Addicted To God!

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What does God's Word say about addictions?

How do we avoid becoming addicted to the wrong things?

How can we recover from addictions by God's power?

"In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."—*2 Timothy 2:25-26*.

CHAPTER 1

"What is an Addiction?"

With the rise of modern-day psychology, there has been much confusion amongst Christians concerning what an addiction is. Christians are guilty today of getting their definitions and their theology from the "wise men" of this world (Daniel 2) instead of trusting in the power of God. Pills and endless therapy sessions have replaced the Holy Spirit in America and other parts of the world. Christians have the power of God resting upon them, but that power often goes untapped. Mainly this happens because of a lack of understanding. "**Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, <u>and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men</u>:**"—*<u>Isaiah 29:13</u>*.

In this chapter, we shall define the term "addiction" based on what the Bible states. We shall also use Noah Webster's 1828 dictionary of the English language, since Mr. Webster himself was a devout Christian and because his definitions in the 1828 edition defined many bible terms. So what is an addiction?

Noah Webster defined an addiction as, *"The act of devoting or giving up in practice; the state of being devoted."* Noah Webster stated that having an addiction means that you are devoted to doing something. He defined "devoted" as, *"Appropriated by vow; solemnly set apart or dedicated; consecrated; addicted; given up; doomed; consigned."* When you are addicted to something, your life is devoted to pleasing it or doing it. You become a servant to it and it becomes your master. However, what most people do not realize about addictions is that they can either be a good thing or a bad thing. "**Stablish thy word unto thy servant, <u>who is devoted to thy fear</u>.**"—*<u>Psalms 119:138</u>*.

Addictions are mainly **HABITS** that have been formed over time. By that respect, all of us have addictions in one form or another. All of us have had habits that we have formed over time, and without realizing it, we do those things daily. They could be routines throughout the day such as waking up and drinking coffee at a certain time, or perhaps taking a shower before going to bed. You have gotten into the habit of doing something and you have been devoted to doing it on a regular basis. Not all addictions are bad. In this chapter we will list some good addictions and give biblical insight and examples of them. Knowing this will help you in your first step of understanding how to break your bad addictions and replace them with good ones.

Good Habits

"I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, <u>and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints</u>,)"—*<u>1 Corinthians 16:15</u>*.

According to the Bible, there was a minister named Stephanas who led his family into having a deep devotion to serving God in the church. The Bible says that they "addicted themselves." This means that they practiced in the ministry every day or at least every time the church doors were open, until they formed a devotion to doing it. Their devotion to the ministry was called an addiction. What a blessed thing to be addicted to! This entire household of people devoted their lives to serving others in their local church and in their community. This man Stephanas led his family into having the right kind of addiction. Not only so, but their ministry was heard of. The great work that Stapahnas and his family was doing every day was known to the Corinthian church.

Having been in the ministry for a while, I can say that I too have addicted myself to the ministry. The Apostle Paul and many other men and women of God have addicted themselves to the ministry. How is it done? First, addict yourself to going to church. Make a solemn vow and commitment to God that you will attend church every time the doors are open. After you have made the commitment—go! Do not find excuses. I have heard a saying and have lived by it, "do not call in—crawl in!" No matter how hard it may seem to go to church, your commitment and love for God must overcome it. Attending church on a regular basis and devoting yourself to it, will allow you to become addicted to it. You are already devoted to doing something like watching television, smoking, drinking, internet use, pornography, spending money you do not have, etc. The list can go on and on, but what better thing can there be than to replace the habits in your life that are harmful to you with good ones like going to church and hearing God's Word? There is no better thing.

"¶And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? 29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: 30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. 31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."—*<u>Mark 12:28-31</u>*.

Bad Habits

"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.)"—*John 8:34*.

One becomes addicted to a bad habit by simply committing sin on a regular basis. For some, it only takes one time for them to try sinful activities before they become addicted, but for others it takes a continual practice of them. What do I mean? The word "committeth" is a continual action verb. It means to commit, and to continue to commit. Those who commit sin and continue to do so will end up becoming the servant of that sinful activity.

For instance, those who start out smoking a cigarette may not become addicted the very first time they try it. In fact, to most people, the taste is disgusting. However, they may continue to smoke because they think it makes them look cool and rebellious. For a while, that cigarette serves that person's desires, but soon after continued use of it, that person will become a servant to it.

When we commit sin, we are fulfilling the desires and lusts of our flesh. "**Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.**"—*Galatians 6:7-8*. When you sow to your flesh, you will reap corruption. When you feed your flesh, you will create new appetites in your flesh that were not previously there. I have never had a craving for Cocaine because I never tried it before. It has never had any appeal to me or hold on me. However, if I were to try it one time, I would create an appetite in my flesh that was not there before.

That appetite will begin to hunger and I will crave it again. That is why living a worldly life and feeding fleshly appetites is unhealthy for you. Those appetites will begin to control you and you will become a servant to them. You will do anything to feed those appetites. You will lie and steal and cheat people just so those cravings can be satisfied once again. Those temporary cravings keep coming back and the vicious cycle starts over again.

Many people blame their addictions on God, when the truth is, they have no one to blame but themselves for having sinned in the first place. God warns us to stay away from sin because sin will hurt us and others around us. Sin will destroy and control our lives. We will become a prisoner in serving our own lusts and that prison can be very hard to break out of. However, there is good news! Jesus Christ came to set the captives free and set at liberty those that are bound! If your desire is to break the bondage of sin that you are in, then you must continue to read this book and follow the Biblical principles laid out in it. Put your faith and trust in the salvation of God and allow Him to direct your steps every day. You will be set free indeed!

MEMORY VERSE:

"**Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.**"—*Psalms 119:138*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. How does Noah Webster define an addiction in his 1828 dictionary of the English language?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
2. Generally speaking, what is an addiction?
   a. _____
3. Which person and his family in the Bible addicted themselves to the ministry?
   a. _____
4. How do we addict ourselves to the ministry of God?
   a. _____
   _____
5. What happens to us when we commit sin and continue to do so?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
6. According to Galatians chapter six, what happens when we sow to our flesh?
   a. _____
7. According to Galatians chapter six, what happens when we sow to our Spirit?
   a. _____
8. What happens when we create appetites in our flesh?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
9. Many people try to blame their addictions on God, but who should they really be blaming?
   a. _____
10. How can we overcome our addictions and be set free from our bondage?
    a. _____
    _____

CHAPTER 2

"Daily Vows"

"**So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.**"—*Psalms 61:8*.

Psalms 61:8 is a reference to the vows of a priest. They would stand daily in the Temple ministering and performing their priestly vows (Hebrews 10:11). Whether at church or at home, it is a most sacred and holy thing when we go to the altar. To make a vow to God means to make a commitment to God. There is no point in going to the altar at the end of a service if you already have it in your heart to break that vow when you get home. "**If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:**"—*Psalms 66:18*.

Do not think that you shall be heard for your much speaking. God does not desire lip service, but true faith in His power to perform those vows. It is better not to make a vow to God than to make one and break it. "**¶But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.**"—*James 5:12*.

