Lord.)

"To minister to the Lord is to be content and satisfied, free of ambition, conscious of needing nothing, since He is All in All to us. We were created to love Him. We were created to be loved by Him." (This doesn't mean we are to have no ambition to do well or succeed; it means, selfish ambition or ego-driven ambition should be quelled. We need to recognize that we accomplish nothing on our own – it is only by and through our faith in Christ Jesus that the gifts and talents He has given us will bear fruit.)

"Our fruitfulness is not what we are to one another, but what we are to Him."

I also recommend reading further on this site about the apostasy of the churches, which is clearly happening today. Whether or not all the information on this site is absolutely the best information out there, I can't say, but it's very deep and makes for some interesting study. Be sure to fact check everything you read on every website with the Word of God. I don't take anything I read on one site as absolute truth because I think there are many people God is speaking to, to spread His Word. Again, ask God to lead you. Only He knows these answers.

THE TRINITY and OUR SAVIOR

Through all the Old Testament, man could not be perfect. It was a result of the original sin in the garden – man is tempted by the flesh, we can't keep our big mouths shut, we don't give like we ought, we are selfish – these things are not new, they've been happening since Adam and Eve. To God, all sin was to be met with the moral judgment of eternal death.

God's Law required that sins be atoned for by blood – animal blood was a "cover" for sin, not a way to wipe it out – it was an act of faith. The owner of the lamb placed his hands on the lamb's head and (symbolically) "transferred" his sin to the lamb. The lamb had to be offered at the altar in a certain way, and a priest had to say prayers and the blood had to be sprinkled in a certain way... there were rules about this, and individual persons could not approach the altar of God, they had to have a representative or priest do it for them. There was a thick curtain, or veil, between the actual altar and the outer room where a person could go to pray – only the priests were allowed beyond the curtain. The sacrifices went on day after day, 24 hours a day, every single day. God knew that there was no way for mere man to keep all his Old Testament Laws all the time, it wasn't possible, because man was flawed in his humanness. He wanted them to WANT to believe in his absolute authority.

God couldn't go back on His word or His promises that He had already made, but man wasn't able to keep the Law – how could He forgive man for all his shortcomings without compromising His own promises? Because God knew that man would ultimately fail, He had already prepared an Answer.



God knew a Savior would be required; it was prophesied in the Bible for thousands of years before Jesus' birth. From Genesis to Malachai there are 300 specific prophecies concerning the coming Messiah, notably in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53.

We have probably all heard or sang the song, "Holy, Holy, Holy", written in 1826 by Reginald Heber and set to music in 1861 by John B. Dykes. "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty... God in three persons, blessed Trinity." It's a foundational Christian belief.

I never understood the Trinity explanation until very recently. It plagued me for years, why do we say God and Jesus interchangeably but they are separate, and who is the Holy Spirit, and exactly which one am I supposed to be praying to?? I can't believe they don't teach this in every single church, but they don't. Or maybe they do the first day they open the doors, but if you come on week 7, you're out of luck. Or perhaps they assume that we all remember what we learned in Sunday school, assuming they taught it at all - but what about those who didn't have the benefit of a family who believed and sent them to Sunday school? Without some direction from people who have had revelation of the Word of God and can explain it, it's hard to figure this stuff out on your own just reading the Bible. I'm not sure why I never thought to Google it until recently. Thankfully, there are many dedicated people who write things to help

The Triune God; the Trinity, Godhead or God in three parts, as I understand it:

We live in a three-dimensional world: everything in it has height, width and depth. God, however, is not limited by three dimensions, therefore He can "be" three persons at the same time – the "essence" of God is, God the Father, God The Son and God The Holy Spirit. Theologian Herman Geisler said, "essence is **what** you are, person is **who** you are. So God is one "what" but three "who's"." In Genesis 1:26, God said, "let **us** make mankind in **our** image". Jesus was always present with God. The third part of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit, was sent by God to intervene FOR us before God.

God, because He is a Spirit being, is able to “be” 3 parts – The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit which is the Trinity, or GodHead – and send his “Son” or second part, to earth and become a sacrifice for our sin. Jesus, as God in the flesh, is called the “Hypostatic Union”. As a spirit being, God IS three parts, and each of them operates distinctly and independently, as well as in complete unison. Now, I don’t know HOW He did this, nobody does. We don’t live in a multi-dimensional space, we are limited to just the three. But I believe that it is the height of arrogance to dismiss any possibility simply because we don’t have an explanation for it. (The scientific community and the academics do this all the time – they dismiss the Bible and by extension, God, simply because they cannot explain it, yet they wholeheartedly embrace a theory that man “evolved” when Darwin himself admitted it was a theory. Where are the intermediates? You’d think they would be smarter than that.) I’ll be in the line that forms to ask those kinds of questions when we get to heaven.

To believe in the bible is to believe that it contains the inerrant Word of God, period. (Here are some resources to read more about the Trinity explanation: www.desiringgod.org also www.everystudent.com just type in Trinity explanation.) We should be asking God to give US revelation of the Word – it comes not all at once, but as we progress. That’s why we have to study, study, study – read everything and pray as you go along to receive the Truth. It’s great that we now have Google.

It’s ok to be spoon-fed the Word in the beginning of your Christian walk, but you should progress from there and learn the Word on your own. Be careful not to listen to those who claim to have personal revelations from God or put too much emphasis on their own interpretations of what God meant. Be aware also that there are very popular church leaders and authors out there who are teaching a philosophy, not the Word of God.

They are teaching more about what God can do for you than what you are to do for God, and focusing on your “feelings”. Remember, it’s not about how you FEEL. If what you’re hearing isn’t focused on Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, be very wary. There are a LOT of “teachers” doing this in the world. Study the Bible for yourself and ask God to reveal the scriptures to YOU.

By taking the punishment for ALL of the sin of all people in the world from now until eternity, onto Himself, God the Son – Jesus - was able to allow God the Father, to keep His own promises, be able to forgive man his sins, and provide a way for each of us to pray and be in fellowship with Him through God The Holy Spirit, without going through a priest or having to sacrifice animal blood for sin. Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection means for each of us that we can now live a resurrected life through Him – assured of our acceptance into His kingdom of heaven for eternity, but also rising above poverty and lack, rising above sickness and pain, rising above all the things that cause people to feel stressed and worried and depressed in this life, through our faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus knew that this was His purpose and knew that the day of His death would come, His resurrection was never in question. After He was crucified, He went to sit at the right hand of the Father and the Holy Spirit remained within us to guide us in our every day walk while we serve the Lord. Each step of that walk requires faith, that’s why it’s called a “walk”. It’s continual; we don’t take one step and say we’re walking.



Let's imagine for a moment what this looks like: The One, seated on a throne of sapphire, with a great rainbow over His head that resembles an emerald. Surrounding this Throne are 24 other thrones on which are seated 24 elders dressed in white, wearing golden crowns. There are flashes of light and peals of thunder, and 7 lamps blazing, which John identified as "the seven spirits of God".

Before Him, a sea of glass, clear as crystal. Around the throne are four living creatures (seraphim) with many eyes and six wings who continually say, "holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come". See Revelation 4: 5-8

Perhaps somewhere in the vicinity are legions of tall, muscular warrior angels, standing at the ready to be dispatched by Jesus upon His command. They spend their time worshipping Him, singing His praises with their eyes focused on Him alone, waiting to do His bidding when one of His children calls upon His name.

THIS is why we must speak the Word! Satan cannot penetrate that which is protected by these warrior angels, Jesus already defeated Satan!

All Satan has left is the fear he can instill in us to deceive us and make us doubt the power of God.

Angels are God-created beings, made specifically to do His bidding. Believers are carried to heaven in the arms of angels when we die (Luke 16:22) and angels are sent by God to surround us and protect us when we pray. But we **MUST** pray!! We do not command or call upon angels, only God can direct them and they respond only to God's voice. (Psalm 103:20) We are allowed to call upon ministering spirits in Jesus' name, but ultimately it is God who decides whether or not to dispatch angels on our behalf.

Angels are not those cute little chubby children with wings you see in paintings. Cherubim are God's attendants; they serve Him, night and day. It doesn't matter to me what they look like (although there is a complete description in Ezekiel) because the Cherubim were created to attend to God, not to man. **Angels** are always males, no female angels exist; they are messengers and warriors, all alike, except for their ranking in the hierarchy. Angels are beings created by God to fight the powers and principalities of darkness on our behalf, and were given free will just as it was given to man. When Satan chose pride over obedience, he was cast from heaven and a third of the angels chose to go with him. Satan is the ruler of the earth. Heavenly angels serve and protect as directed by God. (Luke 4:10, Psalm 91:1, Hebrews 1:14) I believe that these legions of God's angels stand at the ready, waiting for a signal from God to rush to our side when we call upon Jesus' name. There are countless testimonies from people who have seen these mighty warriors and who have been saved by them. If they pass from one dimension into another, that's probably when people see them, for they are supernatural and not visible in our three dimensions. Angels look only to HIM for direction. We would do well to learn that. Psalm 103:20 "Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word."



WHOSOEVER WILL

"The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, [saying], Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3

Because Jesus obediently died on the Cross, God honors His blood. When we pray for healing through our faith in Jesus, God honors our request and if it is within His will, he will answer your plea. Isaiah 53:4 tells us, "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried out our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted." This verse explains that Jesus bore our pain and our afflictions, but people thought He was being punished by God. The next verse, "by His stripes, we are healed" Isaiah 53:5 refers to Jesus' atonement not our physical healing. God is sovereign and He answers prayer! When we pray for prosperity in our work through faith in Jesus, God honors those requests. We never know if God is going to heal us or prosper our businesses, but we ask in faith, by the sacrifice of Jesus, and God will do as He wills for us. Have faith in Jesus to protect your family, your home, your cars, your health, your business, your pets, your efforts to _____ - in other words, pray. Pray for your children and your grandchildren.

In 1Samuel 1:27 Hannah's prayer was to thank God for the child she had prayed for, and to dedicate him to God. It is our duty to pray for our children, and to pray continually. Pray for your healing, pray for wisdom to prosper, pray for God's provision and protection. Pray, using His name. Ask, in Jesus' name; He is your heavenly lawyer and will petition God for you on your behalf when you pray in His name.

Then, believe AS IF what you asked for has come to pass. This is "calling those things that be not as though they were". Romans 4:17 You are still in pain, but you SAY, "thank you God, for the strength I need to overcome this affliction." You are unemployed but you SAY "Thank you God that my perfect job is being readied for me".

You are broke but you SAY, "Thank you God, that you are able to make all grace abound towards ME that I, always having all sufficiency in all things, have an abundance for every good work." 2Cor9:8 What you SAY is what you are believing God for – you are standing on His promises.

When the disciples asked Jesus why they weren't able to cast demons out, Jesus answered them in this famous verse:

"So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief (*improper understanding regarding Christ and the Cross*) for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed (*symbolism*), you will say to this mountain 'Move from here to there' and it will move (*the impossible made possible*); and nothing shall be impossible for you (*that which is the Will of God*)."
Matthew 17:20 (*Expositor's Bible*)

Find the promises that apply to your need and say them aloud, using your Faith in Jesus' finished work on the Cross. The following verse reminds us though, that obedience is key.

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." Matthew 16:25

Whosoever will is an admonition, a qualifier of sorts – if you're going to be one of the people who live with God in eternity, you must humble yourself and submit to His will. This means allowing yourself to be led by the Holy Spirit – even doing some things you don't necessarily want to do – because God knows what's best for us long before we do. He not only wants what is best for us but He wants what is best for the Kingdom. Pray for the Holy Spirit to direct you daily – and follow the path. Most of the time it's a "knowing" that comes over you - what you just thought of is a Spirit-led idea – our job is to do what the Holy Spirit put in our mind and heart. Becoming sensitive to the Holy Spirit happens by listening and then doing. Faith is developed by trusting in God.

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Romans 10:17

And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last." Luke 13: 23-30

Whosoever will.



Jesus IS the narrow gate. There are literally millions of people who think they are behaving like Christians who will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven because they spent their time on earth focused on religion or a “feel-good” philosophy and not on the Word of God. Some of these people are extremely well-known and it’s so sad that they’ve been fooled. They write best-selling books, they promote a kinder, gentler “religion” and tell you that it’s possible to visualize yourself in Jesus’ arms or receive messages from Jesus using New Age philosophy. There are some who promote a “blending” of all religions thinking all faiths can coexist and some will tell you a one-world religion is the future of Christianity, but these philosophies are NOT biblical. None of this kind of teaching is biblical; these are false teachers and they are either promoting this kind of thing for personal gain or they’ve been fooled by Satan and don’t even know it.

ANYONE who tells you there is more than one way to enter the Kingdom of Heaven is not telling you the truth. Using visualization techniques causes people to begin to think they can do what only God can do – some of these teachers even tell us that we can command angels and create just as God did. There is so much of this kind of false teaching out there that people who know the truth are actively warning others that this is how the anti-Christ will get people to accept him as god – by introducing false doctrines into society gradually so that people will accept it as truth without testing it against the Word of God. You MUST be discerning and understand what the bible says about these kinds of things; Google everything and study it for truth before you spend your money on a “best-seller” just because someone you thought was well-respected recommended the book. Always, if the focus is not on Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross and supported in God’s Word, you should regard these teachings as false teaching and get it out of your home. Those who do not believe in Him alone will be standing outside the door, knocking.

I found an amazing website where the creator of the site took a number of “new age” ideas and buzzwords and came up with a number of pages of baloney designed to mimic what the New Age folks are promoting – all of it is nonsense, but it sounds just like what you might read in one of the self-help books written by these false teachers. It’s a fascinating read if your heart is where it should be, on the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, recognizing all this as just what it is – blasphemous mumbo-jumbo. Yet people gobble this stuff up like it’s some kind of spiritual candy. I won’t give the web address here because some of the language used by the site creator and bloggers might be offensive to some people and that is not my intent. (Google new age philosophies if you are interested; you’ve been warned.)

Part of the problem with these self-help books and philosophies is that people are trying to reconcile science and the universe – or, the intellectual – with God. It can’t be done. Believing in God is a conscious decision to accept that He is a greater Being than we are; that our scientific knowledge and ability to understand comes from HIM, not within ourselves, and whatever strides we make in science or understanding the universe is severely limited by our human-ness. We can’t take the awesome enormity of creation and boil it down to something our human mind can accept because we don’t have the ability to understand all that God understands. Until people accept this, they won’t humble themselves before God. That’s what it takes to be a believer – you must humble yourself and realize that even though you might be the smartest person you know, you will truly “know” nothing without the God of the Universe who created you and gave you the ability to think involved in your life.

Study Solomon in Ecclesiastes. He is credited with being the wisest man ever to have lived. That's because he was faithful to God; he gave sacrifices to God that were above and beyond what was required, and as a result, God told him to ask for whatever he wanted. Solomon had the presence of mind to ask for wisdom, because he knew he was in a position of authority and would need it. Ask God for wisdom. Don't be fooled by false teachers and popular philosophies, no matter who they are or how many books they've sold.

Whosoever Will.

RENEWING YOUR MIND

One more thing worthy of mention is, you must not be harboring unforgiveness in your heart if you expect God to bless you. In The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 (where Jesus told the disciples, pray like this) it says, "Forgive me my debts as I forgive my debtors".

This "debt" refers to a debt that cannot be repaid; it must be forgiven, or erased. This is what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross, **if we are willing to repent of our sin, forgive others for what they've done to us, and strive to be more like Jesus every day.**

God will not forgive you if you do not forgive others. Remember to ask God to reveal it if it exists so you can repent of it and ask for forgiveness. "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7 We have to remember to repent of ALL sin, every time it happens. Yes, even after you are saved you still have to repent when you sin.

Study Paul's letter to the Romans. In it, you'll find the first 6 chapters as a blueprint on how we should live in society and the last 6 chapters a blueprint on how to live for God. Paul was originally named Saul; an educated man and Roman zealot who killed Christians for their beliefs until God spoke to him and told him to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. He ended up writing most of the New Testament, as he was inspired by God. He sometimes opened his letters with the words, "grace and peace to you" – again, this is reference to the Grace of Jesus' death on the Cross and that perfect Shalom of nothing missing, nothing broken. Interestingly, in Hebrew, Jerusalem means, the City of Peace. (Jeru-shalom)

When you open your Bible or a verse comes to your mind, remember to thank God for the Word. Again, this is a process. You begin by studying things you think you can do, and progress to reading the entire Bible. It is said that there is a special blessing from God to those who study the Book of Revelation – I’m trying, and you should, too. It’s very difficult but it’s an amazing journey to study different resources and try to understand it. I think it’s another journey, revealed to us as we can absorb it.

When you think you are ready to tackle it, Chuck Missler is just about THE smartest guy on the subject of the Bible and how it relates to events of today you will ever hear. His book, “Learn The Bible In 24 Hours” is amazing and will be of immeasurable help as you read the bible through in its entirety. I also have great respect for the work of Dr. David Jeremiah. Start with David Jeremiah’s “Understanding The 66 Books of the Bible” and then move on to Missler’s work. Load both Dr. Jeremiah’s book and Dr. Missler’s book onto your Kindle or iPad and read and re-read the synopsis of each Book of the Bible. The insight you will receive before you begin to read the actual books in the bible will be very helpful. Take notes, read the Bible concurrently with Missler’s book and subscribe free to his newsletter from his website Koinonia House; he also has many, many resources available on his website. His work is magnificent. www.khouse.org Be sure to sign up for Dr. Jeremiah’s daily message as well – www.davidjeremiah.org. These daily messages keep your mind on Jesus.

We have to learn to be sensitive to God’s input – in order to do that, we have to renew our minds daily with the Word. If we don’t do that, Satan will interrupt and twist our thinking, and he sometimes uses Scripture against us. It’s extremely important to spend time every single day meditating on the Word. Write down the promises you’re standing on and SAY them out loud multiple times a day – cast Satan out if necessary, and use Jesus’ name to do it.

OUR thinking has to line up with the Word in all things. Have a decision to make? First, find out if it lines up with the Word of God. Sometimes our decisions aren't specifically listed in the Bible, but there are principles in the Bible that we need to follow, with verses that support them such as "do unto others", "don't be in debt", "render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's" and "count the cost" (the cost can be your time, your money, a sacrifice you have to make; many things have a "cost"). In other words, make a list and compare your list to the Word. Your answer might appear very quickly. Google this phrase: "what does the bible say about _____" add whatever your particular issue is, and read several entries about it. You might not like it, but God's word is never wrong and it will not return void. Your job is to obey.

Here are ten ethical principles based on the Ten Commandments:

- 1) The Sovereignty of God – Thou Shall Have No Other Gods Before Me
- 2) Stewardship – Thou shall not make for yourself an idol
- 3) Honoring God's Character – You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
(This includes profanity)
- 4) Work and Rest – Honor the Sabbath (Jesus IS the Sabbath and the Feasts)
- 5) Authority and Family – Honor thy mother and thy father
- 6) The Sanctity of Life – Thou shall not kill (murder).
- 7) Sexuality and Marriage – Thou shall not commit adultery (sexual sin).
- 8) Respect for Property – Thou shall not steal.
- 9) Veracity – Thou shall not bear false witness (lying with intent to hurt or maim
another's character)
- 10) Contentment – Thou shall not covet.

You can do your own internet search and find a lot of information on any topic. If what you want to do doesn't line up with the Word, chances are pretty good you shouldn't do it. Google everything you don't understand; be sure to draw on two or three entries just to make sure you're getting the right direction.

When you're facing a decision of which way to go, take baby steps. Ask God to light your path and help you to not lean on your own understanding but on His will for your life. Repeat the promises you're standing on over and over and thank God for His word. Whatever you last heard God tell you to do, keep doing that until you hear from Him that you should do something differently. Make sure you actually DO that which God has told you to do, because He won't keep repeating it, He will simply wait until you obey. You can wrestle with your desire to disobey all you like, but that won't change what God told you to do. Sooner or later, you'll have to DO what He said.

You may think that God told you to work in a certain place but you're bored with it and would like to change – ask God for a change, and wait for him to provide it, but keep doing what He told you to do before. We can't sit in our house and wait for someone to ring the doorbell with a big, fat check, we have to work – Paul wrote in 2Thessalonians 3:10, “for even when we were with you, this we commanded you: that if any would not work, neither should he eat.” While Christians are commanded to help care for those who cannot care for themselves, able people shouldn't sit around and expect others to assume the burden of their care; there's always something they can be doing to contribute, but God should be involved in those decisions. By the way, the Bible also commands us to first care for our own families, *then* for others. (Galatians 6:8 and 1Timothy 5:10). You'd be surprised how many people don't obey.

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." Joshua 1:8

"Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all."
1Chronicles 29:12

"The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing." Psalm 34:10

"And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn." 1Kings 2:3

"You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wonderously with you; and My people shall never be put to shame."
Joel 2:26

"Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart."
Psalm 37:4

"I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the Lord". Jeremiah 23:4

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will come and pray to me and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you," declares the LORD, "and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile." Jeremiah 29:11-14

If you still can't make a decision, do what you believe is the next right thing. Then, do the next right thing after that, and the next after that. Don't over-think your actions, because this is one of the ways Satan uses our minds to baffle and confuse us. Satan doesn't WANT us to follow God's will for our life, he wants us in perpetual confusion because he knows we won't be serving God if we are always baffled.

God doesn't reveal his entire plan to us all at once, He reveals it Grace by Grace. This means, we do one right thing and God blesses that, and then we do another right thing and God blesses that and so on. Read Joyce Meyer's "Battlefield of the Mind" because you CAN choose what you think about and you CAN choose to cast out those things that are not pleasing to God. Remember, renew your mind every day – when thoughts come into your head that you know are against the will of God or something that tries to undermine your faith, cast them out and replace them with thoughts of something good or a blessing God has provided.

Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians, 'Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things.' Philippians 4:8

I love this verse. Not only is it lyrically pleasing in its composition, in it is also the inherent promise that things which are noble, just, pure and lovely still exist. It is a hopeful verse and it has been really helpful to me in casting out weird thoughts, because I've always been one who has a "busy mind". I didn't know I could control the thoughts that come into my head, I thought it was just the way I was made. I had no idea that Satan was trying to keep me in bondage with doubt and unbelief and make my mind jump from one thing to the next with no apparent order.

Now, when I feel it happening, I "renew my mind" with the Word, or I think about my grandkids. There isn't anyone more pure and you can't help but believe they're children of God. Or, look deeply into your dog's eyes or contemplate the trees and the sky. There are many ways of thinking about something pure and lovely, as Paul said. You'll find yourself having to do this a lot at first and you'll be saying, I submit myself to God and the devil MUST flee. ("Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." James 4:7) After you've done it awhile, you'll be commanding Satan to go bother someone else by your faith in Jesus. It's not easy, but it's like any other habit; you have to do it over and over. You CAN control your thoughts. Re-read Joyce Meyer's book, Battlefield of the Mind until you are sure of this, it's a revelation.

There are programs on tv at all hours of the day and night that teach the Word of God. Be discerning and ask God to reveal to you which ones you should be watching and listening to, and where you should be attending church. The litmus test is, if there is a ministry that is not teaching you the Word of God as written in the Bible – and I’m not talking about interpretive editions, they should be teaching from the King James – you should probably stick to other ministries that are focused on bringing the Word to you. This is their solemn duty as ministers of God’s word, and those who distort the truth of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross will be held accountable by God for that distortion.

Our gifts and offerings to worthy organizations from whom we receive teaching and those who are working to spread the Gospel message around the world are to be in addition to our tithes to our local church and are supported by Paul’s message in 2Corinthians 9:6-15. Buying teaching materials from these organizations counts as a gift or offering – even better if you can share the material with someone else after you have read it. It’s helpful to read as many commentaries on the books of the bible as possible to further understand the God’s word. Some are available free online, others only through specific ministries in print or downloads.

After you have thanked God in your prayers, ask Him for what you need or want. You don’t need to beg Him for it, just ask and believe that He WILL do it. Make sure what you ask lines up with the Word. (I have started to circle all the times I see it written in the Bible where God says, “I will” – He said it a LOT) If it is against His will for your life, you’ll know soon enough. Pray continually. Once you have asked, then you stand on the promises. God is not moved by our tears or begging; but He honors our faith in the sacrifice of Jesus.

When you get discouraged – and you will – go to the Word. There are dozens of programs on tv at all hours that will help you when you need it. One of my favorites is “Reflections” on DayStar channel. It never fails to give me peace. I also try to remember to say: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10 (also the Doxology in the Lutheran church). Our “right spirit” was accomplished on the Cross; this prayer was written before Jesus died on the cross for our redemption, but it serves as a reminder for us to believe in the cleansing Jesus accomplished for us and set our minds on Jesus.

One of the things I’m learning is to speak the Word about the problem and nothing else – say nothing else about it. That’s a big one for me. We’re not supposed to say, Oh, God, I’m just so upset and I don’t know what to do I need some help, I can’t do this, I’m so tired of this, please, please, please, blah,blah,blah.... He has already given us all the answers we’re looking for – they’re in the Bible. That’s why it is counter-productive to constantly say how upset you are – God knows you’re upset and He expects us to go to the Word, that’s why He gave it to us. One of the best things to say out loud when you’re really upset and your emotion is taking over is this:

“BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD”. Psalm 46:10

You won’t believe how immediately this sentence will calm you. Then think of a time when God blessed you – if He ever did, He will, again – and begin to thank and praise Him. Remember, God is not on your timetable, but He will never be a minute late.

“For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” Habbakuk 2:3

Recall Exodus when Moses said to the people as they stood before the Red Sea:

"Fear Not, and Stand Silent, and see the salvation of the Lord" Exodus 14:13

Many times when believers feel upset or agitated, this is a fear attack by Satan, using a situation where we are vulnerable to cause us to doubt our faith. THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO in times like this, is Speak The Word out loud. Praise God and remember it is not your power, but HIS.

Say, "Jesus is Lord". Romans 10:9

Say, "If God is for us, who could be against us?" Romans 8:31

SAY, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Psalm 23:1

Say, "NO weapon formed against me will prosper." Isaiah 54:27

SAY, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty." Psalm 91:1

Say, " I submit myself to God and the devil MUST flee." James 4:7

Say, "O Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever". Psalm 106:1-3

I have gone so far as to say this last verse in the direction of the North, South, East and West, just to make sure every spirit hears me. God and His angels respond to words that praise Him. You WILL feel better, God will see to it. Do a Google search for inspirational or positive bible verses and print them and use the KJV or NKJV to be sure you're getting the real Word of God.

Saying positive things are a “seed” sown into your future. Negative things you say will snuff out the seedlings you’ve planted, so you MUST watch what you say out loud. Think of this: of all the animal kingdom, man is the only one who can put together coherent thoughts and speak them out loud. There’s a reason for this! God wants us to SPEAK! It’s how blessings are conveyed and in the inverse, how Satan manages to instill fear. Speak only blessings over your life and into the lives of those around you. And, remember – “Thy Will Be Done.” God SPOKE the universe into existence.

This is a good thing to remember about the way we speak to our children, too. What are you (or the tv or their video games or the music on their iPod, or for that matter, what they hear in our schools) speaking into existence in their lives? If you think it doesn’t matter what they hear, think again. It is our divine duty to protect our children and many people are failing miserably. Pray continually for your kids and for wisdom in how to deal with all that comes against them in the world.



MAMMON

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" Luke 16:10,11

These verses refer to money. "Mammon" is money. People who are faithful turn to God first; to trust Him to provide and also to learn what He wants them to do with their money. These are the mature Christians and those who are "faithful in that which is least". The least thing we can do with our faith is trust God with our money. Once we do that, He will entrust us with further blessings. Jesus taught on money more than any other subject because it's such a big part of our life. We have to work for it, we have to have it to buy the things we need – it's not something that can be overlooked. It's important to note here that God always wants us to sow seeds of faith into the lives of others.

Our harvest depends upon the seeds we sow – this is a reciprocal principle that God used throughout the Bible to help us understand that what we mete out to others is what will come back to us. Perhaps not in the same forms, but we will be blessed as God sees our need. In other words, you might give of your time to someone who needs you and because you are actively placing your faith in Jesus, God blesses you with victory over sin because that's what you need most. God wants us to seek **FIRST** the kingdom of God and then all the blessings will be added. I'm simply trying to be obedient when God moves me to do something and obey immediately; I have faith that God will decide what's best for me. God wants us to give freely and he also wants us to invest wisely and make a fair profit. **BUT... obedience must be coupled with Faith** otherwise, our obedience becomes a works-based act that we think we have accomplished on our own and not through Faith in Jesus.

Proverbs 11:5 "A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed."

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you." Matthew 6:33

A word here about tithing: Tithing is giving back to God the first portion of all our increase in recognition for all He has done for us. Since everything we have or ever will have comes from Him, Old Testament law taught that the first tenth of our increase belongs to God. You might think of it as, we get a 90% commission, God gets 10%. It is through the use of our tithes that God is able to accomplish the many great things that the body of Christ is able to do, not only in our lives but in the lives of others. You give, and God will be able to give to you. "Pay It Forward" was a movie about this same principle – you do something good and so does your neighbor, and their neighbor, etc., and doing good for others eventually comes full circle. We give not *because* God will give back to us, but we give because of our love for God and the mercies He has shown us. God was so merciful to us and loved us so much, He gave His Son to absorb all our sin so that we can be forgiven and have everlasting life. To hold back on the tithe is to steal from God. HOWEVER... tithing by itself is no guarantee that God will bless you financially, and tithing was not taught in the New Testament. Instead, Jesus taught that we should give abundantly: "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." Matthew 10:8 The Apostle Paul taught: "Every man according as he purposes in his heart, [so let him give]; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7 . Paul also cautioned us not to give with intent to advertise our generosity: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 6:1-4. What do we learn from all this? **We learn that we should be giving as much as we can, as often as we can, as cheerfully as we can and as anonymously as we can as a GIFT to GOD, lifted up to Him because we are grateful to Him for all He gives us.**

"And my God will supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"
Philippians 4:19

Don't confuse wants with needs.

As a believer, you will be able to look back and say, God met my need on *that* day, and on *that* day, and on *that* day... sometimes in most unexpected ways, and you can rest in the knowledge that He will meet your needs, again. When you give, God gives more. You can't out-give God.

When you are actively seeking God and studying the Word, you will learn to be able to rely on the Holy Spirit to direct you in your giving. Respond in faith when you "hear" those little whispers that say, "send your sister \$100", or "leave a big tip today". You will probably never know why the Holy Spirit tells you to do these things, but obeying in faith will please God. The "Christ Has No Body" poem written by Theresa of Avila in the 1500's states, "...yours are the hands, yours are the feet". Jesus truly has no hands or feet except ours – if the faithful on earth fail Him, how will He be able to complete His good work? We are to be the example for others to follow, and our generosity toward others is a lifelong endeavor. When we give to others, we can *know* that God will provide for us.

HOW do we "trust God to provide"? There are many answers, but I believe there is a process we need to follow in order to get to that place where we can trust God for our provision. If we follow this process we can *know* without a doubt in our mind, that we are a child of the Most High God and that all of the blessings in His universe can be ours by Faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross.



PART TWO

"Those who hope in Me will never be disappointed."

Isaiah 49:23

ACCEPT HIM.

Make Jesus your Lord and Savior – ask Him to forgive you of your past sins, and come into your heart and be your King. (This too, is an important distinction. “Kingdoms” have a king. In America, we live in a democracy so we don’t know what it really means to be obedient to a King. We have to basically forget everything we know about democracy and living in the world, and set our minds on the “King”.) Go to page 113 and review the “Sinner’s Prayer” so you know what to pray. Make sure you mean it.

We need to understand His Grace. We’ve all heard the old nuggets, “by the Grace of God”, but unless we really understand what Grace is, we’ll never be able to take advantage of the gift of Grace. We’re not talking about holiness, here.

Grace is the strength of God, an empowerment. God isn’t asking us to live holy and use our own abilities to do it. Grace empowers us to live holy because God provides the means with which to do it. When we exercise our Faith in the Grace of God, that’s when His empowerment comes upon us. It is ONLY by His Grace that we accomplish anything; everything in this life that we are gifted with being able to do or accomplish is by the Grace of God.

It is by the Grace of God that we are forgiven through the Crucifixion of Jesus. When we are obedient, God’s Grace flows toward us. It happens with ideas that just come upon us, abilities we didn’t know we had, people who help when even they don’t know why they’re doing it – all these things are God’s Grace. It happens all the time, but we are so conditioned to believe that we’re doing all these things by our own ability or due to our sparkling personalities that we don’t recognize Grace when we have it. Learn to see God’s Grace around you and thank Him for it. God is pleased when we thank Him for the things He so freely gives.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him and He will direct your path.” Proverbs 3: 5-6

We all do it – we think we’re the ones responsible for what we accomplish, but we need to remember that it is God’s GRACE that gives us what we need; the intelligence, the resources, the ideas, the creativity, stamina, strength, everything comes from Him. This is what submitting to God is all about – giving up control, acknowledging that God is your Source. Nobody ever explained that concept to me before – I had heard people say it, but I had no idea what it meant or what I was supposed to do with that – God is my Source - of what? I don’t know why it took me so long to figure that out, but once you understand it, you’ll thank Him for everything. It’s pretty amazing to realize it happening around you – it’s like your eyes are being opened for the first time.

God’s GRACE, simply put, is God’s unmerited favor on those who believe in Him. We believe in JESUS and HIS finished work on the Cross; the Cross is the means by which God gave us access to His Grace.

We have done nothing to deserve it, we can’t earn it, we can’t buy it – it was given freely as a GIFT from God because He loves us. He gave us Jesus as a way for us to draw nearer to Him because sin was standing in the way of us being closer to God. When we learn to exercise OUR FAITH in HIS GRACE of the gift of Jesus Christ, we begin to line up our thinking with God’s thinking, and that’s when we begin to see His blessing upon us.

Pastor Jim Parsons said, “beneath the cross is level ground”. What he meant by that was, *everyone* who wants to come to the Cross for forgiveness is welcome. It doesn’t matter what sin you’ve committed, who you are or how old you are, what color you are, what religion you are, what gender you are – nothing matters except your faith in what Jesus accomplished on the Cross.

Repeat and remember these words, because they are for YOU to hold onto and rest on in your spirit: it's HIS grace and MY faith.

We have to LEARN how to depend on Him, not on our own abilities or strength. This is tough – I think we've been taught to believe that "we" *have to do something*, and if God happens to be merciful toward us, He will bless our endeavor. This is wrong – it is by FAITH that we ask God for help, protection and favor and we go through each day with the assurance that God is working on our problem and has heard our requests. We live expectantly – we KNOW God will answer us. It might not be right away, but He will answer. His answer may be to take us in a completely different direction, too.

1 Corinthians 15:10 'But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace, which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.'

Paul is saying here that he worked hard to "earn" the Grace of God, but he received it from God not because of what he did, but because God bestowed it upon him through Jesus' finished work. We've all heard and maybe even said the old nugget, "there but for the Grace of God, go I". This is so true – it is ONLY by God's Grace that we are alive, well and able. I know I want that which Jesus died for me to have and to give what God believes it is in me to give.

"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, **that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.**"

Philippians 3:12

Paul realizes that he hasn't already attained or achieved perfection, but he presses on, reaching for the promise from God that was manifested in the death of Jesus on the Cross.

Old Testament laws were handed down by God so that the people would learn to recognize sin. Original sin in the Garden of Eden affected all people from Adam and Eve, forward. Each of us are under the influence of sin because of Adam and Eve's original transgression. People now had the "nature of sin"; it was deposited in their DNA. (See "Sin Nature" in Definitions) In order for God to show people what was expected of them so that they could enjoy eternal life, He handed down "the Law", to Jews who were living at that time but also sent prophets to tell of a time when man would no longer be under the Law because a Savior would come. This Savior would erase their sin "as far as the east is from the west and they would be remembered no more". THIS is God's Grace. God's Grace was to send Jesus to take upon Himself ALL sin of man, past, present and future. The new covenant (New Testament) was made so that everyone, not only the Jews, could receive God's grace. This is one reason God chose Paul – he was Greek, educated, and was sent to minister to the Greeks of those days.

To receive this Grace from God, we must have Faith in the Power of Jesus' Sacrifice.

There is nothing required from God except simple Faith in Jesus' Sacrifice on the Cross. It is ONLY by and through the finished work of Christ on the Cross that we can claim the promises, the Grace and the Power Jesus died for us to have.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest any one should boast." Ephesians 2:8,9

Romans 8:9 "**that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.**"

God did not want people bragging that they did this or that to be saved; their works in the flesh did them no good. We can't buy it, earn it, barter for it or win it – we can only receive it by Grace. His GRACE is what saves us, and the Object of our Faith is the finished work of Jesus on the Cross. Our daily recognition of Jesus' work on the Cross and our submission to God's absolute authority is how our Faith is manifested.

Once you have accepted Jesus as your Savior, your sins have been forgiven – every sin you’ve ever done or ever will do, has been atoned for on the cross through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. To God, ALL sin was punishable by death. It didn’t matter what sin, the punishment was death. (Eternal death, meaning, banishment from the Kingdom of Heaven and eternal separation from God. Think about that – God wanted NO SIN; zero, nada, zip!) The punishment that would have been meted out by God for our sin was covered (atoned for) by Jesus’ sacrifice. After you repent, you can be assured that the punishment for your sins was taken by Jesus on the Cross. This does not mean there won’t be consequences for your actions in the natural, you may well have to suffer some consequence as a result of your sin. This is not punishment from God, however. Consequences are meant to teach – we learn by our mistakes – but God’s punishment of eternal death was absorbed for us on the Cross at Calvary. As an example: If you rob a bank and are found guilty, you’re going to jail and for particularly heinous crimes the possibility of the death penalty exists in some states. If you repent of that sin and are truly sorry (remember, God can read the heart of the individual) the eternal separation that would have happened, is erased by Jesus’ sacrifice. You’ll still go to jail. You might still face the death penalty. But your eternal life is saved **if** your repentance is genuine.

The Holy Spirit comes upon believers to intercede for us in prayer and to guide us in all we do – to show us what we should do. If we sin again, we repent and thank God for the Sacrifice of his Son on the Cross. We have to work toward a life free from sin, but if we do something wrong, we repent and thank Him that His Grace is upon us. This is why we plead the Blood of Jesus – His Blood is the Sacrifice that brought forth the Grace of God. **Jesus IS the Lamb of God.** If you do not fully accept the power of the Blood of Jesus, you are, in effect, saying that His Blood isn’t powerful enough to cleanse you, to forgive you, to erase your sin. And it IS – so when you sin, simply repent and thank God for the Sacrifice of His Son. Thank Jesus for His Blood. Resolve to do better. He WILL forgive you. It is everything you need.

It is SO important to understand living under Grace. Study this if you study nothing else. Get this down on the inside of you. There are many, many teachings available on Grace – get educated on it and KNOW who you are in Christ.

I think it's necessary to point out that, because God is able to read the heart of the individual, He knows when we are genuinely repentant and when we're not. As believers, if we've done something for which we should repent, the Holy Spirit could very well nuzzle at you until you respond in Faith and properly repent.

There are many Christians who misunderstand the gift of Jesus' Sacrifice on the Cross. Jesus did not die on that Cross so we can continue to live any way we want because our sins are all forgiven. As a Christian, you are expected to turn from your sin once you repent, you're not to keep doing it over and over and assume that you'll be forgiven. Christians still sin, and we still have to repent and accept Jesus' gift of grace.

Christians struggle with sin just like everyone else. The difference is, the true Christian will ask forgiveness and lean on the Power of God to change them, to renew them, to help them do what might seem to others like an impossible thing – to give up that which has a hold on their life in the form of sin. This is another example of the meaning of this verse: "Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." Luke 9:23

It is a DAILY struggle. Each day, the Christian prays for guidance, deliverance and help from God to maintain their avoidance of the thing they struggle so hard to overcome (at least, they SHOULD BE praying daily). Some people find they have to pray hourly. Sometimes we fail. God understands this and does not expect perfection. He does, however, expect effort.

That's one of the deeper meanings in the Lord's Prayer: "give me THIS DAY my daily bread"; it's to be a daily prayer, not something one says occasionally or by rote memorization. It's your daily food for your body, but it is also your daily SPIRITUAL bread. It's a great way to begin your daily prayers, followed by giving thanks to God for all He has done for you. Review the Aaronic Prayer on page 127 and realize what God wants and promises for you. Even if you don't yet feel you have been delivered from the bondage of your sin, be sure to thank God for working on it in you.

"But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." James 1:4

Ah, Patience. Some of us cannot claim it as our strong suit, but the Holy Spirit is there to teach us, guide us and help us learn to be patient amidst the confusion and noise.



UNDERSTAND SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY.

We, as believers, are under the Spiritual Authority of God. Spiritual Authority is a gift from God – given to us to COMMAND demons be cast out. Authority is just that – God’s authority given to us so that WE can do these things IN JESUS’ NAME. Always remember that whatever power God gives us through the Holy Spirit is given because of the Sacrifice Jesus made on the Cross. (Prov. 18:21 – “Death and Life are in the power of the tongue and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof” – meaning, watch what you SAY out loud, because you will live with the consequences.)

There is a good parable in the Bible that explains this Authority. The parable about the Roman Centurion – Luke 7:1-10 – when the Centurion tells Jesus that there’s no need for Him to come to the Centurion’s home to heal the servant, just a word from Him will do. The Centurion knew that Jesus was under God’s Authority, and he understood being under Authority, because his entire job was predicated on the fact that he worked for the Roman Empire. As a representative of the Roman Empire, this guy could say “come” and “go” to those under his supervision and they’d better do it or else the entire power of the Roman Empire would come crashing down on their disobedient heads. Creflo Dollar explained it something like this: ‘Just as a police officer can stand in the street and say “Stop”, and the cars will stop – the officer does not command the cars to stop because of his own authority, it’s the badge and uniform he wears that carries the authority of the police department and the City. So it is when we are under God’s authority – it is by HIS Authority we can command demons be cast out, not our authority.’ When we speak the scriptures out loud, **we are exercising our Faith in the Authority of God through Jesus’ name.**

There are verses you can choose from, but one that I say often is, 2 Corinthians 9:8

“And God is able to make **all** grace abound toward me, that I, **always** having **all** sufficiency in **all** things, have an abundance for every good work.”

ALL grace toward me so that I have **ALL** sufficiency in **ALL** things.”

Wow! What more could you want?!

Well, there is one more thing...

Eternity.

Jesus' sacrifice on the cross atoned for the sin of all mankind SO THAT we will be allowed to enter heaven and have life eternal with God the Father.

Because God loves mankind so much, He wanted to make sure there was a way for all of us to be invited in – invited to join Him in Heaven forever and ever. This is why He sent His son, Jesus, to die for our sin on the Cross. Jesus made it possible for our spirit to live forever in a glorified body in heaven.

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." Philippians 3:20,21

We are invited to join Him. He will never force anyone to believe, each person must make that decision on their own and of their own free will. If you choose to make Jesus your Lord and Savior, God will make you welcome in heaven when it comes your time to leave this earthly place. It's been said that we'll stay until God is finished with us. Some of us may never know what we were meant to do on earth; rest assured, each person has their divine assignment. God will reveal it to you, if you ask Him. Much has been written about death and dying and where we go when we die – the Bible is clear, when you die, you go directly to heaven if you have been saved. If you've made Jesus your Lord and King, you will be with Him in heaven in the instant of your death. The Apostle Paul wrote, "to be absent from the body" is to be "present with the Lord" in 2 Corinthians 5:8. John 6:47 says, "He who believes in me has everlasting life." In Luke 23:43, Jesus told the thief who was hanging on the cross next to him, "Today you will be with me in Paradise."

It's safe to say, we will be with Jesus the moment we die. (See the notes on Sheol and Hades on p.114 after The Apostles' Creed.)

The opposite is, those who are NOT saved will be in hell at the moment of their death.

In 2 Peter 2:9 the Bible explains that "the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the Day of Judgment." The Day of Judgment is when every person whether or not they are saved by the Grace of God will stand before Jesus to give an account of his or her life. Punishment or reward will be the result on that day for each person. Everlasting torment, or paradise. You choose – God does not choose this for you. The Great White Throne Judgment is where unbelievers will be sentenced; the Judgment Seat of Christ is where believers will be rewarded. God has promised a New Earth, where Jesus will reign from Jerusalem for a thousand years. His headquarters will be transferred to the New Earth for the Millennial Reign. He surely doesn't want to deal with the evil influences that are present in our society today. Unrepentant people who rejected Jesus Christ will be in hell.

Evil has already been defeated by Jesus' Sacrifice on the Cross. We are called to stand strong for Christ and wait for the Day of the Lord to come when believers who have already died will join believers who are still alive in this world, in heaven. Evil people and those who choose not to believe will be in hell, awaiting their final punishment to be cast into the Lake of Fire for all eternity.

We are invited to join Him. God will not force anyone to come to Him, you MUST come to Him of your own free will. God gave mankind free will to choose – the first man and the first woman, Adam and Eve, were given free will to obey or not obey God. He told them, eat everything you see, EXCEPT the fruit of that one tree. They disobeyed, through their free will, and original sin was conceived for all mankind. We still have the free will to decide. As I write this, I pray you will answer God's invitation.

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." 2Cor5:20

Read through 2 Peter 2:1-22 to get a sense of the depravity and sin from which Jesus came to save us. Here, Peter explains the sins and deceptions of false teachers – as you read it, you might be reminded of movies, politicians, headlines in the news – it is all around us, every day. Don't allow these depravities to determine YOUR eternal home.

It's been said that there are no coincidences in a Christian's life, only incidents. Some people who are reading this have been the subject of prayers from faithful Christians who went before you and prayed for your Salvation. Because these faithful Christians loved you enough to pray for you, you were supernaturally directed here, for such a time as this: maybe it was your mother or father or grandmother or the couple who lived down the street; perhaps a former co-worker, a friend or a relative. It might have been someone you never even met; someone who saw you on the street and felt a stirring in their spirit to pray for you out of love for their fellow man. Whoever it was, someone prayed for you. Someone wanted you to know Jesus and the peace only He can provide.

Answer the call. Go to page 113 and read the Sinner's Prayer examples, and then search your heart. Allow God to begin His perfect work in you. Repent today, and ask Jesus to cleanse you with His blood. **He will.**



STUDY THE WORD

There is nothing more powerful in all the world than the Word of God and you must study it and learn. Use your computer, watch tv preachers, go to a bible-teaching church. God wants us to study and meditate on it, and read the Word and hear the Word taught by others. Use every means available to get yourself immersed in the Word – radio, tv, cd's, iPod, computer, books, daily devotionals – everything you can get your hands on, because every time you hear the Word of God you are increasing your Faith.

"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." Romans 10:17

Start with the Gospels, Matthew Mark, Luke and John. I would begin by studying John and then go back and study all four. Then study Romans and Hebrews. This will get you to a place where you are in a good position to read the entire New Testament; after that, read the Old Testament. Online, I generally use www.gotquestions.org, www.blueletterbible.org or www.biblegateway.com, they have a passage look up and you can compare different versions of the Bible. If you Google a question, read a couple entries to make sure you didn't land on a weirdo or someone with an agenda. Be wary of teachings that don't line up with the Word of God. The KJV, NKJV and NASB are your barometers. If a teaching is different than what it says in these versions, don't rely on it.

Get a copy of David Jeremiah's book, "Understanding The 66 Books Of The Bible". You can order one directly from his website, www.davidjeremiah.org. In it, Dr. Jeremiah explains the root message of each Book and gives us a rudimentary understanding of what it means for us. This is an excellent resource and it prepares you to read the bible completely. David Jeremiah also produced an excellent study bible and other resources based on his many decades of study, writing and prayer, and he has a great voice, too.

I have an Expository Bible from Jimmy Swaggart that was given to me by a friend, and it's been very helpful, as are the online versions from F. B. Hole and Wesley's Explanatory Notes. Expository means, it exposes the real meaning of each verse. (I don't take anything I read once as the final word, I usually want to see it backed up in two or three places before I believe any one interpretation.) On tv, I typically listen to Dr. David Jeremiah and Pastor Mark Jeske from Time of Grace ministry as well others to whom I listen occasionally. (I TiVO their programs and watch them at night because that's when I'm most vulnerable and my mind seems to be busiest. The program content helps override whatever Satan is trying to slip into my mind.)

Make sure whomever you listen to is teaching the Word, not their own brand of understanding. Watch out for those who are teaching some sort of prosperity ministry, that you must sow a seed into their ministry to get God's blessing. This is false teaching and we must be wary of it. Most of the tv preachers have a side thing going of offering books and CD's but you don't HAVE to buy them – it's how they pay for the tv airtime and their staff to produce the programs. Their partners in ministry who send in donations are the ones paying so you can watch it on tv and so those in far places will receive the Gospel message. It's evangelism in the 21st century. Sometimes the books provide funds to the pastor or minister if they are not receiving compensation from the ministry and many rely on it alone as their salary.

If you're led to sow seeds into their ministry by all means do so, because it is only by donations from faithful souls that the programs remain on the air. But, don't get caught up in those folks who sell anointing oil, rosaries and a bunch of other stuff they tell you that you'll need so God will "bless" you. None of these are necessary to be blessed, they are only outward expressions of your faith to use oils or a Tallit or being baptized in water; you don't need anything except your faith in Jesus, which you can get through Jesus without sending for the oils from some guy on tv. While it is true that Jesus (and the Jews of His day) wore a Tallit, or prayer shawl, and that ancients used oils in their ceremonies, God won't "hear" your prayer any louder or more clearly if you use them.

He won't act faster or bless you more. If it somehow makes you feel closer to God to use these things, go ahead and get them, but in and of themselves, these items are not what bless you. It is ONLY Jesus' sacrifice that will bless you. Don't put your FAITH in these things, your Faith belongs in the Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. It might be better to use your money to bless someone who needs it rather than spend it on oils and other things. Ask God for guidance about this.

Faith in Jesus' Sacrifice for us on the Cross is the ONLY thing you need.

If I am ever fortunate enough to visit Jerusalem, I might buy a tallit there, but it would be as a souvenir, not a means to get closer to God. I am interested in the tallit as something God told His followers to use in Numbers and because there is much ancient wisdom associated with it. I don't believe it has any "power" of it's own. (Read my notes on the tallit on page 116.) Get a children's bible and read that - do all these things to learn, but LEARN the WORD. The Word is the armor of God. Ephesians 6:11-17. The WORD is where the POWER is! "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1

There will always be people who disparage the ministries of others and call them false teachers simply because they don't agree. While I have no absolute way of knowing who is a false teacher and who isn't, I can discern some of them by the things they say and the way in which they teach. If the focus is not on Jesus, stay away. If the ministry speaks of a one-world religion, stay away. If the focus is on your feelings, stay away. If someone is teaching from an interpretive Bible, stay away. If someone instructs you to sow a seed into their ministry *so that you will be blessed*, stay away. If someone is slamming other ministries in order to make themselves look better, stay away. If someone's ministry is all about you and what you can get from God – this is unbiblical, because God wants us to seek FIRST His Kingdom; ministering to God first is our duty, and then to each other. In other words, you could be out doing all sorts of "religious" activities for the church, the small groups, the nursery, etc. but are you doing it for the Lord or to look good before others? If you do these things in order that other people praise you and tell you how wonderful you are, this is not ministering to the Lord's purpose.

It's ego; a flesh-based act that is not God's intent for us. Everything we do should be to His glory; we are able to do these things because He gives us the strength, the stamina, the will to do them for His church.

That doesn't mean you shouldn't sign up to help, but you must search your heart to see if your reasons for signing up are motivated by ego or by the sincere desire to serve the Lord. Again, this is when we seek the input of the Holy Spirit – ask God to let you know if this or that activity is something He wants you to do. God certainly doesn't want you to be so busy “serving” others that you neglect your own family. Make sure you are led by the Holy Spirit when you give of your time, money and talents. God will let you know what you should do, and you can rest in the assurance that what you accomplish WITH God will be much more effective than that which you attempt without Him.

There has been a lot of commentary about the mega-churches and how they can't possibly be serving God. I honestly don't know the definitive answer, but I will say this: The mega churches, the tv pastors, people who write books etc, should all be focused on the Cross. Sometimes an individual message might not be focused there, but the overall ministry should be focused on Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross and the resulting victory over the sin nature of man. If anyone's ministry leads you to believe anything other than the indescribable gift of Jesus' sacrifice, then it is not biblical. I'm not going to spend time here commenting on individual ministries; each person must make their own choices who they listen to and how they hear the Word of God. But know this: the ONLY thing that is important is what Jesus did on the Cross. God's mercy and grace was to allow Jesus to be sacrificed FOR EACH OF US, having victory over that sin nature and atoning for every sin we could ever commit. This is the amazing Gospel message. Pastors everywhere should focus on it, preach it, re-tell it over and over and over and make sure their congregations hear it and believe it, because any other feel good ministry is simply tickling the ears. **The Cross and what Jesus accomplished there is the only prism through which any Christian message should be heard.**

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths."
2 Timothy 4:3-4

This verse speaks about the people in the church who aren't reading and studying the Word of God, they are listening to certain pastors who promote a philosophy rather than the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These pastors are promoting a feel-good message that promises financial blessing or life path that is not rooted in the Word of God. I would encourage everyone to research these people carefully as much of this type of teaching is unbiblical and doesn't teach you what you really need to know.

I can't know what God put in someone else's heart, so it's not up to me to judge people, I can only use my discernment for myself as directed by the Holy Spirit. Every person reading this should do the same. **Our focus should always be on the finished work of Jesus on the cross, and whatever we believe should be supported by the Word of God.** Whatever you hear from any source, whether it's a church or a tv preacher or a book or a CD, should always begin and focus on the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. That's your litmus test. It simply isn't enough to listen to one pastor for an hour a week, you really need to study and listen to lots of different pastors speak so you get a full and complete dose of the gospel message, and then continue your study on your own and use various resource materials to supplement your study.

If you have a need or while you study if you don't have a verse on the tip of your tongue, go to your computer and put some pertinent words into the search bar that correspond to your question or need, and then type "KJV" and bible verses from the King James version will pop up that will help you, and those sites often include commentaries.

Strong's Concordance can be very helpful and is available online and on Kindle now – I access several online versions including FB Hole and Matthew Henry. I also have lots of bibles, two that I write in and the others I'm trying to keep clean for reading. I like the bible crayons that allow you to highlight certain text and don't bleed through onto the next page or tear the pages but I also use ballpoint pens and write things in every margin available. I underline, circle, put stars around things and use sticky tabs – do whatever you need to do to study and remember the Word so you can call it forth from memory when you need it.

I also like the maps. It's hard to know at first what country or area coincides with which country today, so it's good to reference the maps while you read the Bible. The maps help put into perspective how certain groups of people came to power and helps in our understanding of their role in history.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you." Matthew 6:33

Seek first the kingdom through the Word of God.

We are instructed by the bible to belong to a church; a group of people who are like-minded and whose leader (pastor) teaches the Word of God. It's not as easy as you might think to find a bible-teaching church. Many churches today have veered off into works and other areas and have neglected to teach their members the Word of God. I believe that pastors should be continually teaching the Word – they shouldn't assume that everyone in the church knows this or that, or that everyone has a foundational belief system already in place. Many, many people WANT to come to church but they simply are not being fed the Word of God in churches. People need to know how to apply scripture to their every day life. The book of Revelation warns about the lukewarm church – Revelation 3:14-22. Pastors everywhere should start at square one RIGHT NOW and teach people what they need to know. Only then can the body of Christ branch out and minister to others.

Understand the Crucifixion and what it means for us. Start with the Gospel of John and read it through, it's the best place to begin. Then, read all the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Why did God send Jesus to die for us? The answer is elegantly simple – God cannot lie or go back on His word. When God created Adam and Eve, He made for them a paradise to live in which has been likened to Heaven itself, and gave them everything except permission to eat of the tree of knowledge. This was a test of their faithfulness. They failed the test, so they were cast out of the Garden of Eden and made to work with their hands for their survival. God had a Plan B which He would require of them since they proved themselves unable to be faithful with ALL His gifts. Eve was tempted by Satan and succumbed to his guile. Adam was weak and succumbed to Eve when she urged him to eat. This was the "original sin" which resulted in all of us having the sin nature. **Jesus' sacrifice assured us victory over the sin nature so it would no longer have dominion over us, and atoned for each individual sin we would ever commit, provided we repent of it and continually ask God's forgiveness for our sins. We must still repent, but our forgiveness is assured.** Satan was once God's most beautiful angel, but pride in his own beauty caused him to want to BE God, or equal to God. God cast him out of heaven, and he's been trying to gather followers ever since – those who would worship him – and he tries mightily to instill fear and keep us from learning about God. It is Satan who "rules" the earth.

Beginning in Genesis, God had some faithful followers, but most were following their own way and when God realized that fallen angels, "Nephilim", had mated with the females of the earth, He was most displeased because this created a race of disgraced giants that crossed the "spirit-human" line God had drawn – Hebrew interpretations reveal Nephilim as "evil". Their sole purpose was to dilute the pure bloodline from which Jesus would be born, to try and circumvent the birth of Christ. A side note: there are many interpretations of what Nephilim are and how they became, but it's not a "doctrinal" discussion. It doesn't – or shouldn't – affect your basic beliefs.

In addition to the Nephilim, sin was rampant among the people. They worshipped idols and were completely lawless. It wasn't at all what God had in mind for the human race so God looked and found only Noah, who had been completely faithful and whose bloodline was pure (not tainted as were the Nephilim) so He commanded Noah to build the ark, gather the animals and wait out the coming flood.

The Ark is a type or foretelling of Jesus; believers are on the Ark! The flood was supposed to wipe out everyone but the Nephilim reappear later in the Bible, so I'm not completely clear on how that happened; they might have repeated their sin. Chuck Missler does a teaching about "The Return of the Nephilim", a modern-day commentary citing demonic forces and UFO's – great minds have delved into this and determined that there can be no explanation except that UFO's and things of that nature are anything but demonic. These people have to have the Grace and Protection of God upon them in order to even study these things, because opening yourself up to astrology, UFO's, numerology, séances, all that sort of thing is demonic and invites demons into your life, sometimes without you even knowing it. That's why God told people not to mess with that sort of thing.

Occasionally I listen to Gary Stearman on tv, www.prophecyinthenews.com: Stearman invites guest writers and speakers to his program and covers a multitude of subjects. It's a fascinating program. While no true Christian who has been saved can be possessed by demons because of Jesus' victory on the cross, it is possible to be oppressed by Satanic forces. Don't mess with the dark side, it's not good for you, but it's important to understand what's going on in the world and be prepared to help others understand how important it is that they be under God's divine protection. I was told a long time ago that astrology is an affront to God and I stopped following my horoscope because of that. I didn't know why at that time, but now I know it's not only an affront to God but also because it allows demons to participate in my life. The signs of the zodiac were used by Nimrod in Babylon for pagan worship. I have no use for them. See my notes on the Blood Moons on page 123.

So Noah waits out the flood, and God promised that he would never again destroy the earth with a flood. To make this promise clear, he created a rainbow as a covenant or promise to all people that the earth would not again be destroyed by flood. While watching one of Chuck Missler's programs I learned that people didn't know what "rain" was in those days. People lived to be 900 years old, and it is believed that there was some sort of protective layer over the earth that kept enough moisture in the atmosphere so it never rained and man's physical self didn't go downhill fast like it does today. Of course, they didn't have chemicals in their food and sugar habits either, but I digress. The rainbow was something new that had never been seen before. The sun shining through droplets of water in the atmosphere was not an earthly occurrence until after the flood of Noah.

God raised up Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and Moses and Joshua and Elijah and Solomon and David – faithful servants to whom He was faithful in return. None of them were perfect; their struggles are well documented in the Bible. Read 1 and 2 Kings to learn how David struggled, and see how Solomon wrestled with Life's questions in Ecclesiastes. Moses brought the slaves out of Egypt and God was with Him and performed many miracles along the way such as parting the red sea, causing manna to fall from heaven to feed the multitudes, etc. Moses was selected for this job by God and he tried mightily to be faithful, but even Moses had a hard time now and then. Unfortunately, it was only a few weeks' journey to Israel from Egypt, and the thousands of people for whom Moses was responsible, were complainers and whiners about their comfort along the way. While Moses was up the mountain receiving the commandments, the people rebelled and sinned against God. Moses was so angry he smashed the stone tablets that God had written. It's not like there was a carbon copy back then, Moses had to go back up the mountain and beg God for another set.

Had the people simply been grateful that God was giving them over into the “land of milk and honey”, they would have made it within a month. Instead, because they griped and complained; rebelled against God and fashioned a golden calf as an idol, God let them wander until the entire first generation who was delivered out of Egypt had died off and they learned their lesson – **which took 40 years**. This is symbolic of how long it takes US to get from here to there, because we don’t trust God, we don’t thank Him and we don’t believe Him.

Moses went to the mountain to receive the Commandments from God. This was God’s way of explaining what He wanted us to do and how to live; a manual of sorts, to help man until the Savior would come. The LAW was given to God’s people to instruct them in the way they should go, but was always intended to help people understand that they needed redemption and prepare them for their Savior. Throughout the Bible, prophets wrote about the coming of the Christ. Included in the Law were the Ten Commandments. These were not intended to be everything God expects of us, but if we understand and follow them, our lives and the lives of those around us will be good and pleasing to God. They were meant for our own good, not as a way to take any freedoms from us, but to GIVE us a good life. 10 measly sentences, and we have trouble doing it. The Commandments were not the entirety of The Law, they were simply a foundational element of it.

I should also mention here that God wants faithful servants to bless with important tasks in heaven – He doesn’t want heaven run by people who aren’t faithful to His word, so the only way to have extra blessing in heaven is to be faithful to God on earth. The Tabernacle described in Exodus 26, is a blueprint that shows us how heaven will be laid out for believers. Many bibles include drawings of the Tabernacle and its layout. You can also Google it. Hebrews 8:5 and Revelation 21:1-3 back up this description.

Romans 12:1-2 describes how we should live after we are saved:

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

“...present your bodies a living sacrifice”

This simply means, your earthly self. Present yourself a sacrifice to the Lord by learning to behave more like Jesus, who lived His life through love.

Just as there are three levels in the Tabernacle, there are three levels in heaven:

“...that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

His GOOD will is Salvation.

His ACCEPTABLE will is Salvation and some eternal rewards.

His PERFECT will is Salvation and many eternal rewards.

The Judgment Seat of Christ refers to the day in Heaven when believers will answer to God for what we did with His grace here on earth. Did we pray for others' salvation and try to bring them to salvation? Did we share the Gospel, which is the story of Jesus' death on the cross? Did we speak up about evil? Did we use our talents and the gifts from God wisely and to help others? Are we good stewards of the gifts He has given us? Jesus gave us a new commandment in John 13:34-35:

“A new commandment I give unto you: that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples: if ye have love one for another.”

Again, all these things are a process; nobody knows how to do anything perfectly the first time they try. But through God's Grace and our Faith in Jesus' Sacrifice on the Cross, we get better and better and that's His goal. This is ministering to the Lord's purpose, not our own.

People who believe they can live however they please and wait until the moment before death to repent are playing Russian roulette with their eternity. The wailing and gnashing of teeth in heaven will be from those in the outer court that, while saved, will realize what they've missed by living a life of disobedience. Our goal is not only salvation, it is living within His perfect will – the sanctification process.

The Mosaic Law (Laws of Moses) represents the principles of works-based righteousness. In other words, IF I DO THIS, God will bless me. The LAW are the "rules" that are set forth in the Jewish Torah, or the first five books of the Bible. Another interesting fact is, the actual translation from the original Hebrew was not "law" but "teaching". It is still called the "law", but it sort of changes the tone when we realize God meant it to teach.

Romans 3:22 – "all have fallen short". There are 613 mitzvot or laws (248 do's, and 365 don'ts) found in the Torah that ancient Jews believed had to be kept in order to be "perfect" and become righteous under God. Jesus kept them all. There is no way to be perfect and keep all the laws; no one except Jesus has ever done it, no one else ever will, God intended it to be that way – He deliberately made The Law unattainable so people would understand their need for a Savior. Only "man" could redeem man. (Again, makes more sense when viewed in light of the word, "teaching") In Romans 3:28 – Paul wrote that the "justified" will live by faith. Justified means, "declared or made righteous in the sight of God" . We are immediately justified (made righteous in the eyes of God) when we receive Jesus into our hearts as our Savior. Then we work toward being sanctified, or made pure. Obviously, no mere man will ever be completely "pure", but God wants us to engage in the process because of how much better our own life will be when we follow His principles, and because of how much more we will do for Him and for others as we go through the sanctification process.

Jesus' crucifixion was never in question. He knew he would be crucified and He told His disciples that He would be leaving soon. Jesus **CHOSE** crucifixion, he wasn't murdered. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." John 10:18

The crucifixion is important to understand, but it is not as important as what was accomplished by Jesus when he died on that cross. He sacrificed Himself, for US.

Our call is to believe in Jesus, to believe what He did for us, and by extension, we will WANT to live rightly, because of how much we love Him for what He did for US. "We love Him because He first loved us." 1John 4:19

God's promises are that He will bless all who have become righteous. **We have already become righteous in the eyes of God through the sacrifice Jesus made on the Cross.** What we have to do is believe Jesus IS the son of God; be sorry for our sins; have faith in Jesus that He died for us; that He took ALL our sin upon Himself FOR us, and that HIS death redeemed US for eternity. **Lots of people who call themselves "Christians" are not following God's word or His principles.**

That's a fact. But don't let that deter you and make you think that ALL Christians are hypocrites. That kind of sweeping generalization is dangerous and unfair to those who ARE trying to be good and kind and follow the teachings of Jesus. 2Peter has much to say about false teachers and those who follow them; I think the same could be said of lazy Christians who blacken the good name of those who are genuinely trying to serve the Lord.

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths." 2 Timothy 4:3-4 What if we fail and we make mistakes? We confess our sin to God, repent and thank Him for the gift of Jesus who died for our sin. God already knows all the sin you've ever committed and all you'll ever do – repent; accept forgiveness and move on, striving to be better.



Always, Pray. When you pray, begin by thanking God for blessing you. This is not difficult, even though it may seem right now like you're one of those people in the wilderness of Egypt. Just talk to Him. Thank God for things He has done for you in the past. Thank Him that you have a roof over your head, a comfortable bed, clean water... hot water!... look around you, there is always something to be thankful to God for because ALL things come from Him. Look out your window and see the grass and hear the birds; these peaceful scenes and sounds come from Him. Then, pray for your family; ask God to put a hedge of protection around your loved ones when they come in and when they go out. Pray for your friends and people you know who need help. Remember to pray for others as well as yourself. You don't need to do this every single time you pray, but it's important to KEEP people in your prayers, thanking God always for his provision and protection. Pray specifically for your loved ones, not just generally.

I heard a sermon from Dr. David Jeremiah once and he said someone figured it out that if you have more than just a couple of dollars in the bank or change in a dish somewhere, you are richer than most of the world. Imagine that, for a moment. (There are passages in the Psalms that say, "Selah" – many theologians believe this word means, stop and think about that for a minute!) Most of the U.S. has enough to eat and we feed our pets better than most people in the rest of the world eat. Let's thank God for what we have.

"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; **therefore choose life**, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days" (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)



Jews say "Shalom" – this word is a blessing that means "peace". There is a state of being that God wants for us, His perfect Shalom. It means, "nothing missing, nothing broken." God wants us to live without lack in any area. The Apostle Paul opened letters he wrote with variations of the words, "Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Grace is the beginning of all gifts, and Peace is the end. God is mentioned first because He is the Source of all gifts, and Jesus is mentioned because it is only through Faith in Him and His Sacrifice that those gifts can be received.

"The silver is mine and the gold is mine," sayeth the Lord of Hosts. Haggai 2:8

We need to learn to believe that ALL things belong to God and we are just stewards of it – whatever we do, we do because of the gifts God has given us – talents, creativity, strong backs are all gifts from God. This is SO important, as everything else hinges upon this knowledge.

"for the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness." 1Corinthians 10:26

"As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor – this is the gift of God." Ecclesiastes 5:19

"And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant, which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day." Deuteronomy 8:18

God does not want us to live in lack, He provided a way for us to ask for His help. He DOES expect us to work, He's not going to sprout a money tree in our backyard, but by the BLOOD we can ask Him to help prosper us. If we follow the Commandments, treat each other by the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) love one another, as Jesus commanded in John 13:34-35, give generously and ask God for guidance, we can EXPECT His blessing on us through the Grace of Jesus' gift of His Blood on the Cross. Be sure to ASK Him what He wants you to do with your money gifts and offerings.

I like the premise that we should give where we are being fed (the Word). There are some organizations that we might feel like giving to that simply are not anointed places to give – let God lead you where to give your money and He will reward you for your faithfulness. Don't dismiss the importance of giving, but make sure GOD decides to whom you give, not you.

It is only by our faithfulness that God can bless those in His Kingdom – so you must ask Him where He wants you to sow. Someone else might be led to sow where you think you should, but God wants YOU to sow elsewhere. Be sure to ask Him. All good things come from God so we should not steal from him the firstfruits of our abundance. Give God His share first, and do it because you are grateful for what He did for you.

Remember, God's law specified that sin MUST be covered by blood. Jesus' blood was SO holy that it wiped out ALL sin for ALL mankind. No longer would man need to cover his sin with animal blood. This is what is meant by "we are saved by Grace". God saved us so we would belong to Him by sending His Son Jesus to die on the cross – to atone for our sin in our place. We aren't saved by our good works, by our wonderful attitude, by how much money we give, it is all because of Jesus' Sacrifice – His gift to mankind. Our gifts to Him are obedience in giving, obedience to the Word, etc. We do it because we are thankful for what He has done for us.

" We love Him because He first loved us. " 1John 4:19

God never asks us to do anything he hasn't already equipped us to do. That doesn't mean we already know how to do it, it means that once we start doing what God wants us to do He will make it possible for us to do it, by the empowerment of His Grace.

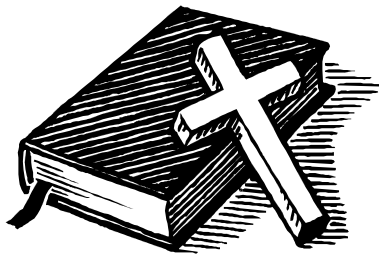
Philippians 1: 3,6: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have, for He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you,"" Hebrews 13:5

"God is not a respecter of persons" Acts 10:35 (or, God shows no partiality toward people – which means, everything He will do for one, He will do for all who believe.)

This is really important, because most of us think "well yeah, God *could*... but I doubt He'd do it for *me*". **This is the entire gospel message in a nutshell: Jesus died on the Cross so that "I" could share in His Resurrection.** "I" meaning, you, me, all of us. It is by His Sacrifice we are saved from sin and by His Blood we can have victory. This is why we must exercise our Faith and learn the Word – strengthen your Faith so that when hardships come (and they will), you have ammo. There is a popular gospel song written by Stuart Hamblen titled, "It's No Secret What God Can Do" which proclaims, "what He's done for others, He'll do for you." Believe it. What He does for others, He will do for you. Your Faith in the Word is the only thing that stops Satan immediately from filling you with fear, and

Satan surely doesn't want you to know that.



SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Whether you believe this right now or not, we are in a spiritual war – a spiritual war, because man was made in God’s image and God is a spirit being. We are spirits also; we have a soul that governs our mind and emotions and a body that governs what we do, feel, see and touch in the earthly realm. We MUST understand that we are primarily spirits, just like God is – we were made IN HIS IMAGE. Our society has degraded severely because of Satan’s influence in the world. Many people believe we are living in the end times and that’s why negativity and sin have accelerated so quickly in the last few years as Satan battles for control. There is a movement afoot to bring as many people as possible into the Kingdom of God before He returns, and this movement is taking on an urgency in the church (people who believe) of God that people have not seen before. **God wants to save as many souls as possible!!**

It is important to watch what you SAY out loud – speak only blessings and positive things over your situation and your life and the lives of those around you – say nothing negative or defeating, because when you do that, you allow Satan in a little. Once he gets in by way of FEAR, he will try to place strongholds over your mind to deceive you – beliefs or habits that are not in line with the Word of God and confuse you. Your good seeds of faith are uprooted by negative words. **This is SO hard.**

It’s really tough to be positive all the time and speak only positive things when your situation is so grossly negative. It’s better to replace those thoughts with something from scripture, such as “O give thanks to the Lord for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever”. Psalm 107:1

The answer to the problem is to be aware of the negative thoughts and stop yourself before you speak out loud. Speak out loud ONLY the positive. Joyce Meyer's book, The Battlefield of the Mind is a wonderful resource. Read it over and over until you "get" it, because our minds ARE the battlefield where Satan threatens us. Put it on your Kindle, carry your copy around in your pocket or purse because you'll want to refer to it over and over. Understand, Joyce uses interpretive bibles for some of her scripture references, so it's a good idea to compare verses to the NASB or KJV so you can be sure you understand the true meaning of any verse you decide to repeat over and over.

An example of this is, saying constantly, "I don't know what else to do". Saying those words belittles your trust in God, which is exactly what Satan wants. I'm working on saying instead, "I trust you, God, to show me the way. I *know* You will never leave me nor forsake me, I *know* You have a plan for my welfare and not for calamity, and I *know* you are able to make all Grace abound toward me so that I, always having all sufficiency in all things, have an abundance for every good work!" I'm getting better at recognizing the negatives before I speak them. The answer to wondering what else "we" should be doing: we should be seeking God.

Jesus said, "The thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it abundantly." John 10:10

Spiritual Warfare is the battle for who or what will influence the decision making process in your life. Decisions made through God's word will lead you to prosper; decisions we make based on our emotions or feelings are probably not best for us. Whatever things play on our emotions or on our guilt or on our urges to blow up in anger, overeat, overspend, disobey or whatever, that's our emotional Kryptonite. Satan uses it every chance he gets. That's why Paul wrote, "put on the full armor of God" (the armor of the Word) in Ephesians 6, so that when you are faced with a decision or we find ourselves fearful and under attack, we'll have the Word to use as a shield or a basis to decide.

It's not enough to believe that you're a good person and that your decisions would be best because you wouldn't knowingly decide something that would intentionally hurt someone else. Satan is actively trying to influence us *in our minds* and God knows this, so He gave us weapons to resist it. Many believe that some very dark powers are at work in the world today that were not present even seven years ago. These dark influences are demonic and we absolutely NEED the power of God to resist it. We must learn to use the Word against all that comes against us, because this IS a spiritual battle for our lives.

We are primarily **spirits**, made in God's own image. Our spirit is where God speaks to us and where He dwells within us. We have a **soul**, which is responsible for our mind, emotion and feelings. We live in a **body**, the outer shell that everyone can see. Our goal is to cause our soul – that which is responsible for our mind, emotion and feelings – to get in line with our spirit, where God dwells within us. It is our spirit that says, I want to do what's right for God; it is our soul that says, but I don't feel like it. In order for our soul to line up with our spirit, we have to study the Word of God and renew our minds with His word, to MAKE our soul yield to God. We have to actively work on this, it doesn't happen by itself. We HAVE to learn how to corral our feelings and make them yield to our Spirit. The spiritual controls the physical, you have to choose which side of the spiritual you want to be on – do you want to be on Team God or Team Satan?

So many people are such slaves to their emotions and feelings that they can't understand this is what is holding them back from walking in the spirit. You must consciously cause your soul to be in agreement with your spirit by seeking God through His word and actively yielding to Him. In order to yield, you must trust Him. To trust, you must have faith. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Romans 10:17 Give up the wheel and allow God to direct your life.

This is what the Bible means by, "the renewing of your mind" in 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.")

It is only through the Word that we can begin to cause our spirit, made in God's image, to influence our soul, which is responsible for our emotions, our feelings and our memories and start to believe God to "Call Those Things that BE NOT As Though They Were" Romans 4:17 - this means, what you are believing God for - the healing, the prosperity, the joy that we don't see right now in the natural world, but that God promises exists in the supernatural. **We ourselves do not call forth these blessings, only God can do that.** Believers do not call forth the blessings of God themselves, and make themselves into "little gods". This is entirely against scripture. Man also does not command angels to come, only God can command them. As believers, we can always believe God for supernatural healing or deliverance, but He alone is the Deliverer, Healer and the Ruler of the Kingdom of God. God is Sovereign and He alone decides what will and will not happen.

We have to get our minds right and then we can believe God to call these things forth by SAYING, "I'm sick, but by His stripes, I am healed." (Isaiah 53:5) Or "I'm in debt, but I believe God will prosper me because I can do ALL things **through Christ** who strengthens me".(Philippians 4:13).

Jesus died on the cross to atone for all man's sin, thereby making all the blessings of God available to us; this means, the healing of our body, the healing of our spirit and the healing of our every day life in the natural, whether it's our finances or addictions or other issues we're dealing with, God cares about them all, and Jesus died so we can be freed from these things that keep us in bondage.

JUDGING OTHERS

One of the most misrepresented verses in the Bible is

Luke 6:37 "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

In Luke 6:37, Jesus is talking about the Jews of that time who were quick to judge the actions of anyone who was not a wealthy Jew; their judgment and condemnation of other people was well known and resulted in their haughty estimation of themselves as above others who did not possess so many worldly possessions as they owned. Jesus was reprimanding them for this, cautioning them not to think more highly of themselves and forgive others if they didn't seem to measure up to the unusually high standards they set for themselves.

Today, people seem to think that this verse and others like it mean, we're not to judge the behavior of anyone else, and we're to accept whatever someone does as their "right" to do it. This is not biblical. We are most certainly meant to judge (or discern) what is good and evil so that we can stay away from evil and guard others from its influence.

We are not to judge (condemn) another person's heart or motive, for only God can do that. So many Christians today are reluctant to speak out against those things that are evil because the secular world will accuse them of judgment. Christians need to know that they are right in their judgment of WHAT is evil, and forgive those who DO evil. We aren't here to cast judgment upon people, but we are most definitely required to speak out against actions that are against the will of God. **No one can claim to be a born-again Christian if they passively accept evil from whatever source;** abortion, homosexuality, drugs – these things are the evil. Politicians who vote for the passage of laws to support these things are promoting evil. Christians who vote for those politicians are passively accepting the evil. The people who are involved in these evil things are the ones we must forgive, but we do not have to accept that the behavior should be legal or promoted.

God will deal with those who do not turn away from these evil things. Christians will be judged as to whether or not we spoke up on behalf of God. Remember, God loves everyone but He hates sinful conduct.

Psalms 97:10 "You who love the Lord, hate evil."

Deuteronomy 7:25-27 "Graven images were an abomination to God, therefore His people were to detest and utterly abhor them. What God hates, we should hate because we love Him and fear Him."

1John 2:15-17 "Do not love the world or the things of the world, including lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life. If we love these things, the love of the Father is not in us."

Romans 12:9 "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good."

Proverbs 6:16-19 "These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies and one who sows discord among brethren." (These are not the ONLY things God hates, there are other examples elsewhere in scripture.)

1Corinthians 6:9-11 "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

I believe God's words here are pretty clear on what is considered "sin". Jesus taught that we should "love one another". That's where the concept of loving the sinner but hating the sin came from; we can love the person, but still hate their sinful conduct. I don't know why the secular world insists upon calling Christians all sorts of ugly names when we stand up for our beliefs. This is not what Jesus was talking about when He said, "judge ye not". By calling Christians ugly names who stand up for God's principles, the secular world makes the argument personal.

We are simply trying to avoid the sin, not only for ourselves but for others in the world who may not yet know what is sinful and what isn't, and what the consequences are for their eternal soul. Christians are called by God to promote the Kingdom and share the too good to be true news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the Cross. If we don't, we will be held accountable to God.

If a Christian makes it personal against any one person they are doing wrong; God is the one who deals with the person. Our job as Christians is to point out, with love, the existence of the sin to others so that they can more fully understand what God is trying to teach us through His Holy Word. One way we do that is through our vote. Politicians should not be allowed to cave in to the pressure of evil and vote to approve those things which are contrary to God and they MUST be held to a higher standard. Giving in to evil is to promote evil, and Christians everywhere need to understand this. But even if we can't find that one perfect candidate that represents all of our beliefs as a Christian, we still have to vote for the one we believe God wants us to vote for – you can't ignore the democratic process just because you don't like the candidates. Vote for the one you think is best, and then pray that God work in their life and manifest His will.

SPEAKING IN TONGUES and GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Some believe there is a prayer language that we can speak to God with, called "tongues". I don't understand it because I can't reconcile the passages in Scripture that those who do believe in it use to justify use of the words that sound to me like babbling. On the day of Pentacost, there were many, many people present from other lands and God gave the disciples the gift of "tongues" (other languages in which they had not been trained) to speak to all the people. They were given actual languages! The disciples were men who were uneducated and not schooled in these languages, so God supernaturally deposited the gift of being able to speak different languages into them to forward His own purpose. The bible clearly states that if you can't interpret the language, it's of no use. I've been reading about speaking in tongues because there are some very well-respected bible teachers out there who claim this is evidence of the Holy Spirit. I want to respect what they say about this phenomenon but I admit I have trouble with it. Jews believe God's heavenly language is Hebrew. Isn't it possible that when we get to heaven, we will simply "know" how to communicate with Him?

It seems to me, if you're going to say something out loud in an arena where other people can hear it, people should be able to understand what you've said. God understands everyone; does He need a special language for you to pray to Him? I would think it's important that others present understand what you've said in public. There is scientific evidence that "unusual activity" occurs in a particular part of the brain when people are speaking in tongues. Scientists say it proves nothing. To me, it only proves that there is much we don't know; in our limited "humanness", we simply can't know unless God chooses to reveal. I believe everyone receives the Holy Spirit the moment they are saved (when they ask Jesus to come and live in their heart). Some people believe you have to be "baptized" with the Holy Spirit. Maybe God uses this phenomenon selectively for His own use. I really don't know the definitive answer.

F.B. Hole wrote, *"These gifts are to be exercised for the benefit of others, and the test the Apostle applies is that of general edification. If the exercise of the gift edifies it is of profit. If it does not edify it is to no profit."* This seems like a good way to look at it.

What I know is, if you earnestly seek the Lord, He will tell you what you need to know.

I believe that the entire Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God, so I don't take out passages that I don't understand or that I don't like and dismiss them. It is important to keep the context of scripture intact. Speaking in tongues remains a mystery to me, and by the number of internet entries on the subject, it's a mystery to a lot of people. Again, I'll be in the line that forms to ask God about speaking in tongues.

Even if we aren't able to speak in tongues, we can pray to God *through* the Holy Spirit, who will ask Him on our behalf. The Holy Spirit is an intercessor for us, given to us by God to go before Him and plead our case, and I believe the Holy Spirit is with us from the moment we ask God to come into our heart. The Holy Spirit is our heavenly lawyer, or guide, so to speak, who goes before God on our behalf. Sometimes we don't even know what to ask for, we're so depressed and downhearted. We ask the Holy Spirit to help, and what we ask, we ask in Jesus' name.

"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." Romans 8:26

Maybe we aren't gifted with the ability to speak in tongues (if such a gift exists), or maybe "tongues" really does mean having the ability to easily learn foreign languages. When my daughter and I went to Europe we had a tour guide who spoke 5 languages, that has to be a gift! Some people know what their gift is because it's obvious – they can sing, they can dance, they have the ability to draw, whatever. When your ability isn't clear to you, ask God to reveal what your gift is, and how to best use it for Him. Gifts of the Holy Spirit are detailed in these verses of Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 and there are many teachings on the subject available on the internet.



PEACE and PROMISES

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27

Jesus has given believers His Grace and His Peace – **you can't be in the peace of God until you accept Jesus.** So many people forget this part – and it's why they are confused and doubtful. Another important point to make is that Jesus the Son, was under the authority of God the Father. Jesus came to earth as a man, to show us that man can be under authority and remain sinless. This is the concept of submitting to God. We have to give our life over to God so that He can dwell within us and show us the way to go.

"Don't you know that you are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you?" 1Cor3:16.

Jesus, as a man, was subject to every type of temptation that all of us are subject to, yet he was able to resist them all through faith in the Father and use of the Word. Even for Jesus, some of it wasn't a cakewalk. Luke 22:44 shows us that Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before he was crucified, and his sweat became like great drops of blood because he prayed so earnestly. ("And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Jesus was obedient above all else, despite what his earthly self desired.) When you ask God for something, know that changes are not always immediate. This is a process and you will not get there by expecting God to rain silver dollars down on your head or an immediate healing of your illness. Something great could happen right away, but it's far more likely you will need to be patient and prove your faith, because God wants us to hunger for His word. "But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." James 1:4 This is the concept of shalom – nothing missing, nothing broken, which I explained on page 96 in the section about prayer. This is what God wants for us.

"And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of Justice; blessed are all they that wait for Him." Isaiah 30:18

It's hard to wait, hard to be patient, especially if you feel you've been believing for something for a long time and nothing has happened. But those times are when you should dig deeper to exercise your measure of faith and overcome your unbelief; study your Bible more; renew your mind (Philippians 4:6), and speak the Word out loud because these are the weapons in your arsenal (Ephesians 6:11,12). At times like these it's very likely you're coming against supernatural opposition – spirits, demons, Satan's minions, whatever you want to call them – are roaming around like a lion, waiting to devour (1Peter 5:8 "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks around like a lion seeking whom he may devour.") It is also likely the Holy Spirit is trying to guide you in a certain way or show you something that you have not yet understood. When you're feeling as if God is far away, that's when you pray MORE, not less. Read the Word, speak the Word and feel yourself draw nearer to God.

When we speak the Word through faith in Jesus' sacrifice, we are believing for healing, restoration, deliverance, etc. It is good to present these requests to God in prayer, thanking Him for all He has already given you. However, don't be fooled into thinking that ALL you have to do is speak a word of scripture over and over and whatever you want will automatically be provided. **God is sovereign.**

He makes the decisions about what is granted and what is not, and there are reasons you and I don't know that go into His decision making process. The one thing of which you can be absolutely sure is, **God wants what is best for you.** This may not be making you rich overnight or healing your infirmities, because we don't know what is that complete and perfect will of God. When we ask, we should always be mindful to say – and believe – "Thy will be done". If whatever we are believing for doesn't materialize, it's not because God is punishing us, it's because that's not what was in His great Plan for our life. If you're not seeing something come to pass, ask God to show you what He wants for you. He might be waiting just for this reason, to cause you to come to Him in prayer and ask what you can do for Him.

CONCLUSION

I don't claim to understand why things happen the way they do, but I can tell you this: I would never have started this journey if I hadn't reached a point of desperation. Do I know what God has in store for me? Nope. But I have committed to doing whatever it is He asks of me. It all happened so fast it makes me think God snatched me out of my life as I knew it just so I had time to study the Bible.

I hope you find this a helpful way to begin your walk with God. My prayer for all of you is that you will use God's word as He intended us to do and learn to believe in Him. I listen to the healing scriptures and tv preachers and fall asleep while it plays or while they talk. I am committed to getting to that supernatural place where God and His angels will direct my path. I know you are much like me – we're not bad people, we give to charity, we aren't doing anything in particular that is against God. So why aren't we blessed?

I've been trying to figure that out and I came to the conclusion that God doesn't want me (or you) to just be "ok", He wants me to walk the walk. That means, getting into the Word, living a Christian life and studying the Bible so we can be of service to Him. Faith plus the Word equals the results, and I've been trying to get there by doing the minimum.

I have obviously not done a good job on my own, so I need God's help! God's will is not for us to sin. He expects us though, to repent, accept the forgiveness Jesus died for us to have, and produce fruit from our salvation at some point. To produce fruit just means, we are to tell others. If we obey all the Word, all the promises are ours as well.

Jeremiah 1:12 – "I am watching to see that My word is fulfilled."

Remember,

"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." James 5:16 NIV

Read and meditate on this declaration from the Word of God:

"For as the rain comes down and the snow from heaven and do not return there, but water the earth and make it bring forth and bud that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from MY mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."

Isaiah 55:10,11 NKJV

God's word will NOT return void.

HOW can we become righteous in the eyes of God? **By submitting yourself to God** and believing that He sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sin; that Jesus was resurrected and is in Heaven, and that **IF WE BELIEVE** in that resurrection, we too will be saved and given eternal life in Heaven.



The Apostle Paul wrote this eloquent verse to the Romans:

"I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord". (Romans 8:38-39).

Thanks be to God for His Amazing Grace.

But remember, being obedient is key. We can't continue to live a life of sin and claim that we believe in Jesus' sacrifice. The Holy Spirit will lead you into a more pure life but you have to be willing to be led. If you truly believe in your heart that Jesus died on the Cross for your sin, you will repent and try not to sin more. Everyone falls short of course, and when we do, we repent and ask forgiveness, and God will grant forgiveness to us, so long as He knows we are trying. Our goal is to continually rise above sin and the clutches of evil in our life. You have to take an active role in casting sin out of your life and turn away from it. It takes resolve.

Faith in Jesus Christ and what he accomplished on the Cross at Calvary is the only way to have eternal life.

Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6

Matthew 28:20 "Lo, I am with you always, even until the end of the age."

I believe it this is the absolute truth, based on the absolute truth of the Bible:

No one gets to heaven except through Jesus Christ.

"For **whosoever will** save his life shall lose it; and **whosoever will** lose his life for my sake shall find it." Matthew 16:25

Jesus said it – "**whosoever will**". Answer the Call.

How To Accept Him

Below are two examples of "The Sinner's Prayer". These are merely examples of what to say; there are many people who simply don't know how to ask Jesus to come into their hearts, so people like Billy Graham came up with a way for them to ask for salvation. These prayers are not listed in the Bible, they are examples of what you can say when you ask God to save you with eternal life.

Examples of a Sinner's Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Savior.

In Your Name,

Amen.

(www.billygrahamlibrary.org)

Heavenly Father:

I come to you in prayer asking for the forgiveness of my Sins. I confess with my mouth and believe with my heart that Jesus is your Son, and that He died on the Cross at Calvary that I might be forgiven and have Eternal Life in the Kingdom of Heaven. Father, I believe that Jesus rose from the dead and I ask you right now to come in to my life and be my personal Lord and Savior. I repent of my Sins and will Worship you all the days of my Life! Because Your word is truth, I confess with my mouth that I am Born Again and Cleansed by the Blood of Jesus!

In Jesus' name,

Amen

(www.churchesofchrist.com)

The Apostles' Creed was not written by the apostles. Rather, it was written at least 150 years after the apostles had all died. It is called the Apostles' Creed because it is supposed to be a record of what the apostles taught. It is a good summary of Christian doctrine.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:
Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.*
The third day He arose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic** church,
the communion of saints,***
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

- *Hell should have been translated as "sheol" or "hades"; there are at least two sides of sheol, one for believers (paradise) one for unbelievers (hell). Paradise is also referred to as Abraham's bosom. Jesus descended into the "paradise" side of sheol to free the saints who died before His victory on the cross, and to await His resurrection to Heaven. Unbelievers go to "hell" upon death to await the Great White Judgment to the Eternal Lake of Fire. Now, believers do not go to hell or paradise or sheol upon death; believers in Jesus Christ go directly to heaven when they die.
- ** The holy catholic church referred to here references the universal church of Christian believers, not one specific denomination. Lower case "c" is utilized when making this distinction over the Catholic church, which refers to the Roman Catholic religion.
- ***Communion of Saints refers to believers in the past, believers in the present, and believers in the years to come sharing a common salvation in our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ

Source: www.gotquestions.org

The Nicene Creed was adopted in A.D. 325 at the Council of Nicea; The Roman Emperor Constantine had convened the Council of Nicea in an attempt to unify the Christian church with one doctrine, especially on the issues of the Trinity and the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ.

The Nicene Creed is one of the most recognized and universally accepted statements of the Christian faith.

Nicene Creed

"We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

"And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick (alive) and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

"And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And we believe in one holy catholic (universal) and apostolic (built on the teachings of the apostles) Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.* And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen."

*"Baptism" by faith into Christ Jesus. Requiring anything in addition to faith in Jesus Christ for salvation is a works-based salvation. To add anything to the gospel is to say that Jesus' death on the cross was not sufficient to purchase our salvation. To say that baptism is necessary for salvation is to say we must add our own good works and obedience to Christ's death in order to make it sufficient for salvation. Jesus' death alone paid for our sins (Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus' payment for our sins is appropriated to our "account" by faith alone (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-9). Therefore, baptism is an important step of obedience after salvation but cannot be a requirement for salvation.

Source: www.gotquestions.org

The Tallit, or “prayer shawl”: I spent many hours researching the *color* or, “tekheet”, of the blue thread “techelet” (also spelled *tekelet*) that is in the fringe, or “tzitzit”, of the Tallit. Some might ask, ***why in the world do you care?*** I wanted the book to be printed in color because the brain loves and remembers color over black and white, and I simply wanted what I represented here, to be biblical; I wanted to use that color as the border color, typeface color for my pages and for the background of the graphics for this book because biblically, blue represents God’s law. While I don’t advocate keeping Jewish laws, as I was thinking of what color to use for my typeface it occurred to me, why not use the color from the Bible? God told His people to use the blue thread in the Tallit. (Numbers 15:38-40) I started researching, and as best as I can ascertain, the techelet blue is a bluish-purple color, very close to indigo. As much as is possible within the confines of color available on my PC, I’ve tried represent that color, here. (See my opinion on the Tallit on page 83.) I admit that researching this for as long as I did was a little obsessive, but as always, when one delves into the Bible, we come away with more than we ever thought possible. Here is what I learned about the mysterious blue thread of the Tallit:

Ancient Jewish rules surrounding the mysterious “chilazon” (the sea creature that contained the blue dye component) taught that it produced a blue color, like the sea; had a hard shell that grew along with it; it jumped when caught; lived in the sand on the bottom of the ocean; it was very expensive; the color would not wash away, and it’s blood (actually, the mucous) was used for the techelet (blue thread). In 1913 Rabbi Isaac Herzog wrote his doctoral thesis on this subject and learned that the Mediterranean snail called *murex trunculus* could be the mysterious chilazon whose mucus was clear but turned brilliant blue in sunlight. The process of creating the dye involves catching the *murex trunculus*, breaking its shell and removing a white gland. The fluid from the gland is clear and colorless but when exposed to light transforms to yellow, then green, then blue then deep purple. The fluid is air-dried into a powder then added to water. (Even the lowly snail holds within it the mysteries of God!)

Rabbi Herzog didn't realize however, that the dye had to be made in the sunlight in order to turn into a beautiful blue. This was discovered by Professor Otto Elsner who noticed that the dye seemed to turn purple on cloudy days and on sunny days, it turned a brilliant blue. It took about 30 of these murex trunculus snails to make enough dye to color the wool for the 4 tzitzis.

In those days one had to be very wary due to those who tried to cheat and use an artificial coloring called kala ilon, which looked identical in color to techeles. In fact the color was such a perfect match that there was no way anyone could tell them apart. There are always plenty of cheats and frauds so people had to be very careful to make sure that the blue dye came from the chilazon and not from kala ilon. Kala ilan has been identified as indigo which is a blue dye of vegetable origin.



The Lord said to Moses as follows: 'Speak to the Israelite people and instruct them to make for themselves fringes on the corners of their garments throughout the ages; let them attach a thread of blue to the fringes on each corner. That shall be your fringe; look at it and recall all the commandments of the Lord and observe them, so you do not follow your heart and eyes in your lustful urge. Thus shall you be reminded to observe all My commandments and be holy to your God' (Num. 15:37-41).

The mystery of the blue thread on the Tallit has fascinated people for centuries. The bible explains that (tekheet) is a bluish- purple color (derived from the chilazon or purple mollusk) to dye the threads on the fringes (tzitzit) of the Tallit so that they may "look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them." After centuries of affirming that for this specific purpose only the tekheet blue dye from a chilazon is kosher, the requirement has been accepted as halakha (Jewish religious ruling). So there you have it: the blue threads were a reminder from God to keep His commandments.

Here is a fascinating podcast about the subject:

<http://www.tabletmag.com/podcasts/128718/the-search-for-an-ancient-blue>

More information can be found here:

<http://www.techelet.info/chilazon-for-techelet/>

http://www.thejewishstar.com/stories/Judaism039s-mysterious-blue-snail,1369?page=2&content_source=

https://www.google.com/search?q=professor+Zvi+Koren+blue+tekhelet&rlz=1C1CHMO_en&es_sm=93&bm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=FYJuU_KBMcmDogTFtYD4AQ&ved=0CFoQ7Ak&biw=1680&bih=

See also **"The Rarest Blue: The Remarkable Story of an Ancient Color Lost to History"**

By Baruch Sterman

Today, thanks to the finished work of Christ on the Cross, a believer no longer has to wear a specific garment or dye the fringes of their prayer robe blue. Jesus IS our techelet – we need only keep our mind on HIM to receive the blessings of the Lord.

BIBLE COLORS

The primary colors appear to represent the core attributes or character of God.

The secondary colors appear to represent the roles of God as He seeks to reconcile one character to another within us.

The colors black and white, represent the status of man as we reject or accept the colors of God.

Just as He uses numbers prophetically and symbolically, God uses colors symbolically in the sanctuary, its services and in the prophecies. *

**		
Color	Meaning	Comment
Red	Sacrifice, mercy, life	Christ is the Lamb of God
Orange	Comforter, teacher, companion	Combines the work of Love in relation to the merits of the sacrifice as a Healer and Restorer and Teacher of righteousness.
Yellow	Character, fruit	The work of the Holy Spirit is to bear the fruits of God in us - of these the greatest is to love. Our character is described as "gold tried in the fire"
Green	King, kingdom of God	Combines the work of law in relation to love.
Blue	Law	The Father sits on the sapphire throne from which the stones for the law were taken
Purple	Priest, defender, lawyer	Combines the work of sacrifice in relation to the breaking of the law
White	Righteousness	Love. Perfection of all characters and principles before God. Knowledge of God.
Black	Sin, evil	The absence of the light of God. Separation from God.

- **www.teachinghearts.org

Again, none of these colors are necessary to be observed in any way by a believer because Jesus has fulfilled all the requirements we will ever need – your belief in Jesus Christ is all you need for life everlasting!

I'm reminded of the bible story of the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment in Mark 5; it is said that what she touched is the fringe of His Tallit – the blue thread being intertwined with the tzitzit of the Tallit. She believed so fully in Jesus' ability to heal that she believed all she needed to do is touch His Tallit and she'd be healed.

(The fringes on the Tallit were known as "wings" – Jews were taught that the 5 double knots on the fringes and the 8 threads of the fringe represented part of the 614 "laws" that must be kept in order to be righteous before God – the blue thread interwoven with plain thread was a reminder to keep His commandments. There were 614 "laws" introduced by the Jews, both positive commandments (to commit) and negative commandments (to abstain from) devised to make man "righteous". Of course, no man ever kept them except Jesus, which is why He had to become man, to redeem man.)

"Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather, grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment; for she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well." Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of him, turned in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You and You say, Who touched Me? And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your affliction." Mark 5:25-25 NKJV

The "hem" that the woman touched represents the finished work of Jesus on the Cross.
We need only believe in Him.

Whosoever will.

IT HAPPENED TO ME

Now, I'm going to tell you something that I have shared with only a few people up to this point, because it's kind of weird and people have a tendency to wonder if you're making it up when you relate something like this because they can't absorb it or understand it. Neither did I. But here goes: For years, every now and then this *thing* would happen to me, and when I first started actively studying the Bible it began to happen with more frequency - evidently I made some spirits mad because (and I know this sounds way out there, but I promise you, every word is true) when I first lay down to sleep at night - not every night, but often, maybe once or twice a month - right after I would lie down in my bed, still awake; this weird feeling would come over me like I was paralyzed. I couldn't move. I couldn't will it to happen nor will it to go away. I'd be lying there, not being able to move or speak, and it would feel like I floated somehow to the ceiling - almost as if I were being pulled by my core toward the ceiling - and I felt as if something would spin me around and around and make me dizzy and try as I might, I couldn't stop it or cry out - my voice didn't work either. It would do this for maybe a minute or two and then stop - just as suddenly as it started, and I'd be able to move again. It was crazy scary. I'd get that weird feeling of being pulled to the ceiling and think, oh, no - here it goes again. I was very fearful of it but I didn't know how to stop it; I just endured it. This went on for years and it went with me when I moved.

For a long time I thought it was due to the amount of stress I was under at work, or my caffeine intake or not enough sleep. I was commuting up to 3.5+ hours a day and that, in itself, is like having a separate 2nd job on Southern California freeways. I had NO idea what it was until my daughter told me that spirits don't want you to study the Bible, and they'll try to interfere. Then one night after I had "floated" to the ceiling, I could see something vague - it was as if dozens of angry faces were screaming at me. They came closer and closer until they were right in front of me.

I don't know who they were or what they were yelling at me, but it was very scary and they were inches from my face; the faces of angry men and women whom I did not know, screaming at me. I couldn't hear them, but I saw their angry faces screaming.

I mustered every bit of strength I had and very weakly, got the words out "Jesus help" - they disappeared immediately, and I felt like I was plunked back down on my bed. I knew at that moment that Jesus' name had caused them (whatever they were) to leave. Then I got mad and I yelled, "Don't you EVER come back, in Jesus' name! In Jesus' mighty name I command you to LEAVE this house, and me, and never come back! Stay away from me, my daughter, my grandkids, all my family and friends, and don't you come back, in Jesus' name!" Really ticked me off that whatever they were they thought they could come in and just flip me around like a rag doll.

I called my daughter and son in law and they came over and my son in law went through the whole house with his Bible commanding all the spirits to leave in Jesus' name. And the spirits never came back. I try to remember every day to say out loud, JESUS IS LORD, just in case any of them are hanging around. "That if you confess with your mouth "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9

I have not had this happen since the night my son in law commanded them out. I commanded them out of my house when I moved and they have not come back. This is all hard to believe, I know – I can't explain it and it makes me sound like I'm nuts. But maybe things like this happen when you start to seriously study the Word, so I'm sharing it with you to tell you, maybe you should cast out any spirits! I didn't know enough to do that. Jesus said He gives us the power of His name to cast out demons, so USE IT! We need to know who we are in Christ –we've been given the power of Jesus Christ! If you believe that Jesus died for your sins on the Cross at Calvary, and you exercise that faith in Jesus, you will be able to cast out demons in Jesus' name. Accept Him as your Lord and Savior, use His holy name and cast those spirits O-U-T!!

About those Blood Moons...

One must be VERY careful not to interject any sort of astrology or divination into the Blood Moon occurrences as this is not biblical. That said however, there are some interesting correlations with the Blood Moon phenomena:

When Jews reached the Holy Land they began to observe 7 year cycles. The 7th year of these cycles was a Sabbatical year called Shmita or Shemitah, meaning, to "release". This was based on Deuteronomy 15:1-2, which directed Jews to release all debts between Jewish debtors and creditors.

They also allowed the fields to remain fallow every seventh year as a Sabbatical to God. They didn't sow, prune or gather in the seventh year, and if any produce grew on it's own, it was community property for anyone to take. This directive is found in Leviticus 25. Those who put their trust in God would reap a three year bounty in the 6th year so that there was plenty for all.

The spiritual message of Shmita was not only to allow the fields to breathe and rejuvenate themselves and to forgive the debts of others, but man was free to concentrate on more spiritual pursuits rather than the material, which was a blessing in itself because he did not always have the time he needed for such pursuits.

The next year of Jubilee in a Shmita year, (7 years x 7 = 49 of the 50 year Jubilee cycle) begins with the Blood Moon Tetrad. 9/11/2001 happened in a Sabbath year. The financial crash in 2008 happened in a Sabbath year. The upcoming Sabbath year begins October 4, 2014 and ends September 22, 2015. Jubilee begins September 23, 2015 and ends October 11, 2016. This is not exactly the same as the Roman Catholic Jubilee, or year of remission, which occurs every 50 years. Catholics have their own observances but the basic concept is the same. The dates are different.

It so happens that this particular Shmita year that begins in October, also coincides with the extremely rare Blood Moon Tetrad – four blood moons in a two-year period – beginning on Passover, April 15th 2014. Another blood moon will occur on the Feast of Tabernacles on October 8, 2014, another on Passover April 4, 2015 and the final one on September 28, 2015 (blood moon dates are courtesy NASA) Many people believe the the crash of the dollar will occur in this period, as well as military conflict involving Israel. Most believe something big is about to happen in the Middle East and it will coincide with the blood moons in this two year period. Still others believe something having to do with China and our staggering debt will come to a head in this period. Others believe that 9-11-2001 was a national judgment on the USA and will culminate on the 28th of September in 2015 – with the blood moon tetrad – on Sukkot, or the Feast of Tabernacles.

There are those who believe the stock market is manipulated and the blood moons are a precursor to how the economy “resets”, by resulting in a crash; 2001 – 658 pts and 2008 – 777 pts, culminating in the forthcoming mother of all crashes around Sept., 2015. What’s most interesting about this particular rare cycle of blood moons is, they not only happen on Passover and Sukkot, but in a Shmita year and that won’t happen again for 100 years. The last time a blood moon tetra occurred on Shmita was in 1493 and 1494 and coincided with when the Jews were expelled from Spain. The next time was in 1967 and 1968 which coincided with the 6-day war in Israel.

The Bible tells us that when we see these things happening, we should know that the time of our redemption is near. Add to this the total eclipse of the sun on March 20, 2015 that is Nisan 1 on the Jewish calendar, and another on Rosh Hashanah in 2015, and you’ve got some pretty amazing things lining up for the next 18 months or so. Is it significant that these things all seem to be happening on Jewish holidays? I can’t say.

As a Christian, I do not celebrate Jewish holidays nor do I believe anyone else should, because it is only by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross that any of us will be accepted into heaven. Jews can't believe in Jesus and still practice the old ways, because that's like saying Jesus' sacrifice wasn't enough. Catholics can't believe in Jesus and still pray to Mary and the saints because it becomes like idol worship. **Our faith always must be focused on the cross and what Jesus accomplished there for each of us.** I am interested in Jewish traditions from a biblical point of view to help understand the Bible, not because I worship as a Jew. Catholic traditions have always puzzled me because so many of them are not biblical. I pray for Jews and Catholics everywhere that they will hear and heed the Truth.

I would not go so far as to say that the Blood Moons have any impact on what is happening in the world today or that they are a heavenly "sign" from God. God said, no man knows the day or the hour of His return so I would be inclined to extrapolate that statement to the logical conclusion: God isn't telling; not by blood moons or prophets or any person who claims they "heard" from God. Since only God knows the day and the hour, there is not much more to say than, **Be Ready.**

(Joel 2:31; Matthew 24:29,30; Acts 2:19, Joel 3:3-4, Luke 21:25-28 Leviticus 23:23-28, Daniel 9:27)



Update: The Tetrad is over. We're still here. What happens next, only God knows.

Epilogue

The entire message of the bible in one word is, Redemption. Your redemption is contingent upon your belief in Jesus Christ. Don't wait, you need to confess your sin and ask Jesus to come into your heart immediately.

Here's a verse I have taped to my computer that has helped me when I felt panic rising or that God was not listening:

Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" John 11:40

Then, consider this powerful confession in prayer:

"Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls – Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Habakkuk 3:17,18

Memorize this promise from God:

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

And this statement of belief in Jesus Christ:

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we ask or think, **according to the power that works in us**, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever, Amen." Ephesians 3:20,21

God said, BELIEVE.

"Now may the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you, and may God grant unto you, His Peace."

The Aaronic Blessing, Numbers 6:24-26

Translated from Hebrew, this blessing reveals the following:

"Yahweh will kneel before you presenting gifts and will guard you with a hedge of protection, Yahweh will illuminate the wholeness of his being toward you bringing order and he will beautify you; Yahweh will lift up his wholeness of being and look upon you and he will set in place all you need to be whole and complete."

Hallelujah!

Praise be to God.

CREDITS

SCRIPTURE: I have used passages from the New American Standard Bible, (NASB), New King James Version bible, (NKJV), The New International Version bible, (NIV), the Expositor's Bible and The Jeremiah Study Bible. When I wanted to make a particular point within any scripture reference, I underlined or made the words BOLD or changed the color; the scriptures are not themselves bold or underlined or changed in any Bible version.

QUOTES: I have used quotes by Andrew Wommack, Chuck Missler, Herman Geisler, Pastor Jim Parsons, F.B. Hole and Dr. David Jeremiah.

AARONIC BLESSING: I quoted the Aaronic Blessing translated from Hebrew from www.ancient-hebrew.org , "The Aaronic Blessing" a work by Jeff A. Benner.

RECOMMENDED AUTHORS: Dr. David Jeremiah, Joyce Meyer, William Federer, Chuck Missler, Andrew Wommack

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES: I recommended the following websites for further study:
www.youneedarabbi.com; www.rabbidaniellapin.org; www.awmi.net; www.koinoniahouse.org;
www.everystudent.com www.desiringgod.org
and <http://kingdavidstable.com/outer-court-and-inner-sanctuary/> , and <http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/>
<http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/fbh/>
<http://www.gotquestions.org/>

INFORMATIVE WEBSITES: I used the following website for information on the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed:
www.gotquestions.org . The "Sinner's Prayer" was copied from www.churchofchrist.com and from www.billygrahamlibrary.org .
The 10 Ethical Principles were expanded from www.cfm.org.uk
Tallit information was gleaned from: www.techelet.info/chilazon-for-techelet/
www.thejewishstar.com/stories/Judaism039s-mysterious-blue-snail,1369?page=2&content_source
www.google.com/search?q=professor+Zvi+Koren+blue+tekhelet&rlz=1C1CHMO_en&es_sm=93&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=FYJuU_KBMcmDogTFtYD4AQ&ved=0CFoQ7Ak&biw=1680&bih=
See also "The Rarest Blue: The Remarkable Story of an Ancient Color Lost to History"
By Baruch Sterman
<http://cyberhymnal.org>
<http://www.tabletmag.com/podcasts/128718/the-search-for-an-ancient-blue>

Information on Speaking in Tongues:
<http://www.gty.org/resources/distinctives/dd06/the-gift-of-tongues>
<http://www.beliefnet.com/iLoveJesus/Features/10-Scriptures-on-Gods-Goodness.aspx?b=1&p=11>
<http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/fbh/>
(I changed some of the scriptures to read as written in the NKJV)

EXPLANATIONS CREDIT: Some of the explanations I have used are gleaned from many sources. Among the many pastors I have listened to over the years are some from television including Dr. David Jeremiah, Pastor Mark Jeske, Andrew Wommack, Rabbi Daniel Lapin, Chuck Missler, Irvin Baxter, the late Dr. D. James Kennedy, the late Pastor Adrian Rogers, Joyce Meyer, Creflo Dollar, Rabbi Kirt Schneider, John Rosenstern, Pastor Jim Parsons, Hal Lindsey and Gary Stearman, as well as "Reflections" on Daystar and various programs on Sonlife Broadcasting that include Jimmy, Donnie, Gabriel and Frances Swaggart and the Rev. Carl Brown; John and Matthew Hagee, Pastor Robert Morris, Joel Osteen, The Church Channel and TBN. I don't claim to have written every word herein without drawing some references from the teachings of others. My copyright is the work as a whole.

DEFINITIONS: I have used Wikipedia, Merriam Webster and the Bible for definitions. The information on the Tabernacle and the Blood Moons is a compilation from reading many pages from a Google search on Blood Moons, and the Jewish Calendar and from sources such as www.jewishpress.com, www.hebroots.org and www.chabad.org .
I hope I interpreted the information correctly.

HYMNS: The words to the hymns on the following pages were found as a result of a Google search for lyrics and the authors of these hymns, and from <http://cyberhymnal.org>. These are a few hymns I happen to like that came to my mind, no particular order. "It Is Well With My Soul" has a particularly moving story behind it:
The author wrote this hymn as a prayer after he found out his wife and daughters had perished on a ship bound from England. I find it particularly amazing that Mr. Spafford was able, in his grief, to pen such comforting words. I include a few of the old hymns here in hope that others will want to hear the old hymns and that we don't lose them in favor of more contemporary music.

Amazing Grace

John Newton (1725-1807)

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear.
And Grace, my fears relieved.
How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'Tis Grace that brought me safe thus far
and Grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me.
His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease;
I shall profess, within the vail,
A life of joy and peace.

The following stanza was written by an anonymous author, often replacing the sixth stanza, or inserted as the fourth.

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun.
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we've first begun.

Jesus Loves Me

Text: Anna B. Warner (st 1) and David Rutherford McGuire (sts 2, 3)

Music: William B. Bradbury

1. Jesus loves me! This I know,
for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong;
they are weak, but he is strong.
Refrain:
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.
2. Jesus loves me! This I know,
as he loved so long ago,
taking children on his knee,
saying, "Let them come to me."
(Refrain)
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.
3. Jesus loves me still today,
walking with me on my way,
wanting as a friend to give
light and love to all who live.
(Refrain)
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

It Is Well With My Soul

Lyrics: Horatio G. Spafford

Music: Philip P. Bliss

1. When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
when sorrows like sea billows roll;
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Refrain:

It is well with my soul,
it is well, it is well with my soul.

2. Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
let this blest assurance control,
that Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
and hath shed his own blood for my soul.
(Refrain)
3. My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
(Refrain)
4. And, Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
the trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
even so, it is well with my soul.
(Refrain)

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Lyrics: Thomas Chisholm (1866–1960)

Music: William M. Runyan (1870–1957)

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.

Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Words: Henry Van Dyke

Music: Ludwig van Beethoven; Arr. by Edward Hodges

1. Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
hearts unfold like flowers before thee,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
drive the dark of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day!
2. All thy works with joy surround thee,
earth and heaven reflect thy rays,
stars and angels sing around thee,
center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
call us to rejoice in thee.
3. Thou art giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
well-spring of the joy of living,
ocean depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our brother,
all who live in love are thine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.
4. Mortals, join the mighty chorus
which the morning stars began;
love divine is reigning o'er us,
binding all within its span.
Ever singing, march we onward,
victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music leads us sunward,
in the triumph song of life.

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Text: *Thomas Ken, 1674*

Music: *Thomas Manzier, 1845 also attributed to Louis Bourgeois*

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
praise Him, all creatures here below;
praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

(This verse is also sung as the Doxology, or short song of worship and praise, in many churches –memorize this verse and use it as a simple way to begin praising God.)

Awake, my soul, and with the sun
Thy daily stage of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise,
To pay thy morning sacrifice.

Thy precious time misspent, redeem,
Each present day thy last esteem,
Improve thy talent with due care;
For the great day thyself prepare.

By influence of the Light divine
Let thy own light to others shine.
Reflect all Heaven's propitious ways
In ardent love, and cheerful praise.

In conversation be sincere;
Keep conscience as the noontide clear;
Think how all seeing God thy ways
And all thy secret thoughts surveys.

Wake, and lift up thyself, my heart,
And with the angels bear thy part,
Who all night long unwearied sing
High praise to the eternal King.

All praise to Thee, who safe has kept
And hast refreshed me while I slept

Grant, Lord, when I from death shall wake
I may of endless light partake.

Heav'n is, dear Lord, where'er Thou art,
O never then from me depart;
For to my soul 'tis hell to be
But for one moment void of Thee.

Lord, I my vows to Thee renew;
Disperse my sins as morning dew.
Guard my first springs of thought and will,
And with Thyself my spirit fill.

Direct, control, suggest, this day,
All I design, or do, or say,
That all my powers, with all their might,
In Thy sole glory may unite.

I would not wake nor rise again
And Heaven itself I would disdain,
Wert Thou not there to be enjoyed,
And I in hymns to be employed.

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Text: Joseph M. Scriven, 1820-1886

Music: Charles C. Converse, 1832-1918

1. What a friend we have in Jesus,
 all our sins and griefs to bear!
 What a privilege to carry
 everything to God in prayer!
 O what peace we often forfeit,
 O what needless pain we bear,
 all because we do not carry
 everything to God in prayer.
2. Have we trials and temptations?
 Is there trouble anywhere?
 We should never be discouraged;
 take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Can we find a friend so faithful
 who will all our sorrows share?
 Jesus knows our every weakness;
 take it to the Lord in prayer.
3. Are we weak and heavy laden,
 cumbered with a load of care?
 Precious Savior, still our refuge;
 take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
 Take it to the Lord in prayer!
 In his arms he'll take and shield thee;
 thou wilt find a solace there.

Holy Holy Holy

Text: Reginald Heber written 1826

Music: John B. Dykes written 1861

- Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!
2. Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.
3. Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love and purity.
4. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

The Old Rugged Cross

Text: George Bennard, 1873-1958

Music: George Bennard, 1873-1958

1. On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
the emblem of suffering and shame;
and I love that old cross where the dearest and best
for a world of lost sinners was slain.
Refrain:
So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
and exchange it some day for a crown.
2. O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,
has a wondrous attraction for me;
for the dear Lamb of God left his glory above
to bear it to dark Calvary.
(Refrain)
So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
and exchange it some day for a crown.
3. In that old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,
a wondrous beauty I see,
for 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died,
to pardon and sanctify me.
(Refrain)
So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
and exchange it some day for a crown.
4. To that old rugged cross I will ever be true,
its shame and reproach gladly bear;
then he'll call me some day to my home far away,
where his glory forever I'll share.
(Refrain)
So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
and exchange it some day for a crown.

How Great Thou Art

Carl Boberg, 1967

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!

When through the woods, and forest glades I wander,
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.

Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!

And when I think of God, His Son not sparing;
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.

Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!

When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration,
And then proclaim: "My God, how great Thou art!"

Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!

God is Good.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" Philippians 4:6

"For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving;" 1Timothy 4:4

"The LORD is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works."
Psalm 145:9

"For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations." Psalm 100:5

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

"And now, O Lord GOD, You are God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness to Your servant." 2Samuel 7:28

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness" Galatians 5:22

"So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear.
What can man do to me?" Hebrews 13:6

"Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." John 6:69

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding"
Proverbs 3:5

And one more, Isaiah 42:16 -

"I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked places straight. These things I will do for them, and not forsake them."

May God make your crooked places straight. Amen.

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