



A
Living
Sacrifice

Mark Hemans

*“Consecrate
yourselves
therefore,
and be holy;
for I am the
LORD your
God.”*

A living sacrifice to the Lord

Chapter:

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| 1. | <i>An Encounter with Jesus</i> | <i>Pg. 4</i> |
| 2. | <i>The God Quest</i> | <i>Pg. 12</i> |
| 3. | <i>Seeking Jesus</i> | <i>Pg. 20</i> |
| 4. | <i>Visions of the Cross</i> | <i>Pg. 23</i> |
| 5. | <i>The provisions of the Cross</i> | <i>Pg. 26</i> |
| 6. | <i>The love motive</i> | <i>Pg. 31</i> |
| 7. | <i>The three witnesses</i> | <i>Pg. 35</i> |
| 8. | <i>Fruitfulness</i> | <i>Pg. 41</i> |
| 9. | <i>Jesus: Friend & Lord</i> | <i>Pg. 49</i> |
| 10. | <i>The blessing of a consecrated life</i> | <i>Pg. 52</i> |
| 11. | <i>God exalts the humble</i> | <i>Pg. 59</i> |
| 12. | <i>Not my will</i> | <i>Pg. 64</i> |
| 13. | <i>The servant of God</i> | <i>Pg. 71</i> |
| 14. | <i>Set apart</i> | <i>Pg. 78</i> |
| 15. | <i>Overcoming temptation</i> | <i>Pg. 82</i> |
| 16. | <i>The Lord's correction</i> | <i>Pg. 88</i> |

17.	<i>The flesh</i>	<i>Pg. 93</i>
18.	<i>Wisdom from heaven</i>	<i>Pg. 99</i>
19.	<i>Our body is God's temple</i>	<i>Pg. 103</i>
20.	<i>The human spirit</i>	<i>Pg. 108</i>
21.	<i>How demons enter</i>	<i>Pg. 113</i>
22.	<i>The mind</i>	<i>Pg. 117</i>
23.	<i>Anger & Discouragement</i>	<i>Pg. 122</i>
Appendix A	<i>The sin and occult list</i>	<i>Pg. 131</i>

An encounter with Jesus

"He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." **John 14:21**

What happens when people meet Jesus *Saul meets Jesus*

Saul was a murderous fanatic who went from house to house arresting the Christians (Acts 9:1-18). Acts 9:1 says his very breathing was filled with hate and murder towards the Christians. He was so zealous in his hate against the church that he went to the High Priest asking for authority to persecute the Christians in Damascus. He was going to search them out, arrest them, bind them and bring them to Jerusalem. But along the road to Damascus he had a power encounter with Jesus Christ. He was literally blinded by a great light from heaven which flashed around him. Jesus audibly spoke to him, "*Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?*" But Saul did not recognize the Lord's voice, and said: "*Who are you Lord?*" Jesus replied: "*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting...*" It took one encounter with the living Lord to change this hate filled, murder-bent man to a loving servant of Jesus Christ. One encounter with Jesus Christ can soften even the hardest heart.

When Mark was visiting Kalamantan, Indonesia, a lady was scoffing and blaspheming against the Lord and His work. But when she entered the living room of the house where Mark was staying the Holy Spirit began to work on her heart. Jesus softened this hardened woman and saved her soul. How an encounter with Jesus Christ can change a person's heart.

At another Indonesian service a man came forward to the front of the church. He knelt down in repentance and wept on the floor. He had murdered and beheaded one hundred people in ethnic clashes. Like Saul, this man's life was changed through an encounter with Jesus. What the church and the lost of today need is to meet Jesus.

Fishermen meet Jesus

There are numerous examples of people who when they met Jesus left everything and followed Him. Jesus had been teaching the crowds that stood by the lake of Gennesaret. When he finished teaching he spoke to the fishermen, Simon and his friends, saying to put out their nets. The seasoned fishermen had worked all night without catching anything. They obeyed the word of Jesus and rowed out to deep water and threw out their nets. The catch of fish was so great that they filled their fishing boats until the boats began to sink and the nets were breaking.

Simon Peter says to Jesus: "*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*" When we truly encounter Jesus we will experience His holiness, confess our sins, and live in the fear of God.

Then when Peter and his fishing partners arrived at land they left their huge catch of fish and immediately followed Jesus. They could have made up excuses about how they couldn't leave the fish in the sun, and had to clean and sell them at the market. But instead they immediately left all for Jesus. When we truly experience Jesus and surrender to Him, we will leave behind our excuses and follow and obey Him.

"While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid;

henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him."

Luke 5:1-11

Zacchaeus meets Jesus

Zacchaeus climbed a tree because he so wanted to see Jesus (Luke 19:2-10). Jesus saw how this man was so eager to see Him. As Jesus passed by He looked up and said: "*Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today.*" And how happy Zacchaeus was that Jesus would come to his house.

"So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully."

The Person of Jesus had a powerful life-changing impact on this rich, chief tax collector. Zacchaeus stood up before all who were in his house and declared:

"Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold."

And Jesus said:

"Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

Jesus will come to us

Jesus told His disciples that He would be going to His Father in Heaven. Jesus left them physically, but He promised to come to them by His Holy Spirit.

"You heard me say to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I."

John 14:28

Jesus made many such promises – that He would be always with us till the end of the age. He promised that He would manifest Himself to us. That if two or three gathered in His Name He would be in the midst of them. He promised us that He would send the Holy Spirit to be our Helper. He said that He and the Father would make their home with us. He promised that He would manifest Himself to us.

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Matthew 18:20

"...and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

Matthew 28:20

"And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows

him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you. "I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you." **John 14:16-18**

"He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." **John 14:21**

"Jesus answered him, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." **John 14:23**

Jesus wants to come into His Church

He doesn't want us to do church like some sort of ritual or religion. He wants to come and manifest His glory amongst us. To save the lost, heal the sick, and deliver the demonic. He wants to speak prophetically and encourage His children. He wants to have loving fellowship with us.

Mark was preaching at a little country church in Victoria, Australia. He asked the Anglican minister if those in need of prayer could receive prayer. The minister said no. Mark had a vision of Jesus standing outside the building weeping. The minister had chosen his ritual, his doctrine, and what he felt comfortable with, instead of Jesus.

The church needs to let go and allow Jesus to have His way. Its not about our program and what seems good to us. Nor is it about pleasing people, or how many people we have in our church, how much money is in the bank, what sort of car the pastor drives, or what our church buildings look like. It's all about Jesus. The church gets so consumed with the status quo and the religious institution that we simply forget to invite Jesus. We fail to ask Him to direct our meetings. That's why people go to church but often do not have a life encounter with Jesus Christ.

Jesus experienced this same problem with the luke-warm church of Laodicea. He rebuked them saying:

"For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked."

Revelations 3:17

Jesus is still waiting for His church to open the door to Him and let Him in.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”
Revelations 3:20

Continually seeking God’s Presence

We are to seek the Lord continually. Our heart should always be inclined towards heaven. In this way we can pray without ceasing. Not only when we go to prayer meeting, or have our personal prayer time, but our heart should always be communing with the Holy Spirit. We are to be always seeking the Lord.

“Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his presence continually!”

1 Chronicles 16:11

How can we have an encounter with Jesus

Jesus wants to manifest Himself in our lives. He wants to visit with us. But we must also seek Him. It is a two way thing. We must do our part. Jesus wants to reveal Himself to all of us. Some people think you have to be some “spiritual giant” to know Jesus. He loves us all and wants to have a relationship with each of us. The Scriptures show us that there are things that we can do to have an encounter with Jesus.

➤ Be filled with a deep love for Jesus, and for one another.

“So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”

1 John 4:16

➤ Believe His promise that He will manifest His Presence amongst us. Walk by faith.

“And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

Hebrews 11:6

➤ Earnestly seek Him with all your heart.

“But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Deuteronomy 4:29

➤ Repent of your sin, and turn away from it completely.

“Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,”

Acts 3:19

- Be totally obedient to the Lord, and to the direction of the Holy Spirit.

"And if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments which I command you this day, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God."

Deuteronomy 28:1-2

- Earnestly desire the spiritual gifts and particularly prophecy. The gifts of the Spirit release the Presence of Christ.

"Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy."

1 Corinthians 14:1

- Follow Jesus without reservation.

"And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it."

Mark 8:34-35

- Be filled with the sense of awe, reverence, and worship of God. Let the Word of God dwell in your heart.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

Colossians 3:16

In the Presence of Jesus...

- There is abundant life.

"You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life."

John 5:39

- There is living water to satisfy the thirsty soul.

"On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

John 7:37-39

➤ There is rest for our souls.

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” **Matthew 11:28-30**

“And he said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”” **Exodus 33:14**

➤ There is healing & deliverance.

“And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them.” **Matthew 4:23-24**

➤ There is peace.

“On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” **John 20:19**

“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body.” **Colossians 3:15**

➤ There is shelter and refuge

“Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night within his temple; and he who sits upon the throne will shelter them with his presence.” **Revelations 7:15**

➤ There is fullness of joy

“Thou dost show me the path of life; in thy presence there is fulness of joy, in thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.”

Psalm 16:11

“...thou hast been my help, and in the shadow of thy wings I sing for joy.” **Psalm 63:7**

“The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD...” **Isaiah 29:19**

➤ There is thanksgiving and songs of praise

“Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!” **Psalm 95:2**

“Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!” **Psalm 100:2**

➤ The prophetic word goes forth

“Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN. This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” **Daniel 5:24-28**

➤ There is conviction of sin and the fear of God

“And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”” **Genesis 3:8-10**

The God Quest

A way of life

In the New Testament we have numerous examples of people who sought Jesus. There are the friends of the paralytic who lowered their friend through the roof of the house because there was no other way to get to Jesus. There was the woman with the flow of blood who pressed through the crowd to touch the hem of His garment. There were the multitudes who went without food into the barren wilderness to hear Jesus. There was Zacchaeus who climbed a tree so that he could see Jesus as He passed by.

Seeking the Lord is not only a one off experience, perhaps when we have a crisis. Seeking Him is a way of life. It is not only a continual desire for the Lord, but honoring Him through obedient living.

“Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false, and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the LORD, and vindication from the God of his salvation. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.”

Psalm 24:3-6

Believe and obey His Word

When we seek God we must do so in faith. Faith means that we not only believe that God exists, but that what He says is true. God gives instructions about seeking Him in the Bible. So to come to God in faith, we should search the Scriptures to see what the Lord says. Some good questions to ask are: “What does God say about how to seek Him? Are there things that I am doing that are a barrier in my pursuit for God.

Many believe that God exists and that He answers prayer, but they don't believe that God means what He says. If they did they would not only read the Bible, but apply what it says to their lives. We have such an example with Israel in the time of Isaiah. They thought they were doing a good job in seeking God. But when God did not respond to their prayers they blamed Him! If they had read their Scriptures they would have found out what God actually required.

“Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. 'Why have we fasted, and thou seest it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and thou takest no knowledge of it?’”
Isaiah 58:2-3

“You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. Unfaithful creatures! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”
James 4:3-4

It takes faith to obey God. You must believe that God actually means what He says, and that obedience will make a real difference. For example let's look at King Josiah. He ordered that the temple of Jerusalem be restored. When the repairs were made Hilkiah the Priest found the lost Book of the Law. Upon hearing what God required in the book of the Law, King Josiah tore his clothes and sought the Lord.

“Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king. And when the king heard the words of the book of the law, he rent his clothes... Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.””

2 Kings 22:10-11,13

We learn from King Josiah that unless we believe and obey His Word, we can not please God in our quest for Him.

Come in humility and repentance

God speedily comes to us when we humble ourselves and repent. This is the most basic principle in touching the heart of God. Jesus gave the example of a proud, religious man who prayed publicly, and a sinner who humbled himself. One stood boasting about how wonderful he was, the other beat his chest saying: “God be merciful to me a sinner”. Jesus said that the sinner who was not only justified, but also exalted or promoted. Jesus said that the proud would be humbled by God.

"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." **Luke 18:10-14**

Lets remember that the way we have access to the Presence of God is through the Blood of Jesus. The Blood reminds us that it is not through our own goodness that we enter His Glory. The Blood of Jesus was shed to cleanse us sinners from unrighteousness. God dwells with the humble who enter by the Blood.

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14

"For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite." **Isaiah 57:15**

Mercy, justice and integrity

The way that we treat others makes a lot of difference to the way God responds to us. Here are some specific examples: we are to forgive others from the heart or God will not forgive us. Husbands are to treat their wives with consideration and honour or God will not hear their prayers. We are to walk with mercy and justice to the poor and the oppressed or God will ignore our prayer and fasting.

➤ Walk in forgiveness

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Matthew 6:14-15

➤ Husbands treat your wives with honour and respect.

“Likewise you husbands, live considerately with your wives, bestowing honor on the woman as the weaker sex, since you are joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered.”

1 Peter 3:7

➤ Walk in mercy to the needy.

“But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?”

1 John 3:17

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am.” If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your desire with good things, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.”

Isaiah 58:6-12

Be totally yielded to God

No buts and excuses with God. The more we yield and surrender to God, the more refreshing is His Presence to our soul. We must be totally obedient to the Lord and to His direction in our life. Let's not tell the Lord we are seeking Him while we walk in rebellion against His purpose and direction in our life. If we love the Lord we will obey Him. Let's not grieve the Spirit of God through disobedience if we want to commune with Him.

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one

another, as God in Christ forgave you.” **Ephesians 4:30-32**

Keep the knife sharp

Our spiritual life is like a knife which can be dull or sharp. If the kitchen knife is sharpened regularly it will be sharp and useful for the task. But if we continually use it without spending the time to sharpen it, we know that it will become dull and useless. So how do we keep our spiritual life from becoming dull? A very important key is to practice spiritual disciplines. Disciplines include setting aside time every day to pray and read the Word, be committed to praying with others, regular fasting, helping the poor, and reaching out to others with the Gospel. John and Charles Wesley who founded the Methodist movement required all their ministers to pray at least two hours a day, and to fast twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays until 4 pm. Charles Finney said that every church should have from time to time protracted meetings, which were extended times to seek God and be built up in the Word.

If you take the kitchen knife and rub it continually on concrete you know what will happen to it. We all know that there are things in our lives that dull our spiritual lives. Things like: greed, lying, anger, manipulation, worry, anxiety, fear, arguments, tension, resentment, lust, jealousy, bickering, ungodly watching of TV, or the internet, or novels, spiritual laziness, and any involvement in the occult.

But when our spiritual life is continually sharpened we know the joy of walking in harmony with God and others, the joy of purity, we clearly hear the voice of God, we know His wisdom, peace, purpose and destiny in our lives, we experience a life of faith, and inner strength, God’s favor and blessing upon us, and there is a release of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Persist and persevere in your God quest

Be strong and of good courage in your God quest. Seeking Him requires character, perseverance, and persistence. One of the reasons why God wants us to seek Him is that in so doing we become like Him.

“But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.”
Deuteronomy 4:29

“And Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and Jacob's thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, “Let me go, for the day is breaking.” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go, unless you bless me.” And he said to him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.” Then he said, “Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.” Then Jacob asked him, “Tell me, I pray, your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.””
Genesis 32:24-30

Long for Him. Desire Him above all else

“Upon my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him, but found him not; I called him, but he gave no answer. “I will rise now and go about the city, in the streets and in the squares; I will seek him whom my soul loves.” I sought him, but found him not. The watchmen found me, as they went about in the city. “Have you seen him whom my soul loves?”
Song of Songs 3:1-3

Make room for His glory

The flesh and the Spirit war against one another. If we want to walk and move in the Spirit, then we must deal with the ungodly rubbish in our lives. If we want the Glory of God to fill our lives then we must make room for the Glory of God. In Isaiah 6 we read how Isaiah saw the train of the robe of the Lord filling the temple of God. In God's temple there is no rubbish piled up on the temple floor. The train of His robe fills the floor.

“In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.”
Isaiah 6:1-4

We are God's temple on earth, a shadow of the heavenly one. If we want God's glory then we must clean out the temple and remove the rubbish in our lives. Then we shall know the truly know the infilling of the Holy Spirit, and not just a partial flow. To seek God means personal change.

Open your spiritual eyes to behold Him

God will very often reveal Himself to us in visions. Visions are the pictures that God gives our heart. It is an important part of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Often prophecy, word of knowledge, discernment of spirits, and healing are imparted through visions. As we seek the Lord we need the eyes of our heart opened to see Him. Close your physical eyes, and then open your spiritual eyes. Ask the Lord that you might see Him and worship Him.

"I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all."

Ephesians 1:16-23

"In Him I live and move"

Seeking God is not limited to our times of prayer or having special experiences of Him. It is about your whole life moving with Him, and in Him. Walk in the Spirit and be led by Him continually.

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh."

Ephesians 4:16

"Yet he is not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being';"

Acts 17:27^a-28

The Lord wants us to abide in Him and He in us, that we might know the intimacy, joy, love, and surpassing greatness of His Presence in our lives.

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:4-5

Seeking Jesus

Longing to see Jesus

People in the time of Jesus were so keen to see Jesus. There were the sick and dying who sought His touch. There were those who were hungry for His teaching and came from kilometres around to hear Him. Then there were His close disciples that loved Him dearly.

“And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them.” **Mark 2:1-2**

“Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee followed; also from Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan and from about Tyre and Sidon a great multitude, hearing all that he did, came to him. And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they should crush him; for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed upon him to touch him. And whenever the unclean spirits beheld him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” **Mark 3:7-11**

The two blind men on the roadside when they heard that Jesus was passing by cried out in a loud voice: *“Have mercy on us, Son of David!”*. After Jesus had healed them it says that they followed Him. We need His healing touch in our lives. We also need His abiding Presence, which only happens when we follow Him.

“And behold, two blind men sitting by the roadside, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!” The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent; but they cried out the more, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” And Jesus stopped and called them, saying, “What do you want me to do for you?” They said to him, “Lord, let our eyes be opened.” And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they received their sight and followed him.” **Matthew 20:30-34**

His disciples longed to be with Jesus because they loved Him. When Jesus told them that He was leaving them, they were filled with grief. But He said to them:

"Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." **John 14:1-3**

After the crucifixion Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb. Suddenly an angel appeared to them. He told them that Jesus was going before them to Galilee where He would meet them. Again we see the disciples great love for Jesus and their desire to be with Him. When they heard the angel's words that they would see Jesus, they ran to tell the others. As the women ran, Jesus suddenly appeared to them. In response the women took hold of His feet and worshipped Him. Theirs was not a casual attitude but one of deep desire. We should be like them. May we run to be with Him, take hold of His feet, and truly worship Him.

"Now after the sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. Lo, I have told you." So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Hail!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." **Matthew 28:1-10**

We need to discover once more that deep love for Jesus, the hunger for His words, and the thirst for His great Presence.

Promises to those who seek the Lord

There are wonderful promises to all those who will seek the Lord. The Lord will be found by those who seek Him diligently with all their heart.

"I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me." **Proverbs 8:17**

"For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile."

Jeremiah 29:11-14

The Lord will reward us when we seek Him diligently. Never think that you are praying or seeking God in vain. If you pour out your heart to Him, He promises to reward you. Trust Him.

"And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." **Hebrews 11:6**

The Lord promises to manifest Himself to those who love Him and obey Him.

"He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." **John 14:21**

He longs to manifest His wonderful Presence to the world. He is waiting for sinners to turn to Him, that He might show them His greatness.

"I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, "Here am I, here am I," to a nation that did not call on my name. I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices;" **Isaiah 65:1-2**

Visions of the cross

“I have been crucified with Christ”

One day as a young man I was lying on my bed. In the Spirit I saw a large wooden cross coming down from heaven. The cross lowered on top of my body. I heard the pounding of a hammer as nails were driven into the wooden cross. Then I heard the words of Paul:

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Galatians 2:20

That was the first time I realized that we had to die with Christ. We do not die physically on a cross. Its all about repentance and dying to our own will. To take up our cross means total surrender to Jesus

Every Christian is called to be a living and daily sacrifice. It is as we die in Christ that the blessings of Jesus are released in us. Through our own death, the life and power of Jesus Christ flows through us. **This truly is the meaning of a consecrated life.**

“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

Romans 6:4

Here are some Scriptures that speak of our own death in Christ.
“And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

Mark 8:34-38

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”

Galatians 6:3

“I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” **Romans 12:1**

We are sanctified, set apart through the Cross. We have become not only separate from the world, but dead to it. The world no longer has any appeal to us, and likewise we no longer crave and run after the things of the world. We are dead to the world, and it is dead to us.

“But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” **Galatians 6:14**

A vision of the cross with fire & wind

In 2004 while praying in the church I looked at the large wooden cross hanging on the wall. As I watched its appearance changed. I saw the wind of the Spirit blowing powerfully around the cross. In the wind there was fire, like a fire ball in a bush fire.

The vision helps us to understand that the Holy Spirit comes in power to confirm the preaching of the Cross. The Holy Spirit applies the provisions of the Cross in our lives. He convicts sinners of their sin so that they can be saved. The Holy Spirit takes the Blood of Jesus and sanctifies the believer. In fact every provision of the cross is made available through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will come mightily in the life of the believer who knows the Cross in his life.

It is through the preaching of the Cross that the wind and fire of the Holy Spirit is manifest. Wind symbolizes the power of the Holy Spirit, and fire His cleansing, sanctifying role. It is only through the cross that we come into the life, power and cleansing of the Holy Spirit.

In the vision, I also saw believers in the centre of the cross. You could see their love and joy on their faces. You could feel their loving fellowship. The more we the church live in the death of the Cross, the more we shall know what it means to have loving fellowship one to another. It is through the cross that we can know God’s love in our hearts, and be bound together in love.

The power of the Cross

So the power of God is actually manifest through the preaching of the Cross. The Holy Spirit comes to confirm with signs and wonders the message of the Cross. In the Cross there was a divine exchange of death for life, curse for blessing, condemnation for justification, wounds for healing, weakness for strength, rejection for acceptance, guilt for righteousness, shame for boldness.

The more we as Christians identify with the Cross of Christ the more we will experience the divine exchange. That which is of the flesh leads to death. As we crucify the desires and works of the flesh we shall experience the resurrected life of Jesus Christ flowing through us.

“For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

1 Corinthians 1:17-18

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

Romans 1:16

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.”

Isaiah 53:5

The provision of the Cross

So many people have no idea why Jesus died on the Cross. They may think of Him in terms of the crucifix hanging on the wall of their room. They know the obvious that Jesus is dead on the cross, but virtually no idea why He died. Yet everything that we need in the Christian life was provided for on the Cross. You simply cannot live a life pleasing to the Lord without the Cross. Below are some of the provisions that God made for you through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

➤ **He bore our sin that we might be righteous.** We are now forgiven and cleansed from the stain of sin by the blood of Jesus. *“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.”* **1 Peter 2:24**

“And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” **Matthew 26:28**

He shed His blood that we might be blameless, holy, pure and sanctified before God. Every Christian needs to know that Jesus on the Cross has taken away their shame and guilt. Praise God! *“But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”* **1 Corinthians 6:11**

➤ **He received our punishment that we might be justified.** *“For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith.”*

Romans 3:22-25

“But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of

God.”

Romans 5:8-9

He fulfilled the Law receiving in Himself the punishment of the Law, that we might know the freedom of the Holy Spirit. Let's never go back into a religion of rules. Jesus died to set us free!

“...having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”

Colossians 2:14

➤ **He died that we might live.** Every time we sin we experience a deadness in our heart, a cutting off of the joy that we are to enjoy in Christ. But when we repent we experience His life flowing through our heart and very bodies.

“And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,”

Colossians 2:13

“So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day... It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”

John 6:53-54,63

➤ **He destroyed the power of death giving us resurrected life.**

The cross and resurrection of Christ gives us hope for the future. Those who die in Christ shall be resurrected with a new body.

“Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Corinthians 15:51-57

➤ **He took our sicknesses to give us healing.** The cross is healing to the whole person: body, soul, mind, emotions, finances,

and relationships. Every blessing in the Christian life ultimately is derived from the Cross.

"By his wounds you have been healed." **1 Peter 2:24**

➤ **He bore our sorrows that we might know His comfort.**

"Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted."

Isaiah 53:4

The word sorrows is used not only for physical pain but also mental pain. "Sorrows" is the same Hebrew word used to describe the anguish of the Israelites as slaves to the Egyptians. On the cross Jesus provided healing of our emotional pain. We can be healed of emotional pain just as we can be healed of physical pain.

"Then the LORD said, "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings,"

Exodus 3:7

➤ **On the Cross He took our mental illnesses,** fears, stress, depression, grief, and sorrows.

"He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

Isaiah 53:3

➤ **On the Cross He was rejected that we might be accepted by the Father.**

"Come to him, to that living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious; and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and he who believes in him will not be put to shame."

1 Peter 2:4-6

➤ **On the Cross Jesus took upon Himself our hurts and rejections** that we might receive the grace and power to forgive others.

"And when they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments."

Luke 23:33-34

On the Cross, Jesus was verbally abused, slandered, and falsely accused. We have the grace to be more than overcomers when we experience such things.

"All who see me mock at me, they make mouths at me, they wag their heads; "He committed his cause to the LORD; let him deliver him, let him rescue him, for he delights in him!" **Psalm 22:7-8**

➤ **He experienced hostility that we might be reconciled:**

a) to God

"And you, who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him, provided that you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard,"

Colossians 1:21-23

b) to each other

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end."

Ephesians 2:13-16

➤ **He defeated Satan that we might walk in victory.**

"He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him." **Colossians 2:15**

"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage."

Hebrews 2:14-15

➤ **He was cursed that we might be blessed.**

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, "Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree"-- that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Galatians 3:13-14

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,”
Ephesians 1:3

➤ **He became poor that we might be rich.**

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.”
2 Corinthians 8:9

➤ **On the Cross Jesus opened the way for us to enter boldly before the throne of God.** The veil of the temple was torn in two and we can freely enter in by the Blood of Jesus.

“And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.”

Mark 15:37-38

The Love Motive

“And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.” **Matthew 22:37-40**

Consecration & love

Consecration is not about legalism, things we have to do. Its about surrendering ourselves to the Lord out of love. Otherwise we are just on a guilt trip. The Lord wants us to obey Him because we love Him.

God is seeking your love, your heart. He is desiring a loving and intimate relationship with each of us. The one thing that will separate us from God and His great love is sin. Satan knows this. Satan wants us to sin to break our love relationship with the Lord.

“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent beguiled me, and I ate.” The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.”

Genesis 3:6-14

The tempter

Satan is called the Tempter. He tempts people to have a lukewarm relationship with God. Satan tempts people to sleep-in in the morning so that they don't come to church. He tempts people to sit in front of the television instead of going to prayer meeting. It's not that he just wants you to sleep more or to watch television. This is just the means to an end. His goal is to compromise or even destroy our zeal and love for the Lord.

"For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent that I might know your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and that our labor would be in vain." **1 Thessalonians 3:5**

Satan is always seeking to get us to compromise our zeal and passion for the Lord. Paul encourages us to be always on fire for the Lord.

"Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord." **Romans 12:9-11**

The cost of sin

God loves us so much and wants this intimacy with us that He gave us His only Son. The only way to deal with our sin was for it to be washed away with the Blood of His Son Jesus Christ. The price of our sin, the price of a restored relationship with God is so high. The price of restoring a loving relationship is the life of Jesus Christ.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." **John 3:14-16**

Sin grieves the Holy Spirit

Sin is not just doing the wrong thing. If that was all it was sin would be like breaking the speed limit and being caught by a speed camera. The camera relays the message to a computer and the computer sends out an infringement notice. The law has been broken and there is a fine as a consequence.

But sin is personal. It personally offends and grieves the Lord. It is about obeying God because we love Him. We don't want to grieve His Holy Spirit.

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." **Ephesians 4:30-32**

The love motive

Being religious and legalistic go hand and hand. Have you ever seen someone who was religious and not legalistic? In the day of the prophet Isaiah the people religiously fasted, but failed to love the poor. In the day of Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees religiously kept the Sabbath and tithed their herbs, but killed the Son of God.

"Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the LORD? "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard."

Isaiah 58:5-8

Religion with out love will never be acceptable to God. The Lord is looking for a people who obey Him because they love Him.

Loving submission

The greater our love for the Lord, the greater our submission to Him will be. The greater our love for God, the greater our passion for holiness. The more we love the Lord the more we will be sold out to Him. The more we will focus on Him. See how Jesus puts obedience to His commands in the context of loving relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you. "I will not leave you desolate; I

will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." **John 14:15-21**

The three witnesses

“Who is it that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth. There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree.” **1 John 5:5-8**

The Spirit: the oil of consecration

In the Old Testament the Anointing oil was used to consecrate someone or something to the Lord. So we see that the kings and priests were anointed with oil, so also the Tabernacle and its utensils. Once the person (or utensil) was anointed he was thereby set aside for God. He was not in anyway to defile himself.

➤ *The Anointing upon the priest*

“The priest who is chief among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil is poured, and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not let the hair of his head hang loose, nor rend his clothes; he shall not go in to any dead body, nor defile himself, even for his father or for his mother; neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am the LORD.” **Leviticus 21:10-12**

“And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head, and anointed him, to consecrate him.” **Leviticus 8:12**

➤ *The Anointing upon the tabernacle and its furnishings*

“Then you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and consecrate it and all its furniture; and it shall become holy. You shall also anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar; and the altar shall be most holy. You shall also anoint the laver and its base, and consecrate it. Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tent of meeting, and shall wash them with water, and put upon Aaron the holy garments, and you shall anoint him and

consecrate him, that he may serve me as priest. You shall bring his sons also and put coats on them, and anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may serve me as priests: and their anointing shall admit them to a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations."

Exodus 40:9-15

➤ *The anointing upon the believer*

It is the anointing oil of the Holy Spirit that sets us aside for God. With the Anointing we are renewed, have a new desire to serve the Lord and to dedicate ourselves to Him. Having the anointing of the Holy Spirit we must give ourselves fully to the Lord. The Holy Spirit renews our love for Jesus, which is the basis for our serving Him. Every Christian is to know the Anointing:

"...but the anointing which you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that any one should teach you; as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in him."

1 John 2:27

Purified by the blood

Not only was the oil used to consecrate something, but very often blood was also used. So when Aaron and his sons were set apart for priestly ministry they were consecrated with both the blood from the altar, and also with the holy oil.

"Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and of the blood which was on the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron and his garments, and also upon his sons and his sons' garments; so he consecrated Aaron and his garments, and his sons and his sons' garments with him."

Leviticus 8:30

In the New Testament all believers are priests to God. Every believer is to be marked with the Blood of Jesus and the oil of the Holy Spirit. It is the Blood of Jesus that purifies and cleanses us from sin. Without the blood we would be unclean vessels. But the blood of Jesus purifies our conscience before God.

The Holy Spirit is then poured out upon us as clean vessels, giving us a passion and power to love and serve the Lord.

In the Old Testament when something was to be dedicated for use in the temple it was first marked with blood. The altar of the tabernacle was dedicated for service with blood.

“And Moses killed it, and took the blood, and with his finger put it on the horns of the altar round about, and purified the altar, and poured out the blood at the base of the altar, and consecrated it, to make atonement for it.” **Leviticus 8:15**

Intrinsic to being consecrated to God is to be made holy. We are called to walk before God in righteousness. If we are to dedicate ourselves to the Lord we must also purify ourselves from sin.

No sinner can purify himself before God. Only through our repenting of sin, and having our sins washed away by the Blood of Jesus can we stand pure before God. Only through the Blood of Christ can one serve the Lord, and be consecrated to Him. Both our conversion and our ongoing sanctification happen by faith. We believe that the power of the Blood of Jesus is effective for us.

No amount of good works, penance, fasting, prayers or anything else religious can make us acceptable to God, or purify us for His use. Faith in the cleansing power of the Blood of Jesus is the only way.

“For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” **Hebrews 9:13-14**

It is so important for all of us to not only know the Anointing oil of the Holy Spirit, but also the cleansing of the Blood. All too frequently the church is required to discipline people who have an anointed ministry but are living in sin.

Jesus shed His blood as a substitution for us. That means that we do not belong to ourselves but to Him. He has obtained us, bought us, redeemed us with His own life, represented by His blood. We now belong to Him. Our response must be total dedication to Him.

“Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son.” **Acts 20:28**

The washing of water

The church is sanctified and cleansed through the washing of the Word of God. The Word of God washes our minds not our clothes. The Word washes our minds of the worldly and demonic philosophies that contaminate, stain and influence the mind and its thinking. All our thinking must become subject to the Word of God, or else we are not sanctified before God. This was all symbolized in the way that the priests had to wash in the bronze basin of water, before they could offer sacrifices to God. So also before we can offer right spiritual sacrifices to God we must have the mind of Christ. Our minds must be washed, cleansed and purified in the water of the Word of God.

“For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war, for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.”

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

“Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”

Ephesians 5:25-27

“You shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tent of meeting, and wash them with water.”

Exodus 29:4

“You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base of bronze, for washing. And you shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it, with which Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet. When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. They shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die: it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his descendants throughout their generations.”

Exodus 30:18-21

The cleansing of the leper

"Then he shall wash his clothes, and bathe his body in water, and he shall be clean." **Leviticus 14:9**

Our whole lives must come into submission to the Word of God, otherwise we are not clean. People say that their hearts and lives are pure, that they are ok with God. However sanctification only occurs as we submit to the authority of the Word.

"How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to thy word." **Psalm 119:9**

God's blessing only comes upon us as we hear and obey the Word.

"But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" **Luke 11:28**

God's Word has power which works within the believer who humbly receives it. The Word has power to consecrate, purify and completely change our lives, if we will submit to it.

"And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers." **1 Thessalonians 2:13**

The Bible describes the power of the Word in our lives.

"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." **Hebrews 4:12**

"You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord abides for ever." That word is the good news which was preached to you." **1 Peter 1:23-25**

A holy priesthood

The Scriptures say that we are all priests before God. We are each called to offer prayers of intercession and worship before our mighty God. As such we are to be a holy priesthood to the Lord.

We are consecrated to Him through the Holy Spirit, the water of the Word, and the Blood of the lamb.

“And Moses killed it, and took some of its blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear and on the thumb of his right hand and on the great toe of his right foot.”

Leviticus 8:23

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I beseech you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul. Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles, so that in case they speak against you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.”

1 Peter 2:9-12

Fruitfulness

Consecration & God's glory

Only if we cleanse ourselves from what is defiling us, can we see God's glory, or know what it means to walk in the Spirit. The Christian with one foot in the world will not know an intimate walk with God, will not know the joy of walking by faith. Such a Christian will have religion, will have the outward bearings of Christianity, but will not know the glory of walking with Jesus. **It is God's purpose to sanctify His temple and fill it with His glory.**

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Matthew 5:8

Get rid of it!

Again and again the Scriptures tell us to put out of our lives that which displeases the Lord, and to follow the Lord with all our heart.

"Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." **Ephesians 4:29-32**

"Keep your heart with all vigilance; for from it flow the springs of life. Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Take heed to the path of your feet, then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil." **Proverbs 4:23-27**

The secret to the victorious Christian life

The secret to living a victorious, fruitful, Spirit-filled life is consecration. The Christian who has one foot in the world and one foot in the Kingdom will always be struggling with one problem or another. He will never know the promise of soaring like an eagle.

"Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run

and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:30-31

When we live half in the world and half in the Kingdom we only get half of what God wants to give us. God allows us to have problems to cause us to repent and seek Him. And when we continue to live in our backsliden state he allows the problems to continue. The key is to seek the Lord with all our heart and forsake our evil ways.

“...and as long as (Uzziah) sought the LORD, God made him prosper.” **2 Chronicles 26:5**

Abiding in Christ

Jesus talked about us abiding in Him, and He in us. A complete oneness between Christ and us occurs when we are consecrated to Him. When He abides in us and we in Him, then we are fruitful. In fact Jesus promised those who abided in Him, “Ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.”

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.” **John 15:4**

Useful to the Lord

If we want to be useful in the Kingdom of heaven we must live consecrated lives. God is looking for pure vessels through which He can pour out His love and power. If we are to be useful to the Lord, and ready for His work, we must first purify ourselves.

“But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.” In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and earthenware, and some for noble use, some for ignoble. If any one purifies himself from what is ignoble, then he will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to the master of the house, ready for any good work.” **2 Timothy 2:19-21**

Consecration comes before divine service

Everything that is used for God's service is to be anointed and consecrated

"Then you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and consecrate it and all its furniture; and it shall become holy." **Exodus 40:9**

Great preachers of the past, like John G. Lake, spoke of a separate experience of being consecrated to God. They spoke about being saved, baptized in the Holy Spirit, and of being consecrated to God. Consecration is an experience of total personal surrender to God. In past revivals they described it as "bending" before God. An experience of total yielding and dedication to God. Kathryn Kulman spoke of it as being willing "to pay the price".

Kathryn Kulman talks how at one time the Anointing was lifting off her life. She was following a course that did not please God. She wanted to get involved with a man and the Lord said no. When she surrendered herself again to the Lord, she experienced once more the blessing of God.

Augustine of Hippo passed through this experience of consecration when he was convicted of teaching philosophy, going to the theatre and his party life. He gave it all up to follow the Lord.

"And for Aaron's sons you shall make coats and girdles and caps; you shall make them for glory and beauty. And you shall put them upon Aaron your brother, and upon his sons with him, and shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests." **Exodus 28:40-41**

"And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests." **Exodus 30:30**

Consecration is a yielding completely to God in our lives. Our desire for the Lord is such that it burns up those fleshly things in our lives. The consecrated Christian sheds his old habits for a life of dedication to God.

In consecration everything that we do and say is subject under the Lordship of Christ. We simply give up all those things that don't please the Lord. Our one pursuit is to live for Jesus. Our one

desire is to know God and serve Him. We want the Lord to be the focus. That He would be glorified in all that we do. So we see all things come under subjection to the Lordship of Christ, whether food or drink, music, TV, entertainment, the internet, sports, studies, friendships, money, the way we use our time, family, and work.

Purity

So many things defile and stain the Christian life. The world is pumping it out like a sewerage pipe. The Lord said to Moses “you shall not defile yourselves...”

“For I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls upon the earth.” **Leviticus 11:44**

Consecration is about dealing with the things that are unhelpful in our spiritual walk, and running in the things that please God. If something is holding us back from entering into God’s best let’s get rid of it!

“But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” **1 Corinthians 6:17-20**

“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? “All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up.” **1 Corinthians 10:21-23**

“But as for you, man of God, shun all this; aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” **1 Timothy 6:11-12**

A sanctified house of prayer

We are the living temple of the Holy Spirit. A temple is to be set aside for worship. It is to be clean and in order. The Lord wants us to remove the rubbish from our lives and be a holy temple for

His service and worship. We are not to be “mismated with unbelievers”. What some call a soul tie, or to be spiritually bonded with an unbeliever. That is, we are not to form special friendships with people who have an ungodly influence on us.

“Do not be mismated with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

In 2 Chronicles 29:3-19 King Hezekiah removes the rubbish from the temple. He sets everything in order, and establishes prayer and worship in the temple once more. Likewise, Jesus drove out of the temple all those who did business, declaring “My house shall be called a house of prayer”. Then Jesus healed the blind and the lame. God’s power will flow in our lives when we make our bodies a living house of prayer. Fruitfulness always follows consecration.

“And Jesus entered the temple of God and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’; but you make it a den of robbers.” And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant;”

Matthew 21:12-15

Consecration is not just about getting rid of the rubbish in our lives. It’s about having a consuming zeal for God. So many Christians are caught up with material things, with family, and there is so little zeal for the Lord.

When Jesus cleansed the temple He was filled with a holy zeal for God.

"His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for thy house will consume me." **John 2:17**

"So put away all malice and all guile and insincerity and envy and all slander. Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation; for you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. Come to him, to that living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious; and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." **1 Peter 2:1-5**

The luke-warm Christian

The Bible warns Christians who are luke-warm. We are to always be zealous for the Lord, aglow with the Spirit and ready to serve.

"Salt is good; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill; men throw it away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Luke 13:34-35

"And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold. But he who endures to the end will be saved."

Matthew 24:12-13

"I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may be rich, and white garments to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent."

Revelations 3:16-19

Our works reveal the heart

How do we know if we are on fire for the Lord? By our works. Our works show what we are passionate about. It's that simple. What we do as Christians reflects the condition of our heart. Are we hot, lukewarm, or just plain cold? Are we fired up to pray and seek God, hungry for His Word, eager to witness to others, love to have fellowship with the Brethren, want to serve the Lord, help the

poor, and generous in giving? Or are we wasting our time on things of no Kingdom significance.

"Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good life let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom." **James 3:13**

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 5:16

Jesus taught that we were to put His Kingdom and His righteousness first above all else (Matthew 6:33).

"Now great multitudes accompanied him; and he turned and said to them, "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

Luke 14:25-27

The divine exchange

In the experience of consecration there is a divine exchange. We give up that which once was important to us, and discover the glory of God. We give up a life of sin in exchange for the riches of the Kingdom of heaven. We become so passionate about God's glory, that we gladly give up that which holds us back.

"To grant to those who mourn in Zion--to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified." **Isaiah 61:3**

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it." **Matthew 13:45-46**

Here are some examples of people who made the divine exchange of consecration. Who exchanged their old life for a new and far better one in Christ.

Levi the Tax Collector

"After this he went out, and saw a tax collector, named Levi, sitting at the tax office; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he left everything, and rose and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his house; and there was a large company of tax

collectors and others sitting at table with them. And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." **Luke 5:27-32**

Zacchaeus

"And there was a man named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector, and rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham." **Luke 19:2-9**

Jesus: Friend & Lord

How we relate to God

Many Christians relate to God in terms of friendship. God is someone they talk to, and can tell him their difficulties. And this is good in many ways. However, they perceive Jesus as their Friend but not as their Lord. Thus their relationship with Jesus is based on friendship and not on submission. Their relationship with Jesus becomes personal, something between just the two of them. They choose to hear only what they want to hear in this relationship. In this way their relationship with the Lord is never personally challenging, never actually costs them anything.

Jesus is the friendly Good Shepherd that loves them and looks after all their needs. Anything that requires obedience on their part, or that makes them uncomfortable, they reject as not part of their friendship with God. Such a Christian will not make any sacrifices for the Lord, or make any real commitments to Him. So personal is this friendship with Jesus that he can really get on just fine without the church. He goes to church when he feels like it. Other things such as family or business take first priority, with Jesus and His Church takes second place. Of course he believes that Jesus is His friend who understands his situation, and would never ask him to do anything uncomfortable.

Such a Christian feels no need to repent, confess his sins to others, make restoration to others, listen to advice, share the Gospel, tithe, give to the Lord's work, pray with others, or take steps of faith. He simply has other priorities. Anyway, Jesus is a friend who understands.

Obedience to God's Word

He doesn't seriously read or study the Bible. The main thing is that Jesus is a Friend who listens. The Word has no real authority in his life. He certainly doesn't take the Bible into consideration when making important decisions. He doesn't want anyone quoting Scriptures about God's plan for His life, or people giving him advice. He likes the Scriptures that make him feel good. For example, the promise of Ps 91 that God is his refuge and fortress, that nothing bad will come near him. He has no understanding that

these promises are given within the context of a binding covenant relationship with the Father God through the Blood of Jesus Christ.

Jesus told a parable to describe those who hear His Word but do not put it into practice. He described such a Christian as a foolish man who will come to ruin.

"Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And every one who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it."

Matthew 7:24-27

Doing God's will

Today many speak of how we are one big family of God (including new age adherents, Catholics, Muslims, Hindus, etc). They say that we are all God's children. Yet Jesus made it clear that obedience to His teaching is the absolute requirement for being part of His family.

"And his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting about him; and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, asking for you." And he replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking around on those who sat about him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Mark 3:31-35

As we have said there are many Christians who call Jesus "Lord" without actually obeying Him. Jesus called such people evildoers! He will tell them to get out of His Presence. We might call God our Friend, but if we do not heed His Word we are simply self-deceived.

"Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.'"

Matthew 7:21-23

Moses: friend of God

Moses was God's friend. He spoke to God face to face. He was also the most humble man on the face of the earth. Intimacy and obedience go hand in hand.

"Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." **Exodus 33:11**

We can all deepen our relationship with the Lord simply by obeying Him. If we truly love Him we will obey Him.

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you." **John 15:9-14**

The blessing of consecration

What are you missing out on?

The Christian who lives a worldly life doesn't know what he is missing out on. There is such great blessings when you consecrate yourself to Jesus. There is freedom from shame and guilt, wonderful communion with God, fruitfulness, a greater Anointing of the Holy Spirit, effectiveness in prayer, power in preaching, discernment of God's voice, fulfillment in life, prosperity, quality use of our time, people experience Jesus through us, and we are released to serve others.

Freedom from shame and guilt

When we are not living fully for the Lord, we struggle with on-going guilt and shame. We know we are falling short of God's best in our lives. It is like we are struggling to follow the Lord while pulling a ball and chain behind us. We know that this ball is holding us back and yet we are chained to it.

When we walk in the Spirit we enjoy the freedom of the Spirit. When we walk in the flesh we are enslaved to the things of the flesh. So the unconsecrated Christian finds himself constantly pulled between the two: freedom and slavery. His heart is not fully committed to the Lord. He desires the Lord, but he also loves the things of the world. Such a life does not please the Lord:

"...those who are in the flesh cannot please God." **Romans 8:8**

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would."

Galatians 5:16-17

The Lord was clear that we must deal with the things that cause us to sin. Just do it!

"And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is

better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.” **Matthew 18:8-9**

When we break with the love of this world, we experience freedom and joy and peace in the Holy Spirit. No longer are we constantly asking God to forgive us for the same things over and over again. We have peace with God because we are walking in the Spirit.

“For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit;” **Romans 14:17**

Communion with God

There is an intimacy and communion with God promised to those whose hearts are pure.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Matthew 5:8

When we live a pure life our heart just rejoices in the Presence of God. His Glory fills the believer’s life.

“How lovely is thy dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs, yea, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at thy altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in thy house, ever singing thy praise!” **Psalms 84:1-4**

Effectiveness in prayer

Consecration enables us to abide in Christ. As we enjoy fellowship with Him, we hear His voice and know how to pray as we ought. Because we know His will in a situation we can pray effectively in faith. Sin has the opposite effect. The person will feel distant from God, confused as to how to pray, and his prayers may remain unanswered. Consecration leads to effectiveness in prayer.

“The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects. Elijah was a man of like nature with ourselves and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit.” **James 5:17-18**

“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but he loves him who pursues

righteousness.”

Proverbs 15:8-9

Power in preaching

Isaiah had a vision of the Lord sitting upon a throne with His train filling the temple. The seraphim called one to another: *“Holy, Holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.”* The temple was shaken and filled with smoke. Then Isaiah cries out:

“And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having in his hand a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven.” And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”

Isaiah 6:5-8

A similar thing happened to Moses, the greatest prophet of the Old Testament. It was after he had the burning bush experience that he received the mantle of prophet. The goal of preaching is basically to call people to repentance. If we do not live a life of repentance, how can we know the power of God to preach a Gospel of repentance? Godliness allows the Holy Spirit to convict people through our preaching.

Discernment of God’s voice

Hearing God’s voice is like tuning in on the radio. Sometimes we just hear a lot of static until we properly tune into the radio station. Until we tune our lives into the Lord, we will always hear a lot of static. The unconsecrated Christian has so much interference from the things of this world, that he simply cannot hear clearly from God.

The human spirit is like a lake. When the lake is muddy it is impossible to see into the depths of the lake. You cannot see the fish and vegetation below. So likewise when we muddy our spirit with the things of the world, we cannot discern the deeper things of the Spirit. This is why so many Christians are spiritually confused, and without the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Many prophecy without clearly hearing God's voice. They speak out of their own imagination This is a reason why the church struggles with personal and public prophecy. Some prophecies create confusion, while others are causing people to stumble or even fall away.

Prophecy is as much about personal godliness as it is about speaking. How can we clearly hear God's voice when we fill our lives with garbage, particularly the television? These things stain our spirit. When we clean up our lives we begin to clearly discern the voice of the Lord. Eliphaz from the book of Job is a biblical example of a spiritually confused person who tried to prophecy. The Lord says of him:

"My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has."

Job 42:7

Eliphaz's description of how his prophecy was received sounds like he definitely didn't get his word from the Lord.

"Now a word was brought to me stealthily, my ear received the whisper of it. Amid thoughts from visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, dread came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones shake. A spirit glided past my face; the hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes; there was silence, then I heard a voice..."

Job 4:12-16

Something obviously wasn't right in this man's spiritual life, which affected his ability to hear from God.

We hear God's voice clearly through spending time in prayer and the Word. Our spirit is washed clean through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Hearing God's voice and receiving His commands, flows from a life of prayer and the Word. In this way the Holy Spirit reveals to us the deep things of God.

"Daniel said: "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals deep and mysterious things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him."

Daniel 2:20-23

Fulfillment in your life

Our hearts desires are fulfilled in Jesus. As long as we are not surrendered to Him we will not know the great joy and fulfillment of His eternal destiny for us. God has prepared wonderful works that we should walk in. We must walk in the Spirit if we are to walk in the His works.

“Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.” **Ephesians 1:4**

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” **Ephesians 2:10**

“Righteousness will go before Him, and shall make His footsteps our pathway.” **Psalms 85:13**

Prosperity and blessing in God's will.

So many Christians want God to bless them, prosper and provide for them, answer their prayers. Yet they do not know the glory of the Presence of Jesus abiding in their lives because they are living a lukewarm life. They tolerate sin in their lives. God will not release us into the full divine blessing of His awesome Presence while we play games with His majesty. Scripture is very clear that God will bless us when we obey Him, and seek Him with all our heart.

“If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you this day, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to take possession of it.” **Deuteronomy 30:16**

Better use of our time and resources

“If any one purifies himself from what is ignoble, then he will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to the master of the house, ready for any good work.” **2 Timothy 2:21**

So much of the Christian's time and money is simply wasted when they are not dedicated to the Lord. When we turn to the Lord with all our heart, God gives to us time, energy, and finances for the Lord, for His Word, and for His Kingdom activities.

There is a release of money for the Kingdom because things become less important to us. No longer do we need the latest technology, the latest thing. The money that we might have spent on such stuff is now available for the Kingdom of God. The money that we receive is now going further, is used more efficiently, and is a greater blessing to others. As we give the Lord gives back to us. We are translated from our personal budget to His Kingdom economy.

"Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back." **Luke 6:38**

The time that we wasted on worldly things is now released for the things that the Lord asks of us. There is more time to spend with our children or grandchildren, for students to study, our house chores, helping the children, serving and loving one another.

As we consecrate ourselves to the Lord Jesus, He becomes the centre of our conversations and activities. Increasingly we speak of the Lord and what He has done, what He is doing, and His call on our lives. Consecration leads us to be more and more Jesus centred. We become "life style" worshippers of the Lord. He is lifted up in what we do and say. We no longer feel content just talking about the weather. Our hearts long to speak of Jesus, and to hear of Him.

Through us spreads the fragrance of Jesus

Our consecrated example is like salt in the food. The salt goes right through the food and effects everything. So also a godly life will begin to effect the people around us. Especially when the father and husband surrenders himself to the Lord, it has a tremendous effect on the whole family. A consecrated life will impact our spouse, our children, our church, our friends, other cities, and the nations.

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men. "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may

see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."
Matthew 5:13-16

Through us the fragrance of the knowledge of Him will be spread everywhere.

"Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment."
John 12:3

"But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere."
2 Corinthians 2:14

Released to serve others

One of the greatest privileges in this life is to serve the Lord. Serving the Lord always flows through consecration. As we surrender ourselves to Jesus, He fills us with His Holy Spirit and we have this great desire to serve Him. What greater blessing could there be than to serve the Lord?

"Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord."
Romans 12:11

Look at the way Jesus set Himself apart to do God's will. God's will was His daily bread.

"Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work."
John 4:34

This overwhelming desire to do God's will releases us into service.

Lets die to the expectation that others serve us. Lets move into the joy and fulfillment of serving others in the Lord.

"For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
Mark 10:45

God exalts the humble

Act of humility sparks awakening in Texas

"A Texas pastor's act of humility has ushered in a powerful move of God at his church. Church Members were stunned when their Pastor preached about the need to root out pride - and suddenly removed the hairpiece he had worn for more than 20 years. "People were absolutely shocked" said one of the associate ministers at the 2,000-strong independent Pentecostal church. "Ever since then it has been the deepest, most intense worship we have ever known...God has completely turned this place upside down."

The church has had to add a second Sunday morning service to cope with increased attendance. More than 200 people have been baptized, and many others baptized in the Holy Spirit. There have been reports of healings, and churches across the country have requested copies of the video of the service."

The Pastor had been speaking about a coming awakening for almost a year. He said that God had impressed on him that many people were being distracted from a deeper commitment by "the deceitfulness of riches and the cares of this life. He asked God if there was anything he could do to get closer to Him. "It was impressed on me that this [hairpiece] was not a necessary thing in my life. It was not a pride thing, it was a preference, [but] it was not something I was born with." So as he preached about removing personal obstacles, he took off the hairpiece and dropped it onto the altar. His son, said to Charisma that "it was the most visual sign of humility you will ever see anyone do. My dad is such a dignified man, to see him do this was quite an impact."¹

Jesus is Exalted in Heaven

Jesus left His place in heaven and humbled himself to the low position of a human being. He suffered thirst, hunger and tiredness. He was tempted. He didn't have His own bed or the comforts of home. He obeyed His Father as a servant, even to death on the cross. He was obedient in everything. Therefore He was raised up

¹ (Source: Charisma News Service)

to the highest place, where all people will come and bow the knee to Him.

"... and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."

John 12:32

We learn from Jesus that the place of exaltation is the place of humility. Jesus in all His glory, exalted above every living thing, still bears the marks of His death on the cross. These marks are signs of His complete obedience and humility before God the Father.

"The place of exaltation is the place of humility."

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross."

Philippians 2:5-8

Through His humility Christ was exalted to the highest place in heaven. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father, having authority and power to rule over the nations and spiritual powers. He will place everything in submission to His authority on the Day of Judgment, when Satan, the demons, and evildoers will be thrown into the lake of fire.

"Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Philippians 2:9-11

The Place of Humility

When we say the prayer of salvation, we do it in humility, leaving aside our pride and repenting of our sins. So also, to be exalted in Christ we must continue in the same attitude of humility and repentance.

"As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him."

Colossians 2:6

We are converted in an attitude of humility. But how many Christians forget their humble beginning and start to become proud. Each day we need to die to our pride so that we might live

in the glory of Christ. God humbles the proud and exalts the humble.

“Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to dejection. Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you.” **James 4:9-10**

The High and Mighty God draws near to the humble to dwell with them. But the proud He knows from an arm’s length.

“For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.”” **Isaiah 57:15**

Humility precedes blessing

Jesus sets us an example on the Cross that humility always precedes blessing and exaltation. After humiliation on the Cross He sat down with the Father clothed in glory and honour. The Christian life is about walking in humility constantly before the Father. This means doing things that may go against our natural pride, like saying: “I’m sorry”. If we will humble ourselves before God, repent of our sins, and be His obedient servants, then He will bless us beyond what we could imagine.

Basic ways in which we are to humble ourselves

The Christian life is filled with things we are to do involving humility. For example:

- Repent to receive salvation.
- Openly confess our sins.
- Being delivered of evil spirits is a humbling experience.
- “Eat humble pie” and say sorry to people whom we have hurt.
- Deciding to do what God wants and not what we want.
- Humbling ourselves before God in prayer and fasting and repentance.
- Being a Christian is about humble service, not position.
- Speak in unknown tongues for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- Being open to the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Being willing to look or sound foolish in the sight of others.

Cleaning toilets

At the age of 17 the Lord called me into the ministry. After His call I held many jobs: working in the hospital morgue, cleaning

college toilets and showers, shoveling snow, raking leaves, painting houses, and laboring jobs. One day I asked the Lord: "Lord if you called me into the ministry why have I spent so much time doing such jobs?" The Lord replied: "*These jobs are training you for the ministry. It's not about position it's about serving.*"

God's promises to the humble

God has made wonderful promises to those who choose to humble themselves before Him. If we will leave our pride and walk humbly before Him, He will bless us beyond our imagination. Here are some of these promises...

"The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and humility goes before honor." **Proverbs 15:33**

"The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life." **Proverbs 22:4**

"Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

1 Peter 5:5

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14

"He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way." **Psalms 25:9**

"For the LORD takes pleasure in his people; He adorns the humble with victory." **Psalms 149:4**

"Toward the scornful he is scornful, but to the humble he shows favor." **Proverbs 3:34**

"When pride comes, then comes disgrace; but with the humble is wisdom." **Proverbs 11:2**

"All these things my hand has made, and so all these things are mine, says the LORD. But this is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."

Isaiah 66:2

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he may exalt you.”
1 Peter 5:6

A dirty river

Naaman the army commander had leprosy. He heard that the prophet Elisha could heal him. So he went to the prophet for his healing. But the prophet did not come out of his house to greet him, but sent his servant to tell him to wash in the dirty Jordan river. Naaman was offended and furious. God offends our mind to reveal our heart. Naaman was offended because although a leper, he was still very proud. So often God will deal with the sickness of our heart, before the blessing will flow.

“So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and halted at the door of Elisha's house. And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean." But Naaman was angry, and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and cure the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage. But his servants came near and said to him, "My father, if the prophet had commanded you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather, then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.”
2 Kings 5:9-14

“Not my will”

“If it is your will”

We remember those famous words of Jesus from the garden of Gethsemane: “not my will, but yours be done”. This was the prayer of surrender to the Father that Jesus made prior to His crucifixion. The surrender of the will is the essence of consecration. True consecration to God is not about giving up the TV or morning sleep, but the surrender of the will. When we surrender our will to the Lord we truly become set apart for Him.

“And when he came to the place he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” And he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, “Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”

Luke 22:40-42

Many Christians have misunderstood these words. They say: “Lord heal me if it is your will.” This is the prayer of fatalism: whatever happens is whatever God wants to happen. This type of prayer lacks any confidence that we will receive what we have asked for. It does not appropriate the great promises of God. If we do not pray with confidence, then it is not the prayer of faith. When we ask we are to believe that we are receiving that which we ask for.

“Not my will, but yours” is the prayer of personal surrender, not of petition. This prayer is about submitting to the Lord. Yielding our will and our desires to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In the garden, Jesus submitted to the will of His Father and chose to die upon the cross. He could have asked the Father for 12 000 angels, but He didn’t. He knew that the Scriptures had prophesied His death and “that it must be so”.

“And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”

Matthew 26:51-54

Obedying God is a struggle when our will has not been yielded to God. Like Jesus we also must surrender to the Father and take up our cross.

“And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” **Mark 8:34**

Throughout Jesus’ life we see how He humbled Himself to obey His Father.

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.” **Philippians 2:5-8**

The things that He did, He saw His Father doing. The teaching He gave He heard from the Father. His authority came from the Father. His prayers were to the Father. Before He chose His twelve disciples He spent all night in prayer. His purpose and mission on earth came from His heavenly Father. He was sent by the Father and was returning to the Father.

What a contrast to so many Christians and even churches, that make their decisions and plans with hardly a prayer. We call Jesus, Lord, but we rarely think of consulting Him with our plans. This was not so with Jesus.

“Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself is doing; and greater works than these will he show him, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.” **John 5:19-21**

Total obedience to God was Jesus’ daily bread. His will was surrendered totally to the Father. What a foreign concept in our modern society, where there is such antagonism towards submission to authority.

“Meanwhile the disciples besought him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” So the disciples said to one another, “Has any one brought him

food?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work." **John 4:31-34**

A broken and contrite heart

So we see that simple obedience to God flows from a surrendered will. There is a process through which our will must be first subjected in order to surrender. Our will is naturally stubborn and doesn't want to submit to God. Typically we want to do our own thing. And our own thing seems good to us.

For example someone says: "We always have our holidays after Christmas. That's our time for rest." Yet the Holy Spirit may direct us to go on a mission. When we choose the holidays rather than the mission, we sin. Our will is not yet submitted. In the early church decisions were made because it "*seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...*" (Acts 15:28). But the church so often does what seems good to us without reference to what seems good to the Holy Spirit.

How easily we follow our own ideas of what is good, instead of yielding to God. Churches likewise get into a rut of rules, policies, procedures and "this is the way we have always done it." When the Holy Spirit renews the church He promises to do a new thing, may we let Him have His way.

So our will is naturally stubborn. God will often break our stubborn will, and cause us to deeply repent. Repentance is the only process through which God moulds and changes our heart. Our will becomes responsive to His voice. He will often bring us to repentance by applying different types of pressures, causing us to see our sin and turn from it.

The Scripture says that the Lord humbles us in order to form our will or heart. We go through humbling circumstances and difficulties that cause us to examine ourselves. We begin to see clearly the pride and stubbornness of our heart and ask for forgiveness.

"And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments, or not. 3 And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not

know, nor did your fathers know; that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but that man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD."

Deuteronomy 8:2-3

Surrendering the control

The breaking of the heart is the surrendering of the control of our lives to the Lord. How we like being in control, and do things our way! But Jesus calls us to give up being master of our lives and become the servant. Giving up control is normally painful.

Through these times of testing and trials our heart is broken before God. True repentance rises before God like a sweet incense. When He calls us, instead of ignoring Him we yield to His desire and will for us. How painful the process can be to go from stubborn hard pride to sweet surrender. David writes of his experience of repentance from his sins of murder and adultery:

"Fill me with joy and gladness; let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.... The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Psalm 51:8,10,17

The importance of the heart to God

God warns us of being outwardly religious while our heart is hard and unyielding to the Holy Spirit. The Lord wants the joyful obedience of the heart to Him, and not our religiosity. Jesus is no longer a distant God that we do religious service to. He becomes personal to us. He personally intervenes in our lives. We love Him and He is our Friend, but He is also the Lord whom we lovingly and willingly serve.

"But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." **1 Samuel 16:7**

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart;" **Deuteronomy 6:4-6**

The splitting of the rock

Out of the split rock flowed the water to the thirsty Israelites. Out of a broken and contrite heart will flow living waters to the thirsty.

“And they did not thirst when He led them through the deserts; He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them; He also split the rock, and the waters gushed out.”

Isaiah 48:21

From the broken body of Jesus Christ flows our healing. From His shed blood there is cleansing from sin. Jesus' death on the Cross is the mould or template of the Christian life. Our lives must be poured into that mould. Like molten steel into a mould.

When we know the death of Christ, the breaking of His body in us, we will also experience His rivers of life. It was after Paul had personally experienced his death in Christ, that he could speak of the life of Christ.

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Galatians 2:20

We must allow the Lord to break us, to bring death to our own will and desires. When this happens we want to be total obedient to God. His will becomes our life beat. His purpose our daily bread.

It is only through this breaking of our stubbornness and fleshly activities that Jesus Christ will be glorified in our lives. Jesus taught this principle to His disciples. It was only through His death that the Father could be glorified. We will only bring glory to Jesus and bear much fruit in His eternal Kingdom, when we die to self and live for Him.

“And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor him. “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father,

glorify thy name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." **John 12:23-28**

Loving Jesus

The motivation to live a holy life comes from our love for Jesus. A will that has been surrendered in love for our Lord.

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments." **1 John 5:2**

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome." **1 John 5:3**

"And this is love, that we follow his commandments; this is the commandment, as you have heard from the beginning, that you follow love." **2 John 1:6**

When we are born again the Spirit of God enters our heart, giving us new desires. The Holy Spirit causes a deep love for Jesus and a hate of sin. We experience a change of desires. Godly desires are fundamental to personal holiness. It is the desire to please God and live a pure life that will lead us to repentance and a changed life. While a person continues to satisfy fleshly desires, there will be little change in conduct.

"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." **Romans 13:14**

How can we know if we are surrendered to God?

An indication of our surrender to God is our attitude towards people and authority. If we joyfully and diligently serve others, and particularly those in authority, we are on the right path to serving God. If we cannot serve what we see, how can we serve God who is invisible.

"If any one says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also." **1 John 4:20-21**

"He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in

that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?" **Luke 16:10-12**

Next time someone asks you to do something, just do it joyfully and wholeheartedly. Don't say I haven't time, its not convenient, its not my ministry or calling, its not fair, its someone else's job, I'm already too busy, Jim isn't doing anything let him do it. Just do it joyfully and diligently. And your heavenly Father will reward you. If we learn to joyfully serve people, we are on the right track to learning to joyfully obey the Father.

"If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away." **Matthew 6:40-42**

The Servant of God

The Master

To really understand our role as servants of Christ, we must first appreciate the authority of the Master. Jesus often referred to Himself as the Master. His disciples and the sick called Him Master. Jesus was Master of every situation. He was Master over demons, sickness, storms, His enemies, and the crowds. In every situation we see Jesus taking command. Everyone was in awe of the authority of the Master. Jesus said to His disciples:

“Neither be called masters, for you have one Master, the Christ.”

Matthew 23:10

“Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.”

Colossians 4:1

“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.”

2 Peter 2:1

The authority of Jesus

Throughout the New Testament we see the authority of Jesus. He commanded the attention of crowds of people. People were astounded at such authority in His teaching. With that same confidence He cast out demons and healed the sick. With authority He taught the crowds and healed their sick.

“And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the sabbath; and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with authority. And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon; and he cried out with a loud voice, “Ah! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.”

Luke 4:31-36

It is truly amazing the authority that Jesus exercised. He commanded even the wind and the waves to be still.

"And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care if we perish?' And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?' And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?'"

Mark 4:37-41

Jesus claimed to have received His authority from God the Father. Only God can forgive sins. Yet Jesus forgave the sins of a paralytic man. Jesus was God incarnate. The same authority that His Father had He also demonstrated.

"Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" -- he said to the paralytic-- "I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

Mark 2:9-12

The authority of the Father

Jesus did nothing of His own authority. He spoke and acted on the authority of His heavenly Father.

"So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me. And he who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him."

John 8:28-29

"For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has bidden me."

John 12:49-50

"Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works."

John 14:10

Jesus is now seated at the right hand of the Father in heavenly places. It is not just that He has authority, but that He is above all rule, authority, power, and influence. He is the Supreme authority who rules the universe. He is worthy that we should serve Him. His authority calls forth our total respect. What a privilege to serve the only true God who rules the universe.

"... which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all." **Ephesians 1:20-23**

"For in him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fulness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority." **Colossians 2:9-10**

Divine Authority

God wants to bless us. In fact He commands and guides us into blessing. As we obey what He tells us then we will walk in His favor. We are His servants, He is the Master. He tells us to do things because He knows it is for the best. As we surrender absolutely to His will, then we will know His mighty blessing. We are simply servants of the Most High God.

There was a Roman centurion who understood the principle of authority. As a commander he was both under authority, and had authority over others. He would give orders to his soldiers and slaves and they obeyed.

"For I am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." **Luke 7:8**

The Centurion recognized the authority of Jesus Christ. He knew that all Jesus had to do was to say the word and his slave would be healed.

"Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed." **Luke 7:6-7**

The Centurion realized the authority of Jesus. He honored that authority. He said he wasn't worthy for the Lord to enter into his house. He had the faith to believe that a word from Jesus was all that was necessary for healing to flow. Jesus commended the man for his faith.

"When Jesus heard this he marveled at him, and turned and said to the multitude that followed him, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave well." **Luke 7:9-10**

Like the Centurion we also need to honour the authority of Jesus. Believing that Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords with complete authority in heaven and earth.

He is clothed in authority and has given us His commands through the Scriptures. He has commanded us to preach the Word, to heal the sick, to cast out demons, to make disciples, and to love one another. He also directs us personally by His Holy Spirit.

We are simply to obey the Master's commands. When we do so then faith will rise in our hearts. The Anointing and authority of God will come upon us, and we shall know God's power. God's blessing shall be released as we totally submit to Him. We are His servants called to serve and obey the Master.

Many times in meetings I have seen how God works in marvelous ways if I will step out in faith and obey Him. Often the Lord will give word of knowledge about sickness. I have seen the Lord healing the blind, deaf, lame, and mute, simply by following His directions. All the glory be to God.

In one meeting the Lord gave me a vision of a heavenly waterfall. I understood that the Master wanted to baptize people in the Holy Spirit. He was showing me this through the vision. I shared the vision and four people came forward for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. They all received the gift of tongues and one person particularly was mightily touched. Jesus is our Master and He wants us to obey Him completely. When we do so the blessing will flow.

In hearing God we do not always get it right. Sometimes we think that He is speaking but it is just our own imagination or some

other influence. Always check with the Word of God. We also need the help of others who are more mature in the things of the Lord. Others can help us to correctly discern the Lord's voice and avoid going into self-deception which can lead to discouragement and confusion.

A blind man receives His sight

Time and again we see this principle of simple obedience releasing the power of God. Jesus commanded a blind man to go wash in the pool of Siloam. The man simply obeyed and was completely healed! Blind from birth he suddenly received his sight. What amazing things would happen if we each would obey God without excuses.

"As he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing."

John 9:1-7

A miraculous catch of fish

There are times when the Lord directs us to do something and we think we know better. Our natural mind wants to argue and make all sorts of excuses and reasons why we shouldn't do it. We see this with Simon Peter. Here was an experienced fisherman who had fished all night and caught nothing. He could have reasoned away Jesus' command. But Peter obeyed the Master.

The result was that they caught so many fish that their nets began to break. They needed help to pull the heavy catch in. Even the boats began to sink. Peter experienced this great miracle because he humbled himself before the Master and obeyed. Surely we would see great things happen in our lives if we were obedient to the Master.

"And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered,

"Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken;"

Luke 5:4-9

We are all servants of the Master

We are all servants of Jesus Christ no matter what our ministry or calling in life. The apostles called themselves servants or slaves of Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:1,9; Titus 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1). When Paul was called by Jesus on the road to Damascus, he was called to serve (Acts 26:13-18). **Ministry is not about position**, but about serving the Master.

Jesus the Master, the Son of God, Saviour of the World said that He had come not to be served, but to serve (Matt.20:25-28; Phil.2:1-16). He was both Master and Servant at the same time, because His authority came from above. He had come to obey His Father, and to serve the world. Likewise we also have authority, but it is delegated to us from above. We use our authority in Christ, to serve Him and to serve others.

When the Master, Jesus, comes again, He will be looking for faithful servants (Luke 12:35-40). He is not going to be impressed by our position or type of ministry. He will be looking to see whether we were obedient and faithful to His commands.

In 1978 the Lord called me into full-time ministry. Three people came to me separately and said the Lord had called me. I went back home and prayed in my bedroom. I said to the Lord: "Lord I know that the ministry isn't going to be easy. Show me from your Word." The Lord spoke in my spirit the Bible reference 1 Peter 5:2. I looked it up not knowing what I would find. But the Lord confirmed His calling through the Scripture: "Tend the flock of God that is your charge..." I wanted to be a doctor at the time. It wasn't that I wanted power and influence in the church. I was a young lad who having heard the voice of the Master was obedient to His call.

We are all servants of the Most High God, no matter what our calling or type of ministry. A pastor is not greater than an evangelist, a prophet is not greater than a pastor, an apostle is not greater than a prophet. It doesn't matter what giftings we have. We all are called to use our gifts in service to the Master.

Listening & obeying the Master

Every servant must wait and listen to the Master. When we hear His command then we can step out in obedience and faith. When I was a teenager my ambition was to be a great preacher like Billy Graham. I am beginning to realize that our only ambition in life is to please the Master. What pleases Him is when wait before Him, hear His voice and obey Him.

Consecrated to serve

We are consecrated to God, washed and purified by the Blood of Jesus, that we might serve the living God. (Hebrews 9:14). God has a purpose for every Christian. He calls us to higher service. He has work for each of us to do. The Master expects us to work hard, and be diligent in serving Him. He wants us to be faithful, reliable and fruitful in every good work (Matthew 25:13-21).

"If any one purifies himself from what is ignoble, then he will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to the master of the house, ready for any good work."

2 Timothy 2:21

How can we serve?

There are specific things that the Word commands us to do. Here are some of these commands:

- Love God and love one another
- Pray constantly
- Find ways of serving one another.
- Be generous. Give and it will be given to you.
- Be a witness to others of the Lord. Share what God has done for you. Lead people to the Saviour.
- Live a godly life.
- Be faithful in the things that God has given you to do, and He will give you more.

Set apart

Sanctification

The primary meaning of sanctification is “dedication, consecration, or setting apart for some specific and holy use.”² In the Old Testament we see how things were set apart for the Lord’s service. For example: a house (Lev.27:14), a field (Lev 27:16), the first born (Ex. 13:2), and the temple vessels (2 Chr. 29:19). Likewise the Christian is set apart for the Lord’s service, to bring Him glory in His life.

When a person is born again he has been chosen by God to live for Him. In this sense He has been sanctified, and called a “saint”.
“And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” **1 Corinthians 6:11**

“To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

1 Corinthians 1:2

The secondary meaning of sanctification is the process of cleansing, becoming holy. It is like a gardener going into a garage sale and buying an old rusty wrought iron park bench. The bench is set apart for his garden – “positional sanctification”. But then it must be cleaned and painted to be useful, which is sanctification as a process.

The process of being cleaned up

The garden seat must be cleaned up before being placed in the garden, otherwise it would be an eyesore, instead of being attractive. So also the Christian after his conversion must enter into deep repentance, cleansing, and be set free of demonic influences if he is to be useful in the Kingdom of God. People who take up ministry positions in the church, without first undergoing the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit, can cause serious damage to the church and its testimony.

² Foundations of Pentecostal Theology. By Duffield and Van Cleave. Pg. 237

Holiness is God at work in us. Holiness is not something we can do, but what God does in us. This happens by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. When we trust in our own efforts (religion) to be holy, we are trying to fulfil the law, which no one can do. The result is feelings of frustration, guilt, shame, and condemnation. It must be God's grace (power) working within us, changing us.

Very important to gaining victory over sin in our lives is to confess it. We are to recognize our sin and not defend it. Concealing sin will be a curse in our lives, but God's mercy and blessing are released through as we confess it.

"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy." **Proverbs 28:13**

Sanctification is the fruit of our faith

A changed life is the follow on from a genuine faith in Jesus Christ. Its like a car pulling a trailer. We could liken faith to the car, and a changed life to the trailer. The trailer simply follows the car. In the same way godliness and good works will follow faith. We are not saved by our good works and godly living.

Good works follows faith. Our salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ and His work upon the Cross. He took our sins and has given us the free gift of righteousness. Now that we believe, we follow Him in obedience.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God - not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." **Ephesians 2:8-10**

Two types of sin:

- *Sins of commission* are sins that we do, such as gossip, swearing or stealing. These sins could be divided into the following categories:
 - ❖ Unbelief in Jesus Christ,
 - ❖ The body – sexual sin,
 - ❖ The tongue - e.g. lying,
 - ❖ The occult and witchcraft,
 - ❖ Rebellion against authority – e.g. against parents or teachers,

- ❖ Sects and world religions,
- ❖ Obsessions and addictions,
- ❖ Work place sins – e.g. corruption, sloppy work,
- ❖ Sins against the Holy Spirit,
- ❖ Marriage and family sins – e.g. domestic violence,
- ❖ Sins of the heart – e.g. pride.

• *Sin of omission* involve the neglect of one's Christian responsibilities. These include:

- ❖ Marital responsibilities to one's spouse – including financial provision, loving care, fulfilling one's sexual obligation in the marriage.
- ❖ Family responsibility – materially providing for one's family; responsibility to love your children, Biblically instruct them, love them, pray for them, and discipline them.
- ❖ Caring for the disadvantaged – visiting the sick, widows, orphans, and the elderly, being generous to the poor.
- ❖ Commitment to world missions and the spread of the Gospel as set forth in the Great Commission.
- ❖ Financial support of the Lord's work.
- ❖ Obedience to the personal direction of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- ❖ Being active in the Body of Christ. Each of us is to have a ministry that builds up the Body of Christ.
- ❖ The choice to walk by faith and not live in fear, doubt or negativity.

Divine provisions for sanctification:

We have already talked about the three great “witnesses” that the Lord has given for our sanctification: the water of the Word, the oil of the Holy Spirit, and the Blood of Jesus Christ . The Scriptures also speaks of the church in our formation. The Lord will use others in the church to help us see our sins, bring correction and encourage us in our walk with the Lord.

Those in leadership have responsibility before God to ensure order and godliness in the church.

“Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

Hebrews 13:7

“Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ.”

Colossians 1:28

“As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.”

1 Timothy 5:20

We are each to submit to one another. In this way we can be open to what the Lord would say to us through the Body of Christ. God may well choose to use our brother or sister in the Lord to bring us to repentance.

“If any one refuses to obey what we say in this letter, note that man, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not look on him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.”

2 Thessalonians 3:14-15

“Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him;”

Luke 17:3

Overcoming temptation

Wrong desires precede temptation

Virtually every sin committed is preceded by a wrong desire. In fact dwelling on ungodly desires is sin. Satan will place temptations in our way according to these desires. Satan draws out from us the evil that is already in our hearts. We need to be so careful about our heart motives. The Scripture says that our heart is not to be trusted. For example, the greedy tend toward corruption. The lustful to sexual sin. The hateful to revenge and violence.

“But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.”

1 Timothy 6:9

David and Bathsheba

David fell into temptation and sin in part because he was not occupied. He stayed at home instead of going out to battle. Sin often occurs when we are not busy with Kingdom work. While David was roaming his palace he saw Bathsheba bathing nude. David took “the second look”, instead of turning his eyes away. He allowed his lustful desire to take hold of him. Lust lead him into adultery and then the murder of Uriah. The consequence of his sin was that God took the life of his son.

“In the spring of the year, the time when kings go forth to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they ravaged the Ammonites, and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking upon the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, “Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?” So David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house.”

2 Samuel 11:1-4

Not defending sin

Right discernment releases us to make right choices. The will to resist temptation begins with the ability to call something sin.

But as long as we justify a sin, we will never have the will to resist it. Why not call it what it is: SIN.

“But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil.” **Hebrews 5:14**

Often people don't recognize their sins because no one ever told them it was sin. As we identify our sins we can then confess them to God and receive forgiveness and peace. A real barrier in recognizing sin is the way that we justify what we do.

For example, some justify their anger by blaming the other person – “It's their fault that I'm angry because they.....”. Others justify pornography as “a personal diversion which doesn't harm anyone”. Others justify violence in marriage “because it helps” in some way. White lies are said to be “necessary and useful”.

There is no end to the reasons we give to justify our sins. Such arguments become demonic fortresses of the mind that must be identified as unbiblical deceptions. True repentance begins when we stop justifying our sin, and call it what it is: sin. Then the cleansing work of the Blood of Jesus can begin in us.

“ Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.” **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**

The mature Christian identifies evil. He discerns the difference between sin and goodness. The immature Christian has yet to apply godly standards to his life, and still is living by the standards of the world.

“ (Solomon asked of God...) Give thy servant therefore an understanding mind to govern thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to govern this thy great people?” **1 Kings 3:9**

The Word of God warns us about sin and its consequences. Furthermore when used by the Holy Spirit the Scriptures have the power to discern those sins that are hidden even from ourselves. This type of deep heart repentance comes to those who have the humility to be corrected whether by God or by others. A proud person has never been broken by deep repentance.

"... the ordinances of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults." **Psalm 19:9-11**

"The wisdom of a prudent man is to discern his way, but the folly of fools is deceiving." **Proverbs 14:8**

One who honors an idol or image is an example of a person living in ignorance of God's expectations of them to worship Him. He has no spiritual discernment.

"They know not, nor do they discern; for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their minds, so that they cannot understand. 19 No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, "Half of it I burned in the fire, I also baked bread on its coals, I roasted flesh and have eaten; and shall I make the residue of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?" **Isaiah 44:18-19**

Joseph deals with temptation

In the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife we see how we can overcome temptation. Joseph was working as an overseer in the house with all the workers under his command. Potiphar trusted Joseph completely. Potiphar's wife sees that Joseph is handsome and begins to seduce him to lie with her. Much can be learned from the way that Joseph as a young man dealt with the temptation.

- First, he simply refuses to give in. He made up his mind that he would not sin. We all have a choice, a will, let's use it!

- Second, he openly states why it is a sin: *"how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"*

"And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and said, "Lie with me." 8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Lo, having me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my hand; 9 he is not greater in this house than I am; nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" **Genesis 39:7-9**

- Third, he chose not to listen to her. Don't allow Satan to fill your mind with temptations. Don't watch and don't listen to things that could cause us to go down the path of sin. If the internet, or the television, or an ungodly person is tempting us, then we need to seriously deal with it. Cut off the friendship, disconnect from the internet, and turn off the television.

- Fourth, run from temptation. If the temptation becomes too intense to handle, then run from it.

“And although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie with her or to be with her. 11 But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, 12 she caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me.” But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and got out of the house.” **Genesis 39:10-12**

Overcoming through the Word of God

The Word of God is a tremendous weapon that God has given us against temptation. By reading it every day we are instructed in righteousness. We are equipped to deal with whatever temptation comes our way. A Christian who chooses not to read his Bible is like a soldier without armor. With the Word of God we can cast down the strongholds of the mind that would justify sin and lure us into temptation. We see how Jesus again and again used the Word of God to defeat Satan's temptations.

“The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” **Luke 4:3-4**

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need some one to teach you again the first principles of God's word. You need milk, not solid food; 13 for every one who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a child.” **Hebrews 5:12-13**

Overcoming through prayer

The New Testament frequently exhorts us to pray without ceasing and to be alert. Through prayer we stay alert and therefore are prepared for temptations. The prayerless Christian is often taken by surprise by temptations.

"Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." **Matthew 26:41**

"Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour." **1 Peter 5:8**

Building defenses against temptation:

We each should be aware of our points of weakness, where Satan could effectively bring temptation. We should avoid people and places that would tempt us according to our weaknesses. Here are some examples:

➤ A husband should avoid intimate friendships with other women, or being alone with another woman to whom he feels drawn. And likewise for wives.

➤ People who have addictions should always avoid going to places where they will be tempted. An alcoholic should avoid the pub and bottle shops, a gambler should avoid the races, a womanizer or a "party person" should avoid night clubs and discos, a gossip should avoid gossips.

➤ We need to guard our eyes and ears which are the doors to the soul. If you see a pretty woman or a handsome man passing by, don't look twice. Take care with what we watch on TV and the internet, the books we read, and the music we listen to. We have so many ineffective, neutralized Christians because they are bound by the influence of the internet, TV, computer/video games, or their mobile phone. So many marriages have been destroyed through internet pornography.

"I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I look upon a virgin? What would be my portion from God above, and my heritage from the Almighty on high? Does not calamity befall the unrighteous, and disaster the workers of iniquity?" **Job 31:1-3**

➤ Be accountable to others. A husband and wife should be accountable to one another. If the husband is feeling sexually tempted towards pornography or is feeling drawn towards another woman, he should normally tell his wife.³ Then the couple can pray together and support one another. Together they can work out

³ If this is not possible, then the husband/wife should make themselves accountable to someone else.

a way of avoiding the temptation and dealing with it. We can be accountable to those in our home group.

“Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Ephesians 5:21

➤ Having a “mentor” is helpful, particularly for those in ministry. A mentor is someone whom we respect, and know that confidentiality will be maintained. A mentor is a person to whom we are accountable, who has permission to ask questions regarding our personal life. (And to whom we have agreed to give honest answers). Or we may make ourselves accountable to our home group, or to a Christian friend.

The path of seduction

The following passage shows a young man seduced into sin. The Holy Spirit calls to us not to be simple, but wise in the way we walk. Over thousands of years have passed since the passage was written and yet it is so pertinent to life today.

“For at the window of my house I have looked out through my lattice, and I have seen among the simple, I have perceived among the youths, a young man without sense, passing along the street near her corner, taking the road to her house in the twilight, in the evening, at the time of night and darkness. And lo, a woman meets him, dressed as a harlot, wily of heart. She is loud and wayward, her feet do not stay at home; now in the street, now in the market, and at every corner she lies in wait. She seizes him and kisses him, and with impudent face she says to him: “I had to offer sacrifices, and today I have paid my vows; so now I have come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly, and I have found you. I have decked my couch with coverings, colored spreads of Egyptian linen; I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with love. For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey; he took a bag of money with him; at full moon he will come home.” With much seductive speech she persuades him; with her smooth talk she compels him. All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a stag is caught fast till an arrow pierces its entrails; as a bird rushes into a snare; he does not know that it will cost him his life. And now, O sons, listen to me, and be attentive to the words of my mouth. Let not your heart turn aside to her ways, do not stray into her paths; for many a victim has she laid low; yea, all her slain are a mighty host.”

Proverbs 7:6-26

The Lord's correction

Being a listener

Discipline is painful, but gets our attention! Like when you hit your thumb with the hammer! Suddenly we pay attention to what we are doing.

God disciplines us because we fail to listen to Him and continue doing our own thing. If we hear and respond to the things that God is saying to us we would save ourselves a lot of pain.

Pride and defensiveness are two reasons why people don't listen. When people are defensive they turn off from hearing others. A defensive person is unbalanced, always wanting praise without correction. Someone may have a constructive comment to make, but a defensive person can't receive it because of his insecurities or woundedness.

When someone says something to him he takes it personally. He may have been wounded before by verbal attacks, and he puts up a shield even against those who love him. He robs himself of the love and correction that others would offer. He chooses to take offense. Offense is a self-inflicted wound.

God will seek to bring us to personal wholeness through discipline. He disciplines us so that we are forgiving, good listeners, and open to correction.

Pride is another reason why we fail to listen to God or others. For example "Bob" had recently been given an old car for his pastoral ministry, and he was so appreciative of it. Yet, Bob was driving around town for weeks with a low oil reading. His son, John repeatedly warned him that the car oil was low. But Bob was so focused on his own stuff that he wasn't open to listening. Anyway he thought he knew his car well, and who was his son to be giving him advice!

Eventually the lack of oil severely damaged the engine. No longer would the car take him where he needed to go. Bob was so distressed that he had wrecked the car that had been given to him,

all because he didn't listen. Through this situation God showed him his pride, and inability to hear others. God uses painful experiences to teach us to walk humbly.

Pride goes before the fall

When we are proud, we become deaf to advice or correction (from God or others). We are so focused on our own ideas and plans that we are unable to take on board something new. About the only thing that will bring about change is the pain of discipline. We see in Scripture how God uses discipline to break up the hard ground of pride and rebellion, so that there might spring up repentance, humility, and godliness.

"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

Proverbs 16:18

The prophet Daniel was called to interpret a dream of King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel told the king that he would become insane for seven years, eating grass like an ox. Unless he repented of his pride, God's judgement was about to fall. God's purpose was that the king would humbly acknowledge the supreme authority of God over the nations - even a king's position comes from God.

Daniel gives the following advice to the king:

"Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you; break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your tranquillity."

Daniel 4:27

Despite the warning of the dream and Daniel's advice, Nebuchadnezzar stubbornly continued in his pride and refuses to listen to the Lord. Pride always comes before the fall.

"... and the king said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; and you shall be made to eat grass like an ox; and seven times shall pass over you, until you have learned that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will." Immediately the word was fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men, and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles'

feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws." **Daniel 4:30-34**

After the seven years of insanity, Nebuchadnezzar's mind is healed and his position is restored. After this terrible period of judgement, he confesses:

"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven; for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to abase." **Daniel 4:37**

There are numerous Bible stories like this one. It is a dangerous thing to continue in pride, reject the Lord's voice, and refuse His correction. The discipline of the Lord is often far more painful than people realize. God wants us to walk humbly before Him, producing the fruit of righteousness.

The Scriptures correct us

The Lord has given us His Word to correct us. If we are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, He will speak to us through the Scriptures and cause us to repent. In the Word we see the right path to take. If we respond to the Lord we save ourselves from more painful types of divine discipline.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16-17

"Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction."

2 Timothy 4:2

God's discipline is a sign of our sonship

The Father disciplines us because He loves us. We are His children and He cares enough about us to turn us from our own ways. Correction is a sign of love. Just as we discipline our children for their good. The goal of discipline is repentance and a changed life. If God didn't discipline and correct us we probably wouldn't change. When the Lord is working on us in this way, we are to submit to Him. In this way we can quickly learn the heart lessons.

"It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes."

Psalms 119:71

“My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.”
Proverbs 3:11-12

“And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons? --“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by him. 6 For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” 7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ... For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

Hebrews 12:5-7, 11

Broken by God

God can only flow through broken vessels. While we are proud and self-reliant, God cannot use us. We need to be like clay in the hands of the potter. Many Christians tell of experiences of being broken by God. Truly it is an experience of the cross, where we experience a dying to the old self, and a breaking forth of the beauty of Christ in our lives. Brokenness is when God deals with our stubbornness, ungodly character and attitudes, and areas of our life that we have held back from Him.

Being broken by God is a life-changing event. After such an experience the Christian is far more fruitful in the Kingdom of God than previously. As an old chorus says:

“Spirit of the Living God fall afresh on me.
Break me, melt me, mould me, make me.
Spirit of the Living God fall afresh on me.”

“Prepare it with oil on a griddle; bring it well-mixed and present the grain offering broken in pieces as an aroma pleasing to the LORD.”

Leviticus 6:21

“Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal.”

Job 5:17-18

A change of direction

Discipline acts to change our direction, like a train that is switched from one track to another. It is the pain of discipline that

gets our attention causing us to listen to God. When we heed God's discipline we change the way we are going. We change from a path that brings death to areas of our life, to a way that brings abundant life.

"For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life..." **Proverbs 6:23**

A heart of wisdom

The wisdom that flows through the heart may only be gained through correction and discipline. While the mind may learn through instruction, often the heart only learns through experience. We call it heart wisdom. Discipline is an experience that can change the flow of the heart. This is so important as it is from the heart that flows our behavior, words and attitudes. If God can train our heart through discipline it will change our whole way of life: the way we relate to people, our inner thoughts, our decisions. Proverbs 29:15 says that correction imparts wisdom.

If we harden our heart against the Lord, and refuse to take Him seriously we may come under a curse, or His judgment. This may take the form of accidents, sickness, poverty, a general unfruitfulness, etc.

"If in spite of these things you do not accept my correction but continue to be hostile toward me, I myself will be hostile toward you and will afflict you for your sins seven times over."

Leviticus 26:23-24

"He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored." **Proverbs 13:18**

Given that God is merciful and patient with us, a curse would occur only after we have continually been unresponsive to His correction.

"At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent. You will say, "How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I would not obey my teachers or listen to my instructors. I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly." **Proverbs 5:11-14**

The Flesh

The flesh: its passions and desires

What characterizes the flesh is ungodly desire. The Bible describes these fleshly desires as passions and lusts. They are like driving impulses or forces pushing us to sin and ungodly behavior.

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world.”

1 John 2:16

“And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

Galatians 5:24

These fleshly urges are always marked by a lack of self-control. Like the urge to gossip (“I’ve just got to tell you...”), the eruption of anger and violence, uncontrolled sexual desires which lead to pornography, fornication and adultery, the impulse to gamble or steal, the desire to make cutting and sarcastic remarks, the addictive impulse to watch TV & videos, play computer games, to be riveted to the internet, read magazines and novels.

We all do things out of impulse. Esau arriving home after a hunting trip, smells his brothers lentil stew, he is overcome by his hunger, and in a moment of impulse exchanges his birthright as first born son for a plate of stew. For most of his life he lived in bitter regret.

“(See to it) that no one be immoral or irreligious like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.”

Hebrews 12:15-17

“Once when Jacob was boiling pottage, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. And Esau said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red pottage, for I am famished!” (Therefore his name was called Edom.) Jacob said, “First sell me your birthright.” Esau said, “I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?” Jacob said, “Swear to me first.” So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.”

Genesis 25:29-34

How many spend years in prison, or are sitting on death row today because of an irrational impulsive act, like murdering a loved one out of a drunken fit of rage.

The flesh vs. the Spirit.

What the flesh wants is always in conflict to what the Holy Spirit wants. Within us there are two conflicting desires, warring with one another.

“For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.”

Romans 7:18-19

On the one hand we desire to love and obey God, yet on the other hand our old man seeks to please and satisfy its self. The impulses and desires of the flesh are directly opposed to the desires of the Spirit.

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would.”

Galatians 5:16-17

Demons and the flesh

There is a difference between demons and our fleshly desire. We cannot blame demons if we fall into temptation and sin. We are responsible for giving in to our flesh. Demons play on the flesh, enhancing fleshly desires.

“These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm; for them the nether gloom of darkness has been reserved. 18 For, uttering loud boasts of folly, they entice with licentious passions of the flesh men who have barely escaped from those who live in error.”

2 Peter 2:17-18

An overhead projector enlarges the image of a transparency. If lust is compared to an overhead transparency, then demons are the overhead projector. Demons act to enlarge things. Take away the transparency and there is no blown up image. Demons play on our fleshly desires. If we control our fleshly desires we will deal a powerful blow against the demons.

The key to victory over demons is self-control. Self-control is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. It is God at work in us. As well this the Lord has given us His armor to protect us (see Ephesians 6:10-18).

Dealing with the flesh

While demons are to be resisted, rebuked, and cast out. You cannot cast out your flesh. Scripture says that the flesh is to be crucified. We are to turn away from our fleshly desires, repent of them, and die to them. Instead of playing with thoughts of lust, greed, self-pity, rejection, or resentment, these are to be repented of and shunned constantly.

Scripture says that we are not to set our minds on the things of the flesh. The more we dwell on these ungodly thoughts the bigger the problem becomes for us.

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Romans 8:5-8

We are to shun the things of the flesh, and hunger and thirst after God.

“But as for you, man of God, shun all this; aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.”

1 Timothy 6:11

“So shun youthful passions and aim at righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call upon the Lord from a pure heart.”

2 Timothy 2:22

Paul says that Christians who give free reign to the flesh act more like animals slandering and backbiting to get their own way, that they end up destroying one another.

“But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another. But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would.”

Galatians 5:15-17

The works of the flesh

It can be so helpful for someone to explain to us what sin is. If we know what sin is we can confess it and know God's forgiveness and peace.

“Now the works of the flesh are clearly revealed, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lustfulness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, fightings, jealousies, angers, rivalries, divisions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkennesses, wild parties, and things like these; of which I tell you beforehand, as I also said before, that the ones practicing such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Galatians 5:19-21 (Green’s Literal)

FORNICATION – sex outside of the marriage covenant whether homosexuality, fornication, or adultery.

IMPURITY – anything that falls short of the purity of God, including swearing, pornography, unclean jokes.

IDOLATRY – good luck charms, anything or anyone in whom we depend, instead of trusting God. Greed and the love of money are forms of idolatry.

SORCERY or witchcraft – is when we manipulate another person to do what we want. In its most developed form a person will use curses and demons to bring about ungodly purposes. For example a girl who wants a young man to marry her, and manipulates him to do so using the occult.

Sorcery as manipulation is not uncommon among Christians. Some examples...

- ❖ Praying that people will conform to our wishes, doing what we want, rather than surrendering our will to Christ’s. There is an intercession that is ungodly.
- ❖ Not attending church in order to get attention, so others will give us a call or visit us.
- ❖ Exerting pressure on the church’s leadership to do what we want through ungodly means. For example:
 - Withdrawal of one’s support unless we get what we want. “I’m not going to help out unless you do what I say.”
 - Giving someone the cold shoulder, ignoring them, can be very hurtful.
 - Threatening to withhold one’s tithes & offerings, or to leave the church to alter a decision.
 - Using a spiritual pretext to manipulate changes. Such as suggesting that our way of doing things will lead to greater blessing and has divine approval.

- Twisting the facts, making accusations, slander, and casting blame in order to get the leadership to change a decision or direction.

ENMITY

This refers to the workings of the flesh in our Christian relationships. Enmity is an unloving condition of the heart towards others whether in holding of grudges (when we choose to dwell on a hurtful memory), resentment or hatred. The opposite of enmity is to love our brother or sister as Christ loved us.

“In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” **1 John 4:10-11**

STRIFE

Strife is when God’s children fight one another. Strife is the result of such things as:

- Sorcery where Christians try to manipulate one another.
- Gossip telling the truth for self-serving reasons.
- Slander twisting the truth or telling lies in order to defame someone.
- Jealousy of someone’s gifting, ministry, position, or wealth.
- Dissension - where a person is disgruntled with leadership and gathers others under his wing.

The result of the flesh

The result of giving in to fleshly desires is disunity and tension. When we give in to the flesh we can clearly see its impact in the marriage, family, work place, or the church.

“If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another.” **Galatians 5:25-26**

In what field are we sowing?

Sowing in the flesh will reap death in our lives. We sow in the flesh by dwelling on fleshly stuff, by feeding ourselves with ungodly stuff. Listening to gossip, spending our time in things that don’t please the Lord, wasting our time with magazines, novels, the TV, video, or computer, and giving in to jealousy and anger. Instead we are to occupy ourselves with Kingdom business.

“For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”
Galatians 6:8

“While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death”
Romans 7:5

Sowing in the Spirit will reap eternal life. We sow in the Spirit by investing our time in Kingdom pursuits – showing mercy to others, helping the poor, sharing the Gospel, prayer, reading the Scriptures, choosing to move in the fruits of the Spirit. Walking in the Spirit leads us to peace in God, life, joy, and harmony with others.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.”
Galatians 5:22-23

Wisdom from heaven

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.”

Proverbs 1:7

The Fear of God

The fear of God is basic in obtaining wisdom. The fear of God begins in our life with the decision to repent and receive Christ as our Saviour. It continues as a love for righteousness and a repulsion or hate towards sin. The fear of the Lord means to take into account what God wants for us in any particular situation. It is to be aware of His awesome holy Presence in our lives, when we make decisions.

Having “the fear of God” does not mean living in fear of God as an unmerciful judge. Rather the fear of God comes as we love God so much that we desire to obey him at all times. It is to know and do the will of God for each situation and decision that we make. As we consistently make godly decisions (e.g. not to react in anger, or not to lust in our hearts) we are then walking in God’s wisdom, and we will know His abundant blessing.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

Proverbs 1:7

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.”

Proverbs 9:10

“The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.”

Proverbs 8:13

Worldly wisdom

The character of Christ is love, compassion, humility, patience, courage, righteousness, peace, and goodness. Showing the character of Jesus will bless our marriage, home, work, and neighbors.

“Likewise you wives, be submissive to your husbands, so that some, though they do not obey the word, may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, when they see your reverent and chaste behavior.”

1 Peter 3:1

Worldly wisdom is selfish. According to the wisdom of this world we have to look after ourselves and not put ourselves out for others. Worldly wisdom treats others as objects to our own selfish ends. This is the opposite of what Jesus did on the cross. Worldly wisdom reveals itself in greed and selfishness. Many Christians are worldly and not spiritual. They desire what they see in advertising and what their neighbor has. They are ready to argue with other Christians in order to achieve their purposes in the church.

Envy, arguments, greed, and pride have a demonic root. When we act in this way we are like the animals that fight for their food. Seriously, if we choose to live like this we may find God as our enemy.

“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This wisdom is not such as comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity.” **James 3:14-17**

“What causes wars, and what causes fighting among you? Is it not your passions that are at war in your members? You desire and do not have; so you kill. And you covet and cannot obtain; so you fight and wage war. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.” **James 4:1-3**

Human wisdom is based on self-reliance and sufficiency in one's own resources. This leads to pride. Heavenly wisdom is about acknowledging our insufficiency, and total dependency upon God. This leads to humility.

“When pride comes, then comes disgrace; but with the humble is wisdom.” **Proverbs 11:2**

The characteristics of a wise disciple:

➤ He has the capacity to listen to others. He is open to counsel and instruction.

“The wise man also may hear and increase in learning, and the man of understanding acquire skill...” **Proverbs 1:5**

➤ He is open to correction in an attitude of humility. He submits to others.

“Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction, but he who heeds reproof is honored.” **Proverbs 13:18**

➤ He has control of his mouth. From his lips flow wise counsel.

“When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is prudent.” **Proverbs 10:19**

➤ He trusts in the Lord and doesn't rely on his own human judgement of situations.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.” **Proverbs 3:5-7**

➤ He searches for the wisdom and discernment that come from God.

“Do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. Get wisdom; get insight. Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you.” **Proverbs 4:5-6**

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways, will receive anything from the Lord.” **James 1:5-7**

➤ He seeks to know God's counsel and insight. He takes hold of God's wisdom knowing that in so doing he will find true happiness.

“Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gets understanding. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called happy.” **Proverbs 3:13, 16-18**

➤ He associates with wise and mature Christians.

“He who walks with wise men becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.” **Proverbs 13:20**

➤ He is faithful in his ministry in the Kingdom of God. He is a good steward of the gifts, ministry, and resources entrusted to him by the Father.

“Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.” **Matthew 24:44-47**

“..but in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence..” **1 Peter 3:15**

Our body is God's temple

"I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." **Romans 12:1**

Sanctifying our body to the Lord

Our body is to be used only for those things permitted by the Word of God. Our spirit, soul, and body are to be kept blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it." **1 Thessalonians 5:23-24**

Notice how the Scripture also says that our spirit, soul and body are to be kept "sound". That is we have a responsibility to look after ourselves, to maintain our health both emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Good health has much to do with our consecration. For example, drinking and smoking can have devastating effects on one's health. Stress and worry damage the whole person. These can result in emotional and psychological problems, as well health problems.

God's purpose for our body

Here we will briefly look at some of the Biblical purposes for our body.

➤ **To bring God glory.** Our body was created to be His temple in which God resides. Our body belongs to the Lord and is for the glory of God. When we use our bodies for ungodly purposes, such as sexual immorality, we defile God's temple.

"The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the

immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” **1 Corinthians 6:13-20**

➤ **To show the life of Jesus**

“For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh.” **2 Corinthians 4:11**

➤ **To work.** Honest work is a blessing from God. God wants us to be productive and fruitful in this life.

“Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for any honest work,” **Titus 3:1**

“For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work in quietness and to earn their own living. 13 Brethren, do not be weary in well-doing.” **2 Thessalonians 3:11-13**

➤ **To worship and praise Him.** We can worship God by raising our hands, clapping and dancing before Him. But we are also to worship God with our bodies daily simply by doing what He wants us to do.

“I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” **Romans 12:1**

Blessings for those who trust in the Lord...

Obedience to the Lord is healthy for us. The psalmist writes how the Lord is always before Him. He is abiding continually in the Presence of God. He feels confident because He is trusting in God. He says: “I shall not be moved.” He enjoys emotional health: “my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices.” Because his trust is in the Lord he says: “my body also dwells secure.”. His body is not diseased by stress and worry.

“I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also dwells secure.” **Psalm 16:8-9**

“For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”
1 Timothy 4:8

Exercising self-control

“Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”
1 Corinthians 9:25-27

“To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.”
1 Corinthians 7:8-9

Keeping the marriage bed pure

“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and adulterous.”
Hebrews 13:4

“You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness while she is in her menstrual uncleanness.”
Leviticus 18:19

Keeping sex in the marriage

Scripture prohibits incest (sex between close family members), fornication (sex between unmarrieds), homosexuality (same sex partners) and adultery (sex outside of marriage).

“None of you shall approach any one near of kin to him to uncover nakedness. I am the LORD.”
Leviticus 18:6

“And you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, and defile yourself with her.”
Leviticus 18:20

Curses for sexual sin

“Blessed is the man to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah I acknowledged my sin to thee, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to

the LORD"; then thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin."

Psalm 32:2-5

Homosexuality and lesbianism

Homosexuality is "sexual desire or behaviour directed toward a person or persons of one's own sex."⁴ Homosexuality includes lesbianism, which is sex between women.. It is important to mention these things as some people have erroneously argued that:

- ◆ the Bible does not mention lesbianism;
- ◆ that homosexuality is a loving expression between same sex partners.

The bible teaches that homosexuality is shameful, improper, an abomination to God, and arises from a "base mind". That those who practice homosexuality "will receive in their own persons the penalty for their error".

"You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination."

Leviticus 18:22

"For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct... Though they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them."

Romans 1:26-28,32

"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."

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Sodomy (or a sodomite) refers to sex using the back passage, and includes sex with animals⁵.

⁴ The Random House College Dictionary, Random House 1979

⁵ Ibid pg 1248

“And you shall not lie with any beast and defile yourself with it, neither shall any woman give herself to a beast to lie with it: it is perversion.”
Leviticus 18:23

Remember, God loves the sinner but he hates the sin. As with all sin God wants us to turn from it in repentance and receive His forgiveness and love. The account of God’s judgement upon Sodom reveals the Lord’s attitude towards the sin of homosexuality (or sodomy).

“The two angels came to Sodom in the evening; and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and bowed himself with his face to the earth, 2 and said, “My lords, turn aside, I pray you, to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise up early and go on your way.” They said, “No; we will spend the night in the street.” 3 But he urged them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. 4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house; 5 and they called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.” 6 Lot went out of the door to the men, shut the door after him, 7 and said, “I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. 8 Behold, I have two daughters who have not known man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.” 9 But they said, “Stand back!” And they said, “This fellow came to sojourn, and he would play the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them.” Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door. 10 But the men put forth their hands and brought Lot into the house to them, and shut the door. 11 And they struck with blindness the men who were at the door of the house, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves groping for the door.”

Genesis 19:1-11

The human spirit

Our spirit is made alive in Christ

Our spirit is made alive and we are born again when God breathes His life into us. This happens when we invite Jesus Christ into our lives. Without Jesus we are spiritually dead.

“And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh...” **Ezekiel 11:19**

“But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...” **Ephesians 2:4-6**

Sickness of spirit

The human spirit can become sick, anguished, grieved, bruised, scarred, painful &/or demonized through life experiences.

➤ *An injured or broken spirit*

“A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.” **Proverbs 15:4**

➤ *A grieved spirit*

“A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.” **Proverbs 15:13**

“Behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but you shall cry out for pain of heart, and shall wail for anguish of spirit.”

Isaiah 65:14

➤ *A bruised spirit*

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.” **Isaiah 53:5**

“... he will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick, till he brings justice to victory;” **Matthew 12:20**

➤ *A proud spirit*

"But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him;
Daniel 5:20

➤ *A downcast spirit*

"A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones."
Proverbs 17:22

➤ *A faint spirit*

"... to grant to those who mourn in Zion--to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified."
Isaiah 61:3

➤ *An anxious or vexed spirit*

Anxiety and fear can lead one into ungodliness. Such as when Ahab was unable to eat because he was so frustrated about not being able to buy Naboth's vineyard.

"But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said to him, "Why is your spirit so vexed that you eat no food?" 6 And he said to her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite, and said to him, 'Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it please you, I will give you another vineyard for it'; and he answered, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'" 7 And Jezebel his wife said to him, "Do you now govern Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."
1 Kings 21:5

Demonically afflicted Christians

The spirit of the believer while alive in Christ can also become contaminated, impure or poisoned. As the physical body can be sick through contact with such things as mercury or asbestos, likewise with our spirit. Christians can be demonically afflicted. For example, Paul warns Christians of the real possibility of falling away from the Lord because of demonic influence:

"...but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits, whose slaves you want to be once more?"
Galatians 4:9

“See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ.”

Colossians 2:8

Many of the examples in Scripture of people affected by demons were God’s people, some were anointed of the Holy Spirit.

➤ **SAUL** had been anointed with holy oil by the prophet Samuel to hold the office of king. After his anointing we read how the Holy Spirit came upon him to empower him for his new responsibilities:

“When they came to Gibeah, behold, a band of prophets met him; and the spirit of God came mightily upon him, and he prophesied among them. 11 And when all who knew him before saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, “What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?”

1 Samuel 10:10

Yet later Saul sinned by not obeying the Lord’s command to destroy the Amalekites and their possessions. Saul was told that his sin of rebellion was like that of witchcraft (divination) or idolatry, both of which are entry points for demons.

And Saul said to Samuel, “I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, I have gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal.” And Samuel said, “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king.”

1 Samuel 16:20-23

So Saul who had known the Anointing of the Lord, because of his rebellion became afflicted with an evil spirit.

“Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him.”

1 Samuel 16:20-23

➤ Some of the **OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS** chose to listen to lying spirits, and became afflicted with such a spirit. So also Christians (and those prophetically gifted) can go astray after deceiving and lying spirits.

“Now therefore behold, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the LORD has spoken evil concerning you.”
1Kings 22:23

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.”
1 Timothy 4:1

• Jesus healed **A DISABLED WOMAN** who was permanently bent over by an evil spirit. Luke says that she was a “daughter of Abraham”, that is part of God’s people. Furthermore Jesus directly attributed her sickness to a “spirit of infirmity” which had bound her for eighteen years.

“Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your infirmity.” And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, said to the people, “There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.” Then the Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?”

Luke 13:10-16

➤ **SIMON THE MAGICIAN.** Simon was a famous and powerful magician in the nation of Samaria. The Samaritans were amazed by his magic (Acts 8:9-12). But after he heard the Gospel preached by Phillip he believed and was baptized, along with many Samaritans.

“Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.”
Acts 8:13

However Simon never fully repented of his sin. In order to do his magic he would have been controlled by spirits of witchcraft. Without deep repentance these evil spirits would have continued to effect him. This is what we see in the story that follows his baptism. Simon seeks the Anointing of God by offering money. Peter discerns that his spirit was still afflicted and poisoned by these evil spirits, even though he was a believer (Acts 8:18-23). Peter in speaking of Simon's spiritual condition says:

- *“for your heart is not right before God” (v.21)*
- *“Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours” (v.22)*
- *“you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity” (v.23)*

How demons enter

Demons enter through sin

Flies are attracted to garbage, in the same way demons are attracted to sin. Wherever there is sin there is the real possibility of demons being involved.

Intense ungodly desires

Demons always manifest themselves when someone gives themselves over to intense ungodly desires. The following passage gives such an example. The spirit of jealous comes upon a man when he becomes jealous of his wife, thinking that she has committed adultery.

"...when the spirit of jealousy comes upon a man and he is jealous of his wife; then he shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law." **Numbers 5:30**

Generational curse

Demons in the form of a curse can be passed down through the generations and especially where ancestors have been involved in idolatry, witchcraft and occultic practices.

"You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 9 you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 10 but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments." **Deuteronomy 5:8-10**

We are instructed to confess not only our own sins but the sins of our ancestors. Through confession and repentance the Blood of Jesus cleanses us, and we can be delivered from generational curse.

"But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery which they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity; then I will remember my covenant with Jacob..."

Leviticus 26:40-42^a

Curse

Demons can afflict someone when they curse themselves (self-cursing). Demons can afflict others when people curse one another, or call down curses upon themselves and upon their children (for example in carva drinking).

"But Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him, and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing."

Genesis 27:11-12

On the Cross, Jesus Christ became a curse that we might be delivered and receive the blessing.

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, "Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree"--

Galatians 3:13

The Christian can appropriate the promises of the Word of God and believe for God's blessing.

"I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves."

Genesis 12:3

We are to bless those who curse us. In this way we will not only have victory over curses but we shall walk under the blessing of God.

"Bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you."

Luke 6:28

Cursed objects

Paul says that idols and the food offered to them are nothing. However he does say that demons are associated with the idol or image. The idol is only made of cloth, wood, metal or stone, it cannot speak, heal, bless or curse. However their demons do have power to affect people. Paul warns that the believer could come into demonic bondage through idolatry.

"What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons."

1 Corinthians 10:19-20

“My people inquire of a thing of wood, and their staff gives them oracles. For a spirit of harlotry has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the harlot.” **Hosea 4:12**

All objects, books, clothes, rocks, and games associated with witchcraft, the occult, secret societies, religions, or sects must be destroyed.

“Say to the people of Israel, When you pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 52 then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images, and demolish all their high places;” **Numbers 33:51-52**

“...you shall tear down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim with fire; you shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy their name out of that place.” **Deuteronomy 12:3**

“Many also of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. 19 And a number of those who practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So the word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily.” **Acts 19:18-20**

Ungodly relationships

We know that the Anointing of the Holy Spirit is transferable from one person to another, normally through the laying on of hands.

“Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was upon him and put it upon the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did so no more.” **Numbers 11:25**

Demons can also be transmitted from one person to another. This happens normally through UNGODLY SUBMISSION. Ungodly submission often leads to demonic affliction. This is where we agree with someone to do something which is contrary to Scripture. For example: committing sexual immorality, having your palm read, or requesting the services of a medium, occultic healer, or witch.

"When you come into the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, any one who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD; and because of these abominable practices the LORD your God is driving them out before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God."

Deuteronomy 18:9-13

Deliverance from demons

Deep repentance from sin is the key to being delivered from demons and staying free from them. If we go back into the sin that is how bondage will happen again. The person must make a decision to repent and renounce the sin, and to walk in godliness. If you deal with the sin in genuine repentance, the demons must leave in the Name of Jesus. It is sin that gives them a legal foothold to remain. When the sin is removed and the Blood of Christ is applied, they no longer have any authority or legal reason to remain.

The Mind

“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”

Colossians 3:2

The mind of Christ

We can deceive ourselves in thinking that because our thoughts are not on public display that they don't matter. The mind is open before God. God searches the mind and heart to know what is really going on inside us.

“I the LORD search the mind and try the heart, to give to every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.”

Jeremiah 17:10

When God searches the mind he is looking for thoughts and desires that show a fervent love for Him and zeal to serve Him.

Our thoughts are to be pleasing to God, filled with His purpose. We are to have the mind of Christ. **We receive the mind of Christ by:**

➤ *Meditating on the Word of God.*

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.”

Psalms 19:1

The Word of God in our mind will destroy ungodly arguments and demonic fortresses of the mind. Having a Biblical mind, fostering thoughts that declare the Scriptures will in turn create self-esteem, peace of mind, security, confidence, positive thinking, godly and upright thinking. It will also help to destroy those thoughts of lust, jealousy, resentment, etc.

➤ *Bringing Him honour and glory.*

Primarily we do this with thoughts of love and gratitude towards God. *“... you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.”*

Mark 12:30

➤ *Prayer*

Prayer releases Kingdom thinking. Instead of reacting to people and circumstances we act. Instead of simply doing what we always

have done, we begin to think creatively of divine possibilities. The Lord's vision fills our mind with creative thoughts. As we pray the Holy speaks to us. Our mind is filled with the creative thoughts that come from God.

The battle of the mind

The mind is the battle field of much of the spiritual warfare that a believer will experience in his life. In the mind the believer will battle against thoughts like self-pity, hopelessness, despondency, fear, doubt, anxiety, lust, pornographic images, revenge, discouragement, suicide, blasphemy, and all types of ungodly thinking and perverse imaginations. Satan wages war against our mind.

For every ungodly thought that enters our mind there is an evil spirit that is seeking to plant it there. Our mind is like soil, and the thoughts we experience are like seed. If we allow Satan's thoughts to germinate and put down roots in our mind, then we will end up with a garden full of ugly weeds.

Some Christians feel ashamed and guilty because of their thought life. They do not realize that it is Satan who is placing these thoughts in our mind. Even if the thoughts take the first person, for example, "I hate John", they can still originate from demons.

For example Satan tempted Cain to murder his brother, Abel. God warned Cain that he was to take authority over this evil desire. We are all responsible to rule our minds.

"In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4 and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. 6 The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? 7If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."

Genesis 4:3-7

Our response is to rebuke ungodly thinking in the Name of Jesus, and refuse to go down that thought path. We have a choice

to make whether to dwell on these thoughts or to actively shut that doorway. Allowing ungodly thoughts to dominate our mind is when these evil seeds germinate and put down roots. In time they eventually bear bad fruit such as swearing, stealing, murder, adultery, revenge, being self-pitiful, etc.

Feeding the mind

What we feed the mind is so important particularly the music we listen to, the books we read, what we watch on TV, the internet, and the conversations we listen to. If we want a healthy mind we need to nourish it with healthy food. And there is no better food than the Word of God. God's Word is our daily source of nourishment to feed our thinking.

The following article illustrates the importance of keeping our mind pure.

"Promise Keepers reports that one-third of the men who attended Promise Keepers rallies in 1996 admitted to a personal struggle with pornography.

According to Enough is Enough, an organization devoted to protecting children and families from the dangers of pornography, illicit sexual material is just about everywhere. In fact, there are now more outlets for hard-core pornography in the United States than McDonalds' restaurants, says Enough is Enough. The introduction of pornography to the information highway has made home computers the fastest growing and primary mode of distribution of pornography, says Enough is Enough.

Dr. Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, calls porn a "ravenous cancer" that is destroying modern society. Land noted in Baptist Press that 1999 revenues of porn Web sites alone were estimated at nearly \$1.2 billion. In addition, some 25 million Americans visit cyber-sex sites - and sex is the No. 1 searched-for topic on the Internet.

Land also outlined the painful trail left by pornography -- increased incidents of child molestation, rape and sexual violence, transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, and societal values

and attitudes that condone and encourage dissemination of soft-core pornography.”⁶

A sound mind

A great percentage of people today suffer from a disturbed and confused mind. There are a number of reasons why this is so. The Bible is clear that mental confusion can come as a result of sin, whether in our own lives, that of our ancestors, or because of sin in our community.

“The LORD will smite you with madness and blindness and confusion of mind;” **Deuteronomy 28:28**

“And they came to Jesus, and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the man who had had the legion; and they were afraid.” **Mark 5:15**

Peace of mind comes as we put our trust in God. In contrast anxiety, fear and doubt lead to emotional disturbance and physical sickness.

“A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh, but passion makes the bones rot.” **Proverbs 14:30**

“Thou dost keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee. Trust in the LORD for ever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.” **Isaiah 26:3-4**

“And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be of anxious mind. For all the nations of the world seek these things; and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things shall be yours as well.”

Luke 12:29-31

Don't dwell on the negatives of the past, old hurts and grievances. Allow the Holy Spirit to renew our mind, filling it with hope for the future.

“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.”

Isaiah 65:17

⁶ By Janet Chismar, editor of Religion Today

“But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.”

Lamentations 3:21

Meditate on the good things God has done in your life.

“Remember this and consider, recall it to mind, you transgressors, 9 remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’

Isaiah 46:8-10

“I will call to mind the deeds of the LORD; yea, I will remember thy wonders of old.”

Psalms 77:11

Anger & discouragement

A warning about getting angry

We know that we are to love one another. So often it is anger that destroys those loving relationships. Jesus warns us that God will hold us accountable for our anger towards our brother in the Lord.

"You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." **Matthew 5:21-24**

Anger is Satan's opportunity

When we lose our self-control and anger takes over, we are laying out the welcome mat for the devil in our lives. Fleshly anger is a destructive force in marriages and all types of relationships. Remember our anger is the devil's opportunity. Anger is a downhill slope to sin, that's why it is the devil's opportunity. Sometimes we can take spiritual warfare and make it so spiritual as to have no practical meaning. If you want to slam the door on Satan in your home, and in your personal life, then slam the door on anger.

"Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil." **Ephesians 4:26-27**

Through anger comes an unbelievable amount of destruction. Through it comes: blind rage, loss of control, swearing, blasphemy, violence, deep emotional pain to others, destruction of the marriage and family, and the nullifying of our Christian witness. Have you ever noticed how spiritually trashed out you feel after losing your temper? When we vent our anger we grieve the Holy Spirit, and open the door to all sorts of wicked spirits.

The apostle James puts anger along with all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness. As much as we may try to justify our anger,

remember: “the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God.”

“Know this, my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” **James 1:19-21**

There is no justification for getting angry. People say: “But he deserves it. He provokes me. He asks for it. He just wont listen to me unless I shout at him. He makes my blood boil.” We are responsible for causing others to get angry. But we are responsible for our own anger if someone else is provoking us.

If someone is provoking you, they are sinning. But we are responsible if we react in anger. It is a sin to provoke others to anger. It is also a sin to vent our anger when provoked. You can’t blame others for your own anger.

People who provoke others

The word provoke in Colossians comes from the Greek word *erethizo* meaning “to stir up, rouse; make resentful, embitter.”⁷

“Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.” **Colossians 3:20-21**

The Greek word to provoke in Ephesians 6 means “to make angry, to bring one along to a deep-seated anger.”⁸ It also can mean to cause one to be resentful. Resentment and bitterness are really deep-seated anger.

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” **Ephesians 6:4**

Let us be careful not to provoke others to anger. Instead lets be peacemakers.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” **Matthew 5:9**

⁷ Greek English Dictionary, Copyright 1972 United Bible Societies, Pg. 72

⁸ Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament, Copyright 1976 Zondervan, Pg.540

Reasons why people get angry

Half the battle in receiving wholeness is understanding and recognizing the problem. When we have stopped justifying our anger, we can then humbly allow the Holy Spirit to show us why we get angry and how to be whole. The grace to break the anger curse is found in the Cross.

Verbal abuse

Jesus was mocked and beaten on the cross, but He did not retaliate in anger. Through the cross we receive the peace of God when others are provoking us. When someone is giving you a hard time, just go to the Cross. Think on Jesus, and His peace will flood your soul.

“Now the men who were holding Jesus mocked him and beat him; they also blindfolded him and asked him, “Prophesy! Who is it that struck you?” And they spoke many other words against him, reviling him.”

Luke 22:63-65

Expectations & lack of flexibility

When our expectations aren't met, that's when we can get upset and angry. If someone says that they will meet us for lunch at a café and don't show up. Expectations are basically rules. Some rules are made by governments who expect citizens to behave in a certain way, but most rules are made in our own heads. We think people should behave in a certain way. Perhaps we expect the young people to give up their seats on the bus, or we expect honesty and integrity of the people we do business with. What do we do with our unfulfilled expectations?

Go to the Cross and you will find that Jesus set them aside and nailed them to the Cross. We look at the cross and we see our expectations nailed there. So instead of responding in a legalistic spirit towards others. “I'm mad because I expected you to turn up on time.” We can let it go and receive grace from the Cross to forgive, to love, and to bless.

“And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”

Colossians 2:13-14

Rejection

When people are wounded by rejection, out of their deep hurt comes bitterness and anger. The person they loved, their best friend, has betrayed them. Our love and affection has been trampled on, and it hurts. We are really angry about it. We want to lash out at them and hurt them so that they can feel the hurt we have suffered. Or perhaps our anger simply turns into depression, and a dark cloud comes over our lives.

On the Cross Jesus suffered tremendous rejection. All His disciples deserted Him in His time of need. His close friend Peter denied Him three times. Jesus took our rejection so that we might no His comfort. Rejection leads to anger. Comfort leads to joy and peace.

“And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, “Certainly this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean.” But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are saying.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.”

Luke 22:59-62

Injustice

One of the causes of anger is the feeling that a personal injustice has been done. You were the one next in line for a promotion, but they passed you by. A person less experienced and less qualified was selected instead of you. It’s not right. Its an injustice and your mad.

Jesus took upon Himself our injustices. While Jesus hung on the Cross they took His tunic and gambled for it in front of his family. How humiliating. What injustice.

“When the soldiers had crucified Jesus they took his garments and made four parts, one for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was without seam, woven from top to bottom; so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfil the scripture, “They parted my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”

John 19:23-25

Pettiness

How often can we get angry and upset about trivial unimportant things. Take a moment right now to think about the things that upset you. Is it the toothpaste tube, or the dirty clothes left on the floor, or the dishes left unwashed. So many arguments whether in the marriage or in the church are about really petty things. We need to focus on the importance of loving one another, instead of sacrificing valuable relationships on the altar of pettiness.

The religious people were angry with Jesus because of their legalistic scruples. He healed a man on the Sabbath!

“Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man upon the sabbath. If on the sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the sabbath I made a man's whole body well? Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”

John 7:22-24

Feelings of helplessness and frustration

One night the Lord showed me the reason why in certain situations I feel angry. This testimony has been included in this book because so many Christians get angry, but don't know why they are angry or how to deal with it. The Lord took me back to my primary school and reminded me how the children teased me. How I felt helpless as to how to respond.

The Lord took me through my growing up years. He showed me how angry I used to get towards my brothers and sisters. When we had squabbles I would feel helpless as to how to respond, and the frustration would lead to me becoming angry. The Lord showed me how this had become a pattern throughout my life. Like the time my wife and I went shopping in a large mall. At one point she took off shopping by herself, and I had no idea where she was or how to find her. That same feeling of helpless frustration and anger was the result. By the time she eventually returned I was fuming.

So the Lord showed me clearly this pattern in my life of feeling helpless, then frustrated, and then angry. After seeing this I then had a vision of the suffering of Jesus. You see Jesus doesn't just

show us our problems, He reveals also the solution. The solution is in the Cross.

In the vision Jesus was struck in the face by someone. His face was bruised and dripping blood from the blow. But Jesus had perfect self-control, He did not react in anger. He did not reply. He loved His enemies and forgave them in the midst of His suffering. On the cross we see the glory of the character of Jesus Christ.

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.”

Isaiah 53:7

“And when they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments. And the people stood by, watching; but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!” The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him vinegar, and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!”

Luke 23:33-37

One of the main reasons why people get angry is because they feel helpless. They don't know how to respond or what to say to someone. They quickly become irritated, frustrated, and angry. Their anger manifests in different ways, whether walking off and sulking, shedding angry tears, giving the cold shoulder, striking out in violence, being vicious and down right nasty, being defensive and argumentative, or yelling and shouting.

Through the cross we can overcome anger

Think of what happened to Jesus on the Cross. He was completely defenseless. His hands and feet were nailed on the cross. He was helpless and yet the people yelled abuse at Him. Jesus understands what it means to feel helpless. But He did not respond in anger. He took on our helplessness so that we might know His power.

“For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to

help in time of need.”

Hebrews 4:15-16

“For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God.”

2 Corinthians 13:4

Through the cross we receive the grace to overcome anger. Every time someone provokes us may we think of Jesus who suffered without saying a word. Through the Cross of Christ we receive grace to be in full control of ourselves. He enables us to respond in love, to bless those who provoke us.

Jesus was provoked, slandered, and beaten. He took all this upon Himself that we might know His peace. Every time we feel anger stirring within us we can go to the cross to find perfect peace. At the cross we find God’s peace and lay aside our anger.

It is a choice to walk in the Cross and not in the anger and frustration of the flesh. When you begin to feel frustrated and angry think of the bleeding face of Jesus. Let His grace and peace fill your heart. Jesus has overcome our need to open our mouth and defend ourselves or be spiteful. He gives us His grace, strength and peace to rule in our hearts.

“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.”

Colossians 3:12-15

Root causes of discouragement

Anger

Discouragement and anger go hand in hand. In Colossians 3:21 it says: *“Do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.”*. While in Ephesians 6:4 it says *“do not provoke your children to anger”*. People who feel discouraged often feel angry as well.

Fear & grief

When faith rises in our hearts we believe that we can do that which God has put into our heart to accomplish. We believe that through Christ whatever obstacles that we encounter can be

overcome. A person of faith always brings encouragement to those around him or her. Fear then has the opposite effect. Fear, doubt and worry go hand in hand. Fear and doubt will rob us of the blessings God has for us. We are afraid that we are going to lose those blessings. Discouragement sets in when we believe our fears.

This is what happened to the people of Israel when they were about to take possession of the Promised Land. Ten spies returned from spying out the land. They returned with a negative and fearful report. They sowed doubt amongst the people. Doubt led to grief. They grieved over the death of their dream and hope of entering the Promised Land. It says that the congregation raised a loud cry and they wept. They grieved that the Promised land would never be theirs and their hands became limp with discouragement. All they wanted to do was to go back to Egypt. Discouragement manifested itself in anger and the people wanted to stone Moses.

So we see how doubt, fear, grief, discouragement and anger can all be connected.

*"Then the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." So they brought to the people of Israel an evil report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land, through which we have gone, to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim); and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them."
Then all the congregation raised a loud cry; and the people wept that night. And all the people of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron; the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why does the LORD bring us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey; would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to one another, "Let us choose a captain, and go back to Egypt."*

Numbers 13:31-33; 14:1-4

Self-control

Feelings of anger will come, but we are responsible before God to act in self-control, and not allow the anger to boil over onto others.

“Be angry, but sin not; commune with your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD.” **Psalm 4:4-5**

“Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake; why should God be angry at your voice, and destroy the work of your hands?” **Ecclesiastes 5:6**

Our commitment to love

Not only are we to practice self-control and not dump our negative mad feelings on people, but God has called us to love those who annoy us. Love covers over these offenses. Choose to forgive, love, bless and pray for those who offend you.

“He who forgives an offense seeks love...” **Proverbs 17:9**

“Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.”

Proverbs 10:12

“Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins.”

1 Peter 4:8

Study Questions

Chapter 1 An Encounter with Jesus

Please read the chapter before coming to home group.

Saul meets Jesus (See Acts 9:1-18)

Q. 1 In what way did Saul, later known as Paul, change after his encounter with Jesus?

Q. 2 In what way has your life changed since meeting Jesus?

Fishermen meet Jesus (See Luke 5:1-11)

Q. 3 What did Peter say to Jesus after the miraculous catch of fish? Why?

Q. 4 What did the fishermen do after they landed their boats on the shore?

Q. 5 How has knowing Jesus effected your life decisions and choices?

Zacchaeus meets Jesus (See Luke 19:2-10)

Q. 6 How did meeting Jesus effect Zacchaeus' dealings with the poor? How did it effect his business transactions?

Q. 7 How do you think our relationship with Jesus should effect our finances?

How can we have an encounter with Jesus

Q. 8 Talk about some of the things that we can do to bring us into an encounter with Jesus. (See pages 8-9)

In the Presence of Jesus

Q. 9 What promises does the Bible make about what will happen to us if we come to Jesus? (See pages 9-11)

Study Questions

Chapter 2 The God Quest

A way of life

Q. 1 How can we make seeking God an ongoing way of life?

Q. 2 What are some of the characteristics given in Ps 24:3-6 of those who seek God?

Believe and obey His Word

Q. 3 Look at Isaiah 58:6-7. What did God expect of the Israelites if their prayers and fasting were to be acceptable?

Q. 4 In James 4:3, why did God not accept the prayers of these Christians?

Q. 5 How does materialism effect our pursuit of God?

Come in humility and repentance

Q. 6 In the parable of the tax collector, what two different approaches were used in seeking God? (Luke 18:10-14)

Q. 7 How can we be like the Pharisee? (Luke 18:10-14)

Be totally yielded to God

Q. 6 How can we grieve the Holy Spirit? (Ephesians 4:30-32)

Make room for His Glory

Q. 7 Take time to pray for one another that the eyes of our hearts would be opened to see Jesus and His heavenly Kingdom. (Ephesians 1:17-20)

Study Questions

Chapter 3 Seeking Jesus

Longing to see Jesus

Q. 1 See Mark 2:2, why do you think the people were packed into the house? What was Jesus doing?

Q. 2 Do you also long to hear Jesus speaking to you? What effect does His words have on us? (Romans 10:17)

Q. 3 Why did the people so press in to Jesus that He had to sit in a boat (see Mark 3:7-11)? If we are in need what should we do?

Q. 4 After the blind men were healed, what did they do (Matt 20:30-34)? When Jesus meets our needs what should be our response?

Q. 5 How did Mary Magdalene and the other Mary show their great love for Jesus (Matt 28:8-10)?

Q. 7 How can we be like them and show our love for Jesus?

Promises to those who seek the Lord

Q. 6 Ask different members of the group to look up the Scriptures below. What promises does God make to those who seek Him?

Proverbs 8:17

Jeremiah 29:11-14

Hebrews 11:6

John 14:21

Isaiah 65:1-2

Study Questions

Chapters 4 & 5 The Cross

“I have been crucified with Christ”

Q. 1 What does it mean for you, when the Bible says that we have died with Christ? (Mark 8:34; Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:4)

The Power of the Cross

Q. 2 Explain what it means that the word of the Cross is the power of God to those who are being saved? (1 Cor. 1:17-18)

Q. 3 On the Cross there was a divine exchange, the good for the bad. Fill in the blanks below:

He took our sin that we may be _____

He received our punishment that _____

He died that _____

He destroyed the power of death giving us _____

He took our sickness and gave us _____

He bore our sorrows (emotional pain, mental illness) that _____

He was rejected that _____

He experienced hostility that we might be reconciled to (a) _____ and (b) _____

He defeated Satan that _____

He was cursed that _____

He became poor that _____

Q. 4 In a few words write down why Jesus died on the Cross. Write it in such a way that an unbeliever could understand.

Study Questions

Chapters 6 The Love Motive

Consecration & love

Q. 1 What are the two great commandments? How are all the other commandments and prophets fulfilled in them? (Matthew 22:37-40)

Q. 2 What is consecration? What does it mean to be consecrated to God? How is this different from legalism?

The tempter

Q. 3 In what ways does Satan seek to tempt us to disobey the first great commandment?

Q.4 What price was paid for us to have a loving relationship with God?

The love motive

Q.5 In the time of Isaiah the people were religious and fasted, but were rejected by God. Why? (Isaiah 58:5-8)

Q.6 What does God seek from us? (Isaiah 58:5-8)

Loving Submission

Q.7 How does Jesus define what it means to love Him? (John14:15-21)

Q.8 What would it mean for you to enter into a deeper love relationship with Jesus?

Study Questions

Chapters 7 The Three Witnesses

Introduction

Q. 1 There are three key things that the Lord uses to purify and consecrate us. What are they? (1 John 5:8)

a)

b)

c)

Q. 2 How do these three witness to the Truth?

Q. 3 Explain why these three witnesses are in unity. How do their unity protect us against false teaching?

The oil of consecration

Q. 4 After the priest had been anointed what was he forbidden to do and why? (Leviticus 21:10-12)

Q. 5 We also are priests, anointed of the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:27). How then should we live?

Q. 6 Share with the group in what way the Holy Spirit is your Teacher?

Purified by the Blood

Q. 7 How was the tabernacle purified and set apart for service to God? (Leviticus 8:30)

Q. 8 Why is it important that a person not only be anointed of the Holy Spirit, but also purified by the Blood of Jesus? What can happen if there is an anointing, but no purity?

The Washing of Water

Q. 9 What happens when we submit our thoughts to the Word of God? (Hebrews 4:12; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

Study Questions

Chapters 13 The Servant of God

The Master

Q. 1 How is Jesus our Master and Lord? What difference does this make to us? (Matthew 23:10; Colossians 4:1)

The authority of Jesus

Q. 2 Read the following passages and identify the different ways Jesus used His authority...

Luke 4:31-36

Mark 4:37-41

Mark 2:9-12

Q. 3 Share an experience you had of the authority of Christ. You may have felt the Lord command you to do something.

Divine Authority

Q. 4 Why did Jesus commend the Roman Centurion? (Luke 7:6-9) What is the relationship between our faith and Christ's authority?

Q. 5 What miracles happened in the following passages when people obeyed Jesus?

John 9:1-7

Luke 5:4-9

We are all servants of the Master

Q. 6 What character trait is required of a servant? (Matthew 25:21)

How can we serve?

Q. 7 The apostles called themselves servants of Christ. We also are His servants. What specifically has God asked you to do as His servant?

(If you are not sure, talk with your home group leader or pastor, as to how you can serve the Lord.)

Study Questions

Chapters 14 Set Apart

Sanctification

Q. 1 Using the analogy of the old rusty garden seat, what do you learn about sanctification? See 1 Corinthians 6:11

The process of being cleaned up

Q. 2 How can we be holy? Proverbs 28:13

Sanctification is the fruit of our faith

Q. 3 In what way do good works follow faith? See Ephesians 2:8-10 What is your experience of this?

Two types of sin:

Q. 4 Generally speaking there are two types of sin. What are they?

Q. 5 How is it that we can sin without actively doing something wrong?

Q. 6 Think about what the Lord requires of us. Are there things that you ought to be doing according to God's Word.

Divine provisions for sanctification:

Q. 7 In what way is the church part of God's provision for us to be holy? (See Luke 17:3; 1 Timothy 5:20)

Q. 8 Why is being part of a small group important for us to grow in godliness?

Appendix A

SIN AND OCCULT LISTING

Recognizing our Sin

Often people don't recognize their sins because no one ever told them it was sin. This list of sins and occult is meant to be a blessing and help to people. As we identify our sins we can then confess them to God and receive forgiveness and peace. A real barrier in recognizing sin is the way that we justify what we do.

For example, some justify their anger by blaming the other person – “It's their fault that I'm angry because they.....”. Others justify pornography as “a personal diversion which doesn't harm anyone”. Others justify violence in marriage “because it helps” in some way. White lies are said to be “necessary and useful”.

There is no end to the reasons we give to justify our sins. Such arguments become demonic fortresses of the mind that must be identified as unbiblical deceptions. True repentance begins when we stop justifying our sin, and call it what it is: sin. Then the cleansing work of the Blood of Jesus can begin in us.

“ Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Sin is sin, and we are guilty before God for our rebellion. Sin brings condemnation, curses, demons, eternal death, guilt and sickness. God requires humility in repentance so that there might be forgiveness and peace with Him. While we defend our sins, we have not truly repented, and therefore are not forgiven by God.

“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:8-9

Through repentance you can receive peace and forgiveness from God.

Some people think that because a sin was committed a long time ago that it does not have to be repented of. We must remember that God is eternal: Who was , and is, and is to come. Before God if we have unrepented sin of the past, it may as well of happened today. So we are to confess our past sins to God.

Doctors say that the damage to our body from smoking can continue to effect us long after the last smoke. How much more the spiritual effect of sin upon people. Sin must be confessed and repented of and the resulting curses broken. Sometimes we need to confess generational sin and break its ongoing influence through the generations.

PLEASE MARK OFF YOUR SINS IN THIS LIST

The greatest sin

Not believing in Jesus as the only Saviour

Sins of the tongue:

Lies

Anger, shouting

Making fun of others in their need

Coarse language, swearing

Slander

Criticism

Judging others

Gossip

Self curses (e.g. "I am worthless, I will never succeed.")

Cursing others (e.g. "He will always be sick.")

Grumbling/criticism against the leadership of the church.

Unfulfilled promises and good intentions.

Sins in the family:

Neglect of children

Lack of discipline and order in the family.

Not teaching the Bible to one's children.

Lack of respect for your partner

Putting down your spouse in front of others.

Mistreatment of one's wife

Lack of love, obedience and honour of the husband .
Violence and anger in the marriage.
Violent discipline of children.
Disobeying parents
Lack of respect of parents

Sins of the heart:

Unforgiveness
Resentment
Bitterness
Holding grudges
Hate
Lust
Greed
Envy and covetousness
Pride
Selfishness
Jealousy
Double mindedness
Lack of faith, doubt
Anxiety, worry, not trusting God.
Racism and bigotry

Various sins:

Lack of love towards God and others.
Religiosity and legalism
Prayer and fasting not accompanied
by righteousness.
Persecution of Christians
Religious pride
Lack of daily prayer and Bible reading
Using God's Name in vain
Blasphemy
Lack of prayer for authorities in the church
Lack of obedience, respect and support
of church leaders and pastors.
Causing division in the body of Christ.
Rebellion and disrespect towards authority.
Laziness
Stealing
Addictions

Taking advantage of others unjustly
Violence
Impatience
Manipulation
Deceit
Not visiting the sick and prisoners
Mistreating the poor and needy
Murder
Vengeance
Abortion
Drunkenness
Bribes
Attending worldly parties with drinking & dancing.
Videos or films of violence, horror, swearing, pornography.
Inappropriate TV watching

Sins of the use of resources:

Dressing luxuriously as an expression of pride, vanity
Buying things out of vanity.
Gambling
Using our time wastefully
Not obeying God with our finances (tithing and offerings)
Lack of compassion and generosity to the poor
Using our resources selfishly
Not offering hospitality
Financial irresponsibility

Sins against the Holy Spirit:

Resisting or grieving the Holy Spirit
Criticizing and belittling the work and manifestations of the Holy Spirit
Mistreating and persecuting those who are used by God in the Anointing
Speaking against the gifts of the Holy Spirit

Sins in the work place

Laziness or sloppiness at work
Taking advantage of and mistreating employees.
Not paying or withholding appropriate wages.
Borrowing and not returning is stealing.
Unjust or illegal contracts

Corruption
Not paying taxes

Sexual sins:

Perverse sexual acts or sex with an animal.
Violent or forced sex (including in the marriage).
Rape
Prostitution
Fornication
Adultery
Homosexuality
Lesbianism
Sex between family members – incest
Pornography
Lustful thinking

Obsessions & addictions

Addiction to smoking, alcohol, novels, TV, the internet, computer games, video games, or play stations.

NB. Watching TV, reading novels, using the internet and games are not necessarily sins, but lack of self-control in these areas is.

Occult and witchcraft sins:

Acupuncture
Amulets (good luck objects, etc)
Ancestral worship
Ankh (a cross with a ring top used in satanic rites).
Apparitions – occultic
Astral traveling
Astrology
Automatic writing
Birth signs
Black arts
Black magic
Black mass
Blood pacts
Casting of spells and curses
Chain letters
Colour therapy
Conjuration (summoning up a spirit)

Consulting medium, spiritists,
witchdoctors or psychic healers
Contact with spirits
Control of objects by mental power (Tk
or Pk).
Coven of witches
Crystal ball gazing
Crystals & stones
Demon worship
Divining rod, twig or pendulum
Dungeons and dragons
Eastern meditation
ESP
Espiritism
Fire walking
Fortune telling
Halloween
Hallucinogenic drugs (e.g. heroin)
Hard rock & heavy metal secular music
Harry Potter – games, books, & teachings
Horoscopes
Hypnosis
Idols and images used in worship
Incantations
Iridology (eye diagnosis)
Jonathan Livingstone Seagull
(reincarnation).
Judo
Karate
Kung-fu
Levitation
Listening to demonic voices (including voices of deceased).
Magic (not sleight of
hand but supernatural power)
Manipulation and cursing of others
Mantras
Martial arts
Mental suggestion, telepathy, therapy
Mesmerism
Mind control
Necromancy (conjuring up spirits of the dead)
New Age (in all its diverse forms)

Numerology
Occultic games: oiji boards
Occult novels, magazines, music, or movies
Pagan rites, religious objects, artifacts and relics
Palmistry
Pokemon Cards
Satanism
Secret society oaths
Sorcery
Soul traveling
Spells
Spirit guides or friends
Star signs
Superstitions
Tarot Cards
Tea-leaf reading
The Lodge (Free Masonry)
TM – transcendental meditation
Videos and movies of violence, horror, pornography, occult.
White magic
Witchcraft
Yoga
Zodiac signs

Sects, World Religions & Philosophies:

It is important to renounce all oaths, pacts and baptisms made with any sect or secret society, destroy their religious objects, and destroy any books that are not in accord with Scripture.

A sect is a religious group that has one or more of the following characteristics:

- Denies the full divinity of Jesus Christ.
- Doesn't recognize the full authority of the Bible as the basis of faith and conduct.
- Accepts prophecies, traditions, and other books as fundamental to belief and practice.
- Denies the Trinity, that of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Emphasizes traditions and rules to gain salvation.

All religions that deny that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour and way to God are to be renounced.

To pray to, to use as a mediator, to show religious respect, or to worship idols and images.

To burn candles to them, to prostrate or bow before an idol or image.

Adventists

Ananda Marga Yoga Society

Bahai

Buddhism

Children of God

Christadelphians

Christian Science

Communism

Confucianism

Divine Light Mission

EST

Hare Krishna

Hinduism

Islam

Jehovah's witnesses

Marxism

Materialism

Mormons

The International Way

The New Age (in all its diverse forms)

Unification Church (Moonies)

Universal Church of God

This sin & occult list is adapted from Bill Subritzky's literature (see website, Dove Ministries).