If we do go to the altar, we must have it settled in our minds and hearts that we will not break our vows no matter what happens. We must decide and hold to it. We must say, "I have already decided I will not commit this sin any longer, therefore it is settled and I will not do it." "**He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.**"—*Proverbs 28:9*.

There have been many times when I have gone to the altar and prayed for God to help me not commit a sin, but never made a vow to not do it again. However, as Moses drew a line in the sand and asked, "….Who is on the Lord's side?…" (Exodus 32:26), so too God draws the line at the altar. He asks you to step over to His side and not commit that sin. He asks you if you are going to choose this day to live unto Him and die to yourself, or to live for yourself and die to Him. It is really that simple. There can be no fence straddling with God. You are either on His side or you are not.

"¶And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."—*Joshua 24:15*.

You are faced with a decision to serve God or not. Going to the altar is pointless if you are going to simply pray, "Lord, help me to…" The prayer should be, "Father, your Word says…Therefore, I will obey. Give me the power of the Holy Spirit to work through me to do what my flesh cannot do so that I may be a clean vessel to serve you." Going to the altar is much more than asking for help to stop sin. It should be to make a vow that you will never do it again.

"And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; 17 For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: 18 And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God.

19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. 20 If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

21 And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD. 22 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. 23 Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel. 24 And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. 25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem."—*Joshua 24:16-25*.

Joshua demanded a staunch decision from the people of Israel. There could be no serving other Gods while serving the True and Living God. God is jealous of your devotion. To devote yourself to anything but Him means you are serving other gods. To have any kind of addiction against God's Word means you are serving another god.

Note that if you are going to decide to quit, then it is a decision that must be carried out this day, for you are a witness against yourself saying, "Nay, but I will serve God." Saying that to someone can be meaningless, as Joshua told Israel. However, actually doing it is another story. When we make a decision and tell others we have made a decision, it becomes a vow to God. That vow must be carried out on a daily basis.

The reason there is such a high divorce rate amongst married people today is because husbands and wives are simply not committed anymore to carrying out their wedding vows. They go to the marriage altar and say, "…forsaking all others…'till death do us part…" However, to love your spouse and carry out that vow must be carried out on a daily basis. To love someone means you give your entire devotion to that person and forsake all others.

When a husband views pornography, he is breaking his wedding vows to love his wife and forsake all others. He uncovers the nakedness of a strange woman and lusts after her flesh. Jesus said this is adultery (Matthew 5:27-28). You are committing adultery in your heart. If you had the chance to sleep with another woman you would. The same holds true for pornography of the mind. To lust after a woman in your mind even if you are not viewing pornography on the television or the computer is the same thing as viewing pornography on those media outlets.

The television and computer are windows into your heart. "**I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.**"—*Psalms 101:3*. What you view on the screen is what your heart condones and thinks upon. If you view pornography on the screen, you are already viewing it in your mind. The pornography in your mind has become insufficient, so you have to view it on television. That too becomes insufficient and you need more as you sink deeper and deeper into sin. "**Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.**"—*Philippians 4:8*.

To love your wife and to forsake all others means to put away the other gods from your mind and heart once and for all. You are to be totally devoted to her in your heart and mind. The same holds true with God. The first and great commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and might. This means you have a choice. You will either stop committing spiritual adultery from God, or you will continue serving your gods and never grow in your Christian life, and perhaps even have the judgment of God to chastise you into a right relationship with Him. That is why this matter is of such great importance.

You must conclude and believe that God is not happy with your sin and service to other gods.

He is a jealous God, as a wife or husband is jealous of their spouse. You are saying, "You are not enough for me, I must have an intimate relationship with another." How would you like it if your spouse flagrantly brought another person into your home, went into the bedroom and started having intimate relations them right in front of your eyes! You would be furious and heart-broken! Yet that is exactly what we do when we serve other gods. We commit spiritual adultery from God and God sees it all. It must grieve Him to see his espoused church committing fornication and adultery from Him every day. We must have it in our hearts to serve the true and living God daily. Do not make a vow unless you are prepared to carry it out every day from that point forward. If you do, you are a witness against yourself.

Today's challenge is to choose this day who you will serve; whether they are the gods of Egypt, or the True and Living God. Make a commitment to serving God and devote your heart and mind to Him and Him alone. Make a commitment to Him and keep it. You do not want the judgment of God upon your life. "**It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**"—*Hebrews 10:31*. Therefore, fear God and know wisdom. Obey His Word and keep your vows daily.

MEMORY VERSE:

"**So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.**"—*Psalms 61:8*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. What did Moses make the people do at Mt. Horeb in regards to serving God?
   a. _____
2. What are the television and computers windows into?
   a. _____
3. What did Joshua challenge the people to do in Joshua 24:16-25?
   a. _____
4. According to Jesus what are we doing when we lust after someone other than our wives (or husbands)?
   a. _____
5. What is a husband breaking when he view pornography or thinks about another woman?
   a. _____
6. What things are we supposed to think on in order to not be addicted to fleshly appetites?
   a. _____

CHAPTER 3

"Devotion to God and His Word"

Psalms 119:9-16.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.
10 ¶With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.
11 ¶Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.
12 ¶Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.
13 ¶With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.
14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.
15 I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.
16 I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word."

All of us want to have a closer walk with God. We desire to have a better devotional life and a better time in fellowship with God as we spend time with Him. In this portion of scripture, I would like to concentrate on areas of our devotional lives that often come up short. They are the areas of scripture memory and service. There are eight verses and there are eight points.

1. The Decision to Love God and His Word-V.9
2. The Devotion to God and His Word—V.10
3. The Design of how to learn God's Word—V11.
4. The Doctrine of God's Word—V.12
5. The Declaration of God's Word—V.13
6. The Desire to Have God's Word—V.14
7. The Daily meditation in God's Word—V.15
8. The Delight of Knowing God's Word –V.16

So how do we have a better devotional life?

FIRST, LET US SEE THE DECISION TO LOVE GOD AND HIS WORD-V.9:

David made a decision in his life to follow God's Word. By doing so, it would allow him to have a "cleansed way." That is, he would be able to live a clean life, have a clean mind and be a clean vessel to be able to serve God and worship Him in good conscience. This verse is directed to a "Young man," indicating that the one who is affected by this the most is a young man who struggles with sins of the flesh (2 Timothy 2:19-26; Psalms 1).

"**¶Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. ¶Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.**"—*2 Timothy 2:19-26*.

David understood that many young men struggle in the area of the lust of the flesh. Therefore, in order to combat this lust, the young man would have to make a decision. He would have to obey the Word of God and trust in it. It would take faith for a young man to follow God's Word and to make a decision like that.

He would not be like the other young men and allow himself to be placed in a position where he would be tempted. He would restrain his own flesh by his faith in God and love for Him. "**I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.**"—*Psalms 101:3*.

David made a mistake and had to learn this the hard way. He allowed his eyes to have something set before him that he was not supposed to see. He did not turn away, but set Bathsheba before his eyes. He dwelt on her and the result was he raped her, killed her husband and God judged him for it.

When you set something wicked before your eyes, you begin to dwell on it, and it starts to cleave to you. You create a fleshly appetite and a craving to have that wicked thing. This fleshly craving can become addicting as it cleaves to you. You are supposed to hate the work of those that turn aside and flee youthful lusts.

Having a closer walk with God and a better devotional life starts with a decision. You must decide right now that you are going to live for God and cleanse your way by obeying His Word. If God tells you to do something, then do it. If God tells you not to do something, then do not do it. The decision is yours to live for God or not. Your personal walk with God depends on your obedience to Him and it starts with a decision to be obedient.

"**And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**"—*Joshua 24:15*.

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

This leads me into my second point, THE DEVOTION TO GOD AND HIS WORD—V.10:

After you have decided to follow God, you must then do it with your whole heart. There is no half and half with God. You must run your race full throttle and put your whole heart into it. If you are half-hearted about serving God, you are not truly worshipping Him and He will not bless you in it.

"¶And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."—*Revelation 3:14-20*.

(READ SONG OF SOLOMON 5).

A half-hearted love for God will only make you unappreciative of His blessings. You will be serving God in the power of your flesh and not in the fire of His Spirit. You cannot serve God without putting your whole heart into it. Otherwise, you will tire out easily. The only real motivation for a Christian to do the service of God is the motivation of the Spirit of God. God moves on the hearts of individuals to do His service, but if those individuals are not spending time with Him in prayer and devotions, that fire will quickly burn out and the power of the flesh will become weak. (Matthew 26:38-45).

In Matthew 26:38-45, we find that Jesus asked the disciples to watch and pray. Their spirits were willing, but their flesh was weak. They did not truly know the depth of what was about to happen. All they knew is that they were exhausted and needed rest. However,

a soldier cannot sleep on his watch. These soldiers of Christ, were told to watch and pray. They did not give their whole hearts to staying awake.

They placed more emphasis on the needs of the flesh than of the spirit, and as a result they were reprimanded. Whether you are serving God or memorizing Scripture, or doing anything Godly, you must do it with your whole heart and give it one hundred percent. "**And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.**"—*Mark 12:32-33*.

"**Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.**"—*Proverbs 3:5-7*.

Do not even try serving God if you are not going to do it with your whole heart. Your rewards in Heaven are given to you only if you do them FOR CHRIST, IN CHRIST, AND THROUGH CHRIST. Any other way of serving God or worshipping Him will not be blessed and your rewards will be burnt up in the fire of God's judging eyes.

Third, let us see THE DESIGN OF HOW TO LEARN GOD'S WORD—V.11:

David hid the Word of God in his heart by memorizing it. If you truly want to learn the meaning of a passage of Scripture, I challenge you to memorize it. Memorizing Scripture will help you clean your life and heart out. If you spend more time in the Word of God and in service to Him than in front of the television set, your mind and heart will be cleansed.

The Devil places traps for us every day. Every day it seems as if there is some new temptation awaiting me. However, I have found that by memorizing the Bible, when that temptation comes up, so does that verse. It sounds out in my mind and heart as a trumpet and a red flag. It screams, "TRAP! TRAP!"

(Matthew 4:1-11). When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness of Sin, he tempted Him with the lust of the flesh, the pride of life and the lust of the eyes. It is those same temptations that Satan tempts us with today. Satan does not have to do a lot of work. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Remember, Satan attacked Jesus after He was hungry in the flesh. Jesus countered Satan's attacks with Scripture He hid in His heart.

It is even more important for us as fallen creatures to hide the Words of God's Spirit in our hearts. By doing so, we feed the spirit within us with His Spirit, so that when another spirit comes our way, we will not listen to it (Romans 8:14; Psalms 1; Proverbs 30:5; Philippians 4:8). We must spend time daily meditating on the Word of God. Rehearse it repeatedly until we know and understand it by heart, and keep trying to learn new Scripture every day.

Let us now see THE DOCTRINE OF GOD'S WORD—V.12:

If you are to get closer to God, you are going to have to do it by learning the truth of God's Word.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."—*John 4:24*.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."—*John 17:17*.

"Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever."—*Psalms 119:160*.

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

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."—*2 Timothy 2:15*.

"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."—*1 Timothy 4:13*.

The Bible tells us that we are to worship God in truth. We are to pay particular attention to the doctrine of the Bible. The Word of God is to be the sole authority for our faith and practice. We are to rightly divide the Word of God. There is a mentality today that says, "Anything goes." This church is right and that church is right. However, we are not to place our faith in a particular church doctrine, but the pure doctrine of the Bible. I am a Biblicist before I call myself a Baptist. I identify with the Baptists because of the heritage of people and doctrines, but if a Baptist preacher says something wrong, then I must believe the Bible instead of him.

"Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding."—*Proverbs 23:23*.

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding."—*Proverbs 4:7*.

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

"God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."—*Romans 3:4*.

We will always find that God's Word takes authority over man's word. When a man starts to speak for God, then that man is a liar and needs to be shunned.

"Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. 6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."—*Proverbs 30:5-6*.

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."—*Revelation 21:8*.

"Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. 31 Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. 32 Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD."—*Jeremiah 23:30-32*.

It is of primary importance in your walk with God that you get your doctrine straight. Not doing so can cause you to err and go astray. You might think God is telling you to do something when it is another spirit that is really speaking to you.

Next, let us see THE DECLARATION OF GOD'S WORD—V. 13:

Once you have learned the Word of God, you should be bold enough to speak it. "**Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;**"—*Psalms 107:2*.

"**And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.**"—*Acts 4:31*.

When you have spent a lot of time with God in His Word, you will be bold to speak God's Word. "**For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.**"—*2 Peter 1:21*.

If you want to be filled with the Holy Ghost, you must be filled with His Words. If you wish to be led by the Holy Ghost, you must be led by His Words. Everything falls back to the Word of God and its doctrine. You speak boldly that which you know and are confident about. When you truly believe something, you will be passionate about it and you will live it out to its fullest.

Once you have learned God's Word, you ought to be able to teach it and to declare it to others who do not know it as well as you do, and to edify others who do know it as well or better than you. "**I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.**"—*Psalms 40:10*.

"**O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.**"—*Psalms 71:17*.

"**And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.**"—*2 Timothy 2:2*.

Do you want to know the best way to memorize Scripture? Do you want to know the best way to keep Scripture hidden in your heart? It is by giving it away. "**For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.**"—*Mark 8:35*.

"**Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.**"—*Luke 6:38*. The best way to memorize Scripture is to give it away! By speaking the Word of God, you remember it better.

Next, let us see THE DESIRE TO HAVE GOD'S WORD—V.14:

People sure desire to have a lot of riches. Many people play the lottery, rob banks, steal, or work themselves to death in order to obtain riches and glory. They believe that having riches will make all their problems disappear. They do not know the peace and joy of God. "**But godliness with contentment is great gain.**"—*1 Timothy 6:6*.

However, this verse is just the opposite. As much as worldly people lust for and crave earthly treasures and riches, so too this spiritual man craves the reading of God's Holy Word. "**As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.**"—*Psalms 42:1*.

There is an earnest desire to read and understand the Word of God. There is an earnest desire for the spiritual Christian to want to be close to God and to have Him speak to his heart. "**Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.**"—*Job 23:12*.

"**...that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.**"—*Deuteronomy 8:3*.

The Word of God is to be to us even greater than meat or drink, or greater than any other carnal thing. "**Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.**"—*John 4:33-34*.

Our lives ought to be so that we should crave the Word of God even more than we crave anything else this earth has to offer. It ought to be a, "I've got to have it now!" kind of love and desire.

If you are going to have a great devotional life, you are going to have to desire the Word of God. You do this just like you create any other appetite. When you try something that tastes good, you will have a craving for it. "**O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.**"—*Psalms 34:8*.

When you spend quality time in God's Word and you experience that sweet fellowship with Him, your spiritual man will begin to crave that over and over again. If you starve out the flesh and feed the spirit, your spiritual cravings will hunger more and more, and your fleshly cravings will begin to die out.

That is what fasting is, it is starving out the flesh in order to feed the spirit. It is killing off the flesh so that the spirit may live. "**I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.**"—*Galatians 2:20.*

For our next point, lets us see THE DAILY MEDITATION IN GOD'S WORD—V.15:

The greatest way to learn the Word of God and to learn how to live it is through daily meditation in the Scripture. There is no doubt in my mind that there is no better way for God to speak to your heart from His Word than for you to muse on the it day and night.

Psalms 1:1-6

"**¶Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. ¶The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.**"

The Bible tells us that if we meditate on the Word of God day and night, we will be like trees planted by the rivers of waters. What does that mean?

1.) The Water is the Word of God and the Spirit of God. "**As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.**"—*Psalms 42:1*.

"**He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)**"—*John 7:38-39*.

"**For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.**"—*2 Peter 1:21*.

2.) We as the people of God are the trees of life that bring forth fruit in our season. "**The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.**"—*Proverbs 11:30*.

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

"**He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.**"—*Ecclesiastes 3:11*.

3.) Our leaves shall not whither; whatever we do shall prosper—We are given eternal life; We are more than conquerors through Christ. "**Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.**"—*Proverbs 11:31*.

"**Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.**"—*Galatians 6:7-8*.

"**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**"—*Romans 8:35-39*.

"**I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.**"—*Philippians 4:13.*

If God calls us into His service, He will give us the strength and the grace to do what He called us to do.

"**Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.**"—*1 Thessalonians 5:24*.

Let us now look at Leviticus chapter eleven. In it, we can draw some spiritual truths from the Jewish dietary laws. God told Israel that they were to stick to a specific diet. By doing this it would be beneficial to their health. But let us not miss the spiritual truths that go with it.

Leviticus 11:1-8

"**¶And the LORD spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. 3 Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat. 4 Nevertheless these shall ye not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: as the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. 5 And the coney, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. 6 And the hare, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. 7 And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you. 8 Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you.**"

There is a great truth in this portion of text about how to study the Word of God.

First, let us see that THEY WERE TO EAT THOSE ANIMALS THAT DIVIDED THE HOOF (V.3):

"**Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**"—*2 Timothy 2:15*. If we are going to have a great devotional life and eat clean meat from God's Word, we are going to have to rightly divide the Word of God. We are going to have to study it out and rightly divide truth from false doctrines.

Second, THEY WERE TO EAT THOSE ANIMALS THAT WERE CLOVENFOOTED (V.3):

"**Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,**"—*2 Corinthians 6:7*. To be clovenfooted means that their feet were separated, like the separation that occurred in the CLOVEN TONGUES OF FIRE over the apostles heads on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:13). They were to be a people set apart and separated for the Master's use.

Lastly, the beast also had to CHEW THE CUD (V.3):

"**I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.**"—*Psalms 77:11-12*. As a cow chews the cud over and over to get all the nutrients out of his meal, so are we to meditate in the precepts of God. The meat of God's Word must be chewed over and over again in order for us to get everything we can out of it. I make it a point to read a chapter multiple times in order to gain a deeper understanding of it. It is recommended to read a Bible passage at least ten times to truly see things that you did not see the first few times you read it.

For our final point, let us read verse sixteen in our text and see THE DELIGHT IN KNOWING GOD'S WORD—V.16:

When you spend time meditating on the Word of God, you will have a deeper desire to have it. You will crave it like you might have a craving for a certain delicacy that you eat. You will desire to know it more and more and you will certainly not forget it.

It is easy to forget the Word of God if you do not spend time in it and if you do not talk about it. Some of the first verses I learned to memorize were the ones I spoke about all the time. I rehearsed the "Roman's road to salvation" to so many people and so many times, I eventually memorized it and had no need to read it. It was permanently engrained in my mind. You will not forget the Word of God if you are delighting in it and you will delight in it when you have meditated on it long enough. You will create spiritual appetites that were not there before and you will begin to love God's Word.

Psalms 119:97-104

MEM.

"97 O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. 98 ¶Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. 100 I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. 101 ¶I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. 102 ¶I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me. 103 ¶How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! 104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way."

"O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him."— *Psalms 34:8-9*.

"Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness."—*Ezekiel 3:1-3*.

If you truly want to remember the Word of God and to delight in His ways, you must put into practice the principles of what is being said in this lesson. The Israelites were not allowed to eat an animal if he was missing one of the attributes God described in Leviticus 11:3. They had to have these traits or they were unclean. By meditating in the Word of God, studying to rightly divide it in doctrine, and living a separated life, your Christian life will take off like a rocket. It starts with a daily commitment do doing so, and with structuring your life and schedule to meet your spiritual needs and the needs of your family.

MEMORY VERSE:

Psalms 1:1-6

"¶Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. ¶The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. What is the first thing we must do if we are to rid ourselves of any addictions that are contrary to God's Word?
   a. _____
2. Instead of being devoted to sinful lifestyles and hurtful lusts, what must we have a devotion to?
   a. _____
3. According to Psalms 66:18, will God hear your prayers if you are holding any sin in your heart?
   a. _____
4. What are three spiritual lessons we can learn from the Jewish dietary law as referenced in Leviticus chapter eleven?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
5. What is the Holy Spirit referred to as in John 7:38-39?
   a. _____
6. What kind of fruit do righteous trees (God's people living holy lives) produce?
   a. _____
7. What are the nine fruit of the Spirit?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
   d. _____
   e. _____
   f. _____
   g. _____
   h. _____
   i. _____
8. According to 2 Peter 1:21, how did we get the Word of God?
   a. _____
9. What can we do in Christ's power according to Philippians 4:13?
   a. _____
10. What is fasting?
    a. _____

CHAPTER 4

"The Porn Industry and God's Design for Intimacy"

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."—*Matthew 25:27-28*.

One major addiction that has plagued America and the world today is the open and free use of internet pornography. Many men and even good men have fallen subject to this trap of Satan. Most men struggle in this area because they are designed to be very sight oriented. The breakdown of the family, the current trends and rise in homosexuality and gender confusion, the rise in the divorce rate (even amongst Christians) has a lot to do with the rise in the free and open use of pornography.

It is easy for a man to become addicted to pornography, and easy for a woman to become exploited by it. With the downfall in the economic system, many women have sold themselves into the porn business because there is a lot of money in it for them. They are whoremongers who regret later what they are doing. **"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."**—*Ephesians 5:5*.

Should Christians get involved in this business, or should it be a shame to them? I believe the answer is obvious. There is no way to justify this sin. If you have a problem with looking at pornography, you must first admit that it is a wrong thing to do. You must agree with God that it is a sin or nothing can help you. **"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."**—*1 Corinthians 6:9-11*.
With that said, let us see from the Bible first what God's design for sexual expression is supposed to be for the Christian.

Section 1:
God's Design for Intimacy

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

The Bible tells us that when Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden prior to having sinned, they were both naked before each other and before God. They were not ashamed of who they were and how they looked. They had no evil or perverted thoughts. They were married together by God Himself. They were joined together as one flesh in the bonds of matrimony. It was only after the fall of man that we see men and women needed a covering to cover the shame of their nakedness. Initially, Adam and Eve tried to cover themselves with fig leaves. They were ashamed to face God in their nakedness. "**And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.**"—*Genesis 3:7*.

"**For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.**"—*Romans 10:3*.

The fig leaves were the work of their own hands. However, this covering was not enough. They tried to establish their own righteousness before God to make themselves presentable before Him and this covering failed miserably. The sacrifice of their hands could not make themselves righteous enough to stand in the presence of God after their sin. God provided them with a covering. God Himself slew a lamb, or a sacrificial animal and covered Adam and Eve with coats of skins. In order to cover Adam and Eve and for them to be righteous enough to stand before God, both had to be covered by the robes God provided for them and those robes had to come from an animal that was slain for them by God.

"**And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:**"—*Romans 5:11-12*.

This is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of Adam, we are all sinners in the eyes of God. Every man and woman on this earth has a common ancestor—Adam. God cursed Adam. Everyone that would be born of Adam's seed would be born with a nature to commit sin and because of this; we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. We are all depraved human beings in need of God's forgiveness. We need a covering. God provided us with a covering for our sin—The Lamb slain from the foundations of the world, Jesus Christ. None of us are righteous enough to stand in the presence of God on our own. We must have the shed blood of Jesus the Lamb of God and wear His imputed righteousness, just as God imputed His righteousness onto Adam and Eve.

"**Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.**"—*Romans 4:6-8*.

"**But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.**"—*Romans 5:8-10*. If you desire to stand righteous before God, do not think that your robes or phylacteries make you righteous. Only the righteousness of Jesus Christ can make you holy enough to stand before God. No work you can do can help you. "**But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.**"—*Isaiah 64:6*.

Not even the high priest Joshua was righteous enough to stand in his own robes.

"**And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.**"—*Zechariah 3:1-5*.

The fig leaves were not enough for Adam and Eve and it is certainly not enough for us either. It is not holy and righteous for a man or woman to go to the beach in a bikini or something that shows off the flesh. Those kinds of clothing are designed to create and inflame lustful appetites in both men and women. They are designed to show off as much flesh as possible to attract someone's eyes to how good you look. They are designed to take people's eyes off the Creator and onto the creation. That is why Bible believing Christians should dress modestly.

The goal is to get people you talk to see the Christ that is IN you, not the flesh that is ON you. It is selfish for a Christian to take glory to his or herself and draw people's attention onto their own vanity. Vanity is all that it is. According to the Bible, "**Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.**"—*Proverbs 31:30*. We will all get old and our beauty will vanish. Some people never had it, some try to keep it, but it will always disappear. When it does, what do you have left? Only what you do FOR Christ, IN Christ and THROUGH Christ will matter. Only the souls you bring with you to Heaven will matter. That is why it is time to take people's attention off from you and onto God and Christ!

"**Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.**"—*Exodus 20:17*. It is easier for a man to covet his neighbor's wife when she barely has any clothes on. Any woman that you are not married to is your neighbor's wife—including a single woman. She is someone's future wife, isn't she? More than likely she is, and to do anything with her would be stealing the one thing away that she has to give her husband that is pure—her virginity. David coveted his neighbor Uriah's wife and look where that got him (2 Samuel 11). Bathsheba was taking a bath on her roof. She was naked and David coveted her. When men look at a woman's flesh, it is hard for them not to take a second look. However, if they dwell on the flesh, they will covet it more and more until they must have it. David coveted after Bathsheba's flesh and raped her. Raping Bathsheba was pointed out to David as stealing something that was not his by the prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 12:1-14).

If Bathsheba would have known David were watching, she would have covered herself up in shame. She would not have wanted anyone other than her husband to see her nakedness. Today, we have a lot of men and women who do not understand this concept of covering up. It is of utmost importance that we cover ourselves up God's way so that others do not covet our flesh.

What is God's way? I would have to say the less flesh we show off the better. The sport's bars and the strip clubs and the beaches all have one thing in common—women in bikinis. It is not innocent for a woman to run around in her underwear. A two-piece bikini shows if the same amount of flesh as does a woman in her bra and underwear. It is called underwear because it belongs under the other clothing, but women today see nothing wrong with wearing it as outerwear. It happens so much and is so unavoidable that both men and women have become hardened to the idea of modesty and the philosophy is to not let it bother you. As our society declines from Christianity, so does the amount of clothing that is worn out in public view. It is no wonder why men and women are trapped by so many youthful lusts.

What then is God's design for intimacy? God had intended the nakedness of a man and a woman to be secret and exclusive only to each other. Doing this allows the couple to remain attracted to one another's fleshly body. However, women today must compete with air brushed models on the cover of magazines. The nakedness of some of the most beautiful women is flagrantly exploited in free images on every sort of visual media. Doing this has lost the secrecy of a woman's body, and as a direct result the attraction between a husband and his wife has been downplayed. A man's heart gets hardened to these images and his eyes start to seek more and more. It is then when a couple experiences difficulties in their marriage. Now the specialness is gone. Now the secrecy is out in the open. Now it is harder and harder for a man to love his wife's body, especially after she has children and gets older and starts to gain weight, which is only natural for any woman.

"Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts."—*Isaiah 3:17*.

Intimacy in marriage is meant to only be between the married couple. They were never meant to see anyone else's secret parts, not even their own families and especially not a stranger's.

Leviticus 18:1-20

1 ¶And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the LORD your God.
3 After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances.

4 Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God.
5 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.
6 ¶None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD.
7 The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.
8 The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness.
9 The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, whether she be born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover.
10 The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover: for theirs is thine own nakedness.
11 The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she is thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.
12 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister: she is thy father's near kinswoman.
13 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister: for she is thy mother's near kinswoman.
14 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother, thou shalt not approach to his wife: she is thine aunt.
15 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter in law: she is thy son's wife; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.
16 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness.
17 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; for they are her near kinswomen: it is wickedness.
18 Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time.
19 ¶Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness.
20 Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her.

It is very clear what God's intentions and what His standards are to us. His Word is meant to protect us from doing something we would regret later.

"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."—*Hebrews 13:4*.

Marriage is meant to be holy and set apart for God. It is meant to have a safe and healthy environment for a man and woman to express their love for one another in the deepest emotional sense. Only half of intimacy is physical pleasure. Without the other half (emotional connection), it becomes meaningless and your sense of feeling for it will diminish. You must be in love with your wife and you must express that love to her by being totally devoted to her both in your physical being and in your emotional state. You must not have emotional connections with any other woman than your wife. She is the only one you should be emotionally vulnerable to. By violating this principle, you are putting yourself at high risk for committing adultery. That is why spiritual adultery is just as bad as the physical act.

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."—*Matthew 5:27-28*.

Ephesians 5:21-33

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.
22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.
23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.
24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.
25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.
29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:
30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.
31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Marriage is also the institution by which we are to have children. By doing this, those children will have the Godly example of a committed Christian father and an obedient Christian wife. The children will see their father honor their mother and their mother honor and obey their father. Having both a mother and a father are necessary in a home. Both exemplify the roles that God wants them to see concerning Him. The wife is the Holy Spirit in the family. She is to be compassionate, apt to teach, tender, and loving. The husband is to exemplify the Father in Heaven. He is just, holy, reverend (Isaiah 45:21; Psalms 11:9). Both parents are to give the perfect blend of who God is and to display Christ—tender, yet just; holy, yet compassionate (Proverbs 31:10-31; 2 Timothy 2:24).

When a man and a woman stay totally committed to each other, they cleave to each other as the Bible says. It is hard to cleave to your wife while you are looking at other women or committing adultery. When you both are all each other have, you will stay closely knit together in your spirits. Your spirits become "one" with each other and you will love and cherish each other. It ought to be the deepest shame to a man who has a faithful wife while that man is being unfaithful. It ought to give a man like that the ultimate feeling of guilt and shame.

God's design for marriage, the family, and intimacy is the right design and it is the best way. It is the healthiest way for a man and a woman to express their feelings for one another. Having any other way leads to emotional scars, broken hearts, hurt feelings, depression, anger and other negative emotions. Many suicides have occurred because of the shame felt when a man committed adultery against his wife. Many suicides have occurred because a woman has been raped or molested as a child. We must practice God's design for intimacy in our lives and not get caught up in the philosophies of the world that are only designed to please the flesh. Only by pleasing the spirit can we have eternal satisfaction and rewards in Heaven.

"**Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.**"—*1 Corinthians 6:18*.

"**And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.**"—*1 John 1:4*.

"**If ye love me, keep my commandments.**"—*John 14:15*.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."—*Matthew 5:27-28*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. What is God's design for intimate relations?
   a. _____
   _____
2. In a marriage, what does the husband exemplify? Why?
   a. _____
3. In a marriage, what does the wife exemplify? Why?
   a. _____
4. Why were fig leaves not good enough for Adam and Eve to clothe themselves in?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
5. What did God to for Adam and Eve to make them righteous?
   a. _____
   _____
6. In Ephesians chapter five, what is marriage a picture of?
   a. _____
7. What does the Bible say in Proverbs chapter thirty one about beauty?
   a. _____
8. What happens when a man and a woman are totally committed to one another?
   a. _____
   _____
9. What have we lost in regards to our society today concerning the physical appearance in dress out in the public view?
   a. _____
   _____
10. What should be our goal as Christians in regards to how we dress in public?
    a. _____
    _____
11. What is left in our lives after our beauty is gone?
    a. _____
    _____
    _____
12. When is it easier for a man to covet after his neighbor's wife?
    a. _____
    _____

Section 2:
The Dangers of Pornography and its Effects

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."—*Galatians 6:7-8*.

Many people do not realize how dangerous it is to view pornography until it is too late and they have been ensnared by it and placed into its bondage. Pornography is just as addicting as anything else you can get involved with and the end result is that it will ruin your life. Your testimony as a Christian, your marriage, your family, and any ministry you might have will all eventually fall by the wayside and be destroyed because of the false promises of pornography.

Proverbs 5

1 ¶My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding:
2 That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge.
3 For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil:
4 But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword.
5 Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.
6 Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.
7 Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth.
8 Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house:
9 Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel:
10 Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger;
11 And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed,
12 And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof;
13 And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!
14 I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly.

15 ¶Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.
16 Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.
17 Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee.
18 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.
19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.
20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?
21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.
22 His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.
23 He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

The Bible gives us a staunch warning to stay away from committing adultery and getting involved with a strange woman. While there was not a media outlet for this to have taken place during Bible times, there were prostitutes, which the Bible refers to here as the strange woman. Do not be the man who says, "**How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!**"—*Proverbs 5:12-13*. Do not be the one who destroys his life with pornography and hangs his head in shame because you despised the instruction of God's Word and the reproof of your friends. Take advice from the Word of God and drink waters from your own cisterns. Have an active intimate relationship with your own wife and be content with what God has given you.

Pornography promises you a good time, and fleshly pleasure and fulfillment. However, these are all lies. Look at what the Bible says about Moses' choice to follow God: "**Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;**"—*Hebrews 11:25*. There is pleasure in sin for a season, but that pleasure is short-lived and the effects of that pleasure will be dumbed down to a point that you will desire it more and more in order to receive the same amount of fulfillment.

Pornography is dangerous. The images you see will never be enough to fulfill your eyes. You will search the internet or other media longer and longer because you will become almost immune to the sensation and excitement you once felt. "**Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.**"—*Proverbs 27:20*. The images you see will have to become worse and worse. You will continue to sink deeper and deeper into sin

and your thoughts will become more and more abominable in the sight of God. "**And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**"—*Genesis 6:5*.

When we fill our heads with all kinds of abominable images, those images will quickly enter the darkest realms of our hearts and stay tucked away there until we die, unless God by His grace purges that from us. Those images never leave your mind and will resurface whenever you do decide to stop viewing pornography. They will resurface in your dreams as vividly as if you were there in real life. They will resurface in your mind as you are trying to pray or do something good. The images will haunt you as long as you live. That is the truth about viewing pornography. It is the end result. Even if no physical harm comes to you, which it could, the psychological effects of it are devastating. The shame and reproach you carry with you are terrible. Only by the power of God can one overcome this.

Pornography is an addiction of the flesh. It is a fleshly appetite that is created when you look at it for the first time and dwell on it, or when you talk about it and it is glorified by someone, or when you feel a loss of hope in being married to another. If you do marry someday having been addicted to pornography, the addiction will not go away just because you are married. If anything, it harms the intimate relationship you have with your spouse because it desensitizes you and gives you a false realty of what intimacy is like between a man and a woman.

There is a real trap of pornography. It gives false promises of fulfillment, but leaves you wanting. It gives a false sense of reality. Pornography desensitizes you because it compromises Godly standards of modesty and identity. You cannot preach about modesty and identity while you are looking at these abominations. You cannot preach the power of God to save the lost if you yourself are caught in the bondage of sin. It compromises Godly standards of intimacy and makes your spouse no better than what you see those prostitutes do on the media. It leaves you with nothing left to give your spouse at the end of the day, thereby not allowing you to have a fulfilled intimate life with her.

"**But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.**"—*1 Corinthians 9:27*.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well."—*Proverbs 5:15*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. What are some of the false promises of pornography?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
2. What is the end result for those who choose to view pornography?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
3. Where in the Bible do we see a staunch warning to stay away from committing adultery?
   a. _____
4. Why will an addiction to pornography continue to get worse and worse?
   a. _____
   _____
5. What happens with the abominable images we see?
   a. _____
   _____
6. How does pornography desensitize you?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
7. How does one get hooked on pornography?
   a. _____
   _____
8. Why did God destroy the earth with a flood as read in Genesis chapter six?
   a. _____
   _____
9. How will pornography haunt us for the rest of our lives?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
10. Will an addiction to pornography go away once you get married? What will happen?
    a. _____
    _____

Section 3:
How to avoid Pornography and other Temptations

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."—*1 Corinthians 10:31*.

If you have been saved for any length of time, you probably feel the same as I do. When I became a Christian and decided to live for Christ, it seems like temptations became even worse for me than they were before I was saved. For instance, I never was very good with the ladies, but it seemed like I started getting more attention from the wrong kind of women than I ever did before. Things like that started happening after I trusted Christ and decided to follow Him.

I used to think that temptation was too hard for me to avoid. The struggle was too great and so I would just give in. However, I have since learned that God can grant any man the strength to flee temptation when it comes. He can give any man the wisdom he needs to avoid temptation and to stay accountable. So how do we avoid temptation? We will see some things from our text in 1 Corinthians 10:31 conquer this area of your life.

EVERYONE IS TEMPTED

The first thing you need to know about temptation is that there is not a man, woman, or child alive that is not subject to being tempted. According to our text, temptation is COMMON TO MAN. That means that temptation is common to all of us. We all have this problem in common. "**But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.**"—*James 1:14*. James shows us that EVERY MAN is tempted and that he has HIS OWN lust. There are things that may tempt me that may not tempt you and there are things that might tempt you that would not necessarily tempt me. However, we are all subject to being tempted and those temptations are very real in our lives and we need to take them very seriously. It is also important to note that even Jesus Himself was tempted during His sojourn here on earth. Let us read what it says in the Gospel according to St. Matthew and chapter four verses one through eleven.

"¶Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. 3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."—*Matthew 4:1-11*,

Notice what Jesus did here. Jesus was tempted just as we are. However, He did not bow down to the temptation. Satan attacked Jesus at His most vulnerable point—when he was hungry after a forty day fast. Satan observed Jesus' behavior and knew that He was hungry. This is when Satan attacks you the hardest and tempts you the most. He attacks you when your mind and will are at their weakest states. Remember, Satan is a roaring lion. That means that he will look for the weakest prey and go after it to devour it. "**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:**"—*1 Peter 5:8*.

"**For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.**"—*Hebrews 4:15*. Though Jesus was at a weak point in his flesh, He did not live by the flesh. As He explained to Satan, He did not live only by the earthly bread that He could have created at any time, but His meat was to do the will of God. Jesus' driving force in life was not food. Jesus would have rather starved to death than to have broken one word of God's commands. "**Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.**"—*Job 23:12*.

In combating temptation, Jesus gave us the prime example. Our source of hope and life is found in the Word of God. Through it, we can battle any temptation Satan throws at us.

"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*.

There are three temptations that Satan will throw at us at any one time. They are:

1. The lust of the flesh
2. The lust of the eyes
3. The pride of life

These are the only three categories of temptations there are. There may be many things that tempt you, but they will fall into one of these three categories. It is with these three categories of sin that Satan tempted Eve with in the Garden and it is with these three categories of sin that Satan tempted Christ with in the wilderness. Satan said to Jesus that if He was the Son of God that He should command the stones to be turned into bread. This was a temptation of the lust of the flesh, since it was Jesus' fleshly appetites that would have been satisfied and God's Word would have been broken.

Satan told Jesus that if He jumped off a roof that God would send angels to pick Him up so he would not get hurt. This appealed to the pride of life, since it would have been prideful to tempt God in such a way as to break the law of gravity in order to satisfy Satan's curiosity or desires. Lastly, Satan tempted Jesus with the lust of the eyes by showing Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Jesus did not need help from Satan to have a kingdom, since one was already promised to Him by God and was recorded in the Word of God.

We are all tempted in the same way. We are all subject to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. For some, Satan has observed that he may tempt them better in one or more of these three areas, but rest assured that he does know your weakness. He has had enough time to observe your weaknesses and he knows human nature very well, since he was in the Garden with Adam nearly six thousand years ago. Do not think you can defeat him on your own. You need God's authority and His Word to counter the attacks Satan throws at you.

If you are being tempted by Satan, especially when you are hungry to fulfill the desires of your flesh, you must recognize this as an attack on you by Him. Satan wishes to devour your life. He wishes to devour your testimony, your marriage and your very physical life itself so that you are rendered useless as a Christian soul winner. He cannot take your soul, but he can sure destroy what you work so hard to build.

GOD IS FAITHFUL

According to our text, God will never allow you to have more than you can handle in life. He will not make your life so hard that you simply cannot bear it. God will not allow you to have temptation in your life without giving you the strength to get through it. Remember, God understands how it feels since He was tempted like you are tempted, yet without sin. "**Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.**"—*1 Peter 5:7*. It is during these times of testing that you have an opportunity to grow in your faith toward God. God knows what you are going through and He cares. When no one else cares, Jesus does. He cares about the little things and He cares about the big things. He will always be there for you when you need Him and He always has His ear bowed down from Heaven because He is waiting to hear from you anytime you just want to say hi.

"**And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.**"—*1 Kings 20:28*. God loves you in the good times and in the bad times. He is good when you are on the mountain top and when you are in the valley. God is faithful in the good times and in the bad. He is faithful when you are on top and when you have reached bottom. Therefore, He desires to have fellowship with you at all times. However, it is usually when we have reached bottom that we tend to call on His name the most.

"**O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;**"—*Psalms 63:1*. God's desire is for you to get to the place where you long to have fellowship with Him. He wants you to be thirsty for His presence in your life. When you are at this point, you will not have as much trouble combating temptation as you once had. Though you will commit sin, you may do so in ignorance or at a moment of weakness. However, your heart will be right with God and your desire will not be to commit sin. "**Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.**"—*Psalms 19:13*.

The "Great Transgression" is when you premeditate to commit sin and say in your heart that God will forgive you later. Taking advantage of the grace of God is the greatest sin a Christian can ever commit and it is something that will bring God's judgment on your life. "**For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.**"—*Galatians 5:13*.

THERE IS ALWAYS AN ESCAPE ROUTE:

According to our text, God always provides us with A WAY TO ESCAPE. Having served in the US Armed Forces for ten years, I understand this concept. The Word of God relates our lives to the kind of life a soldier leads. **"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully."**—*2 Timothy 2:3-5*.

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."—*1 Timothy 6:12*.

As a soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ fighting in His army, you must fight the good fight of faith. Our lives are not as children in a playground, we are as soldiers living in a battlefield. If you are to understand the Christian life, do not look at the modern-day philosophy of name-it, claim-it. Do not think that the kingdom of God is meat and drink. Do not think that we are supposed to be here to have a big party before we leave this earth. That is what many Christians think the Christian life is all about. While we are supposed to abundantly enjoy life, we are not to enjoy Satan's worldly devices and traps. Sinful activities are not given to us to enjoy. God blesses us with many things we can enjoy, but we must enjoy what God gives us, not what Satan has to offer. **"The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."**—*Proverbs 10:22*.

As a Veteran of the Armed Forces, I understand something called FORCE PROTECTION. Force protection is when you stay aware of your surroundings and use DEFENSIVE POSTURES. During times of peace, your defensive posture may not need as much attention as it is during times of war. When there is an eminent threat to your base, you are more cautious than you are when there is not an eminent threat.

A military member living overseas lives on a military base. In that base the member is secure from immediate danger because the base commander has set up a defensive perimeter with security measures. That is what I would like to speak about here. There is always a way to escape the temptation and there are generally two ways to do so. You can either avoid temptation altogether, or you can look for the escape route once you are in a compromising position. You will always be in either one of those two places. You cannot help temptation, but you can take measures to avoid or escape it.

FIRST, SET UP A DEFENSIVE PERIMITER.

"My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.
21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.
22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.
23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.
24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.
25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.
26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.
27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil."—*Proverbs 4:20-27*.

If you are going to take a defensive posture and defend yourself against Satan's attacks, you are going to have to set up a defensive perimeter to help you do that. We accomplish this by obeying God's Laws. You will need to set up barriers and walls to protect you from the enemy that would lurk outside waiting for you to come out into his territory. You must take control of your own territory and keep it guarded with all diligence. Your territory is your heart, and there are different entry control points or gates into your heart that you will need to place a guard at. By doing this, you can help ensure that the enemy won't have an advantage over you. "**Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."**—*Proverbs 4:14-15*.

Psalms 119:1-8
1 ALEPH. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.
2 Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. 3 They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. 4 ¶Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. 5 O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! 6 Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. 7 ¶I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. 8 I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.

INTRODUCTION TO PSALMS 119

Those who wish to have a closer and deeper relationship with God should read the entirety of Psalms 119. This is the longest chapter in the Bible and it deals almost totally with the Word of God. Only three verses out of the 164 verses do not talk about the Word of God (vv. 90, 122, 132). This Psalm is an acrostic Psalm. If you notice, there is a header above each of the eight verses in the Psalm. It is written in eight verses because there are

eight notes in music. Under the header ALEPH, the first letter in the Hebrew Alphabet, all eight verses begin with the letter ALEPH as you read it in the Hebrew language. The same goes down the line for all the other verses under all the headers. All eight verses under BETH begin with the letter BETH.

Now to our Subject:

This chapter will help anyone to get closer to God. It shows us that by keeping God's Laws, we are free to worship Him in good conscience. Those who scoff at bible living are spiritually dead themselves. They say things like, "I am free to do whatever I wish. I can do whatever I'd like."

The Apostle Paul said, "**¶All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.**"—*1 Corinthians 6:12*, and "**¶All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.**"—*1 Corinthians 10:23*.

"**Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.**"—*John 8:34*.

Those who live a life of sin become addicted to those sinful lusts. When you live a life of sin, your body starts to crave those things, even if it is just psychological. Paul said that he "would not be brought under the power of any." Jesus said that those who commit sin become the servants of sin. That means that we become addicted to doing things that are sinful. Anything sinful is harmful to our own bodies. That is why God hates sin so much. It hurts us and hurts others. However, God loves us and desires us to be free from the captivity of sin.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,"—*Luke 4:18* .

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—*John 8:32*

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."—*John 8:36*
"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."—*John 17:17*

"Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever."—*Psalms 119:160* .

"Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him."--*Proverbs 30:5* .

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."--*Philippians 4:8*.

"¶Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 ¶The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."—*Psalms 1:1-6*

After reading these verses, this brings us back to our text in Psalms 119. By obeying the Word of God and staying away from sin, you can:

A. Not become addicted to sinful behaviors and substances, which harm you.
B. Cleanse your life from any addictions you might have.

The Law of God is not a prison by which God keeps you from enjoyment. It is a fence which keeps you safe from things and people that will harm you. A puppy dog or a baby is kept in a fenced area where it can be monitored. The fence is there to keep them from being harmed by anything on the outside of that fence. Sin is on the outside of the fence of God's Word. Satan is waiting there to devour you and entrap you and enslave you to himself. By obeying God's Word, you are free within His fence to do things safely. You are entertained safely within the fence of His Word. You worship Him safely within the fence of His Word, and so on and so forth.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." –*1 Peter 5:8*.

If you are enslaved in sin and desire to be free from it, you must look to Jesus.

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

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—*Luke 19:10*.

Jesus came to seek you out, find you and save your soul from the bondage of sin and iniquity. If you desire to be saved, just call on Jesus and He will answer you.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"—*Romans 3:23*.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—*Romans 6:23*.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—*Romans 5:8*.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."—*John 3:16-18*.

"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. ¶For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."—*Romans 10:8-13*.

If you need salvation and wish to pray and ask God to save you from your bondage and be set free, then call on Jesus. He will give you eternal life and heal your wounds in due time. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and He will set you free indeed!

PRAY:

Dear Lord, I know that I have sinned. I need your salvation to set me free from the bondage I am in. Please save me and forgive me for what I have done. Make me a child of God and come and live in my heart! I believe Jesus died for me and rose again and I am willing to stop trusting in myself and to put my faith and trust in Him. Save me O God in Jesus' Name. Amen.

SECONDLY, WHAT TO DO WHEN THERE IS A BREECH OF SECURITY:

"**And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.**"—*Ezekiel 22:30*.

Remember when we talked about your perimeter having different entry control points, or gates by which people or things may come through? At this point we will discuss some of that. Ezekiel talks about having gaps in the hedges. Hedges in the Bible are indicative of barriers of protection. "**Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.**"—*Job 1:10*.

Remember, Satan is referred to as A SERPENT (Genesis 3:1), THAT PIERCING SERPENT (Isaiah 27:1), A DRAGON (Biblical terminology for the word serpent), A CROOKED SERPENT (Job 26:13), and LEVIATHAN THAT CROOKED SERPENT (Isaiah 27:1). It was in A GARDEN that Satan met with Eve and tempted her (Genesis 3). He was able to slither through a small crack in the hedge of protection that God made in the garden. That small crack was Eve's ignorance (1 Timothy 2:14). She was beguiled (lied to and she believed that lie) into eating the fruit (Genesis 3:13). She was not staying accountable to her husband's leadership as she did not seek his permission to eat of the fruit. The power of accountability is another subject we will cover later. There was a gap in the hedge and when it came time for a man to stand in the gap and guard it, there was none. Adam was not there and their security was breeched.

I cannot say that I blame them, however. Adam and Eve lived in an environment where they had not seen sin or death take place. They trusted everything and there was no fear of any creature. Certainly, a talking serpent would have been shocking, but there was no fear of danger because Eve had never experienced danger. The only danger and red flag that should have been seen was that the serpent was tempting her to violate the Word of God and the word of her husband Adam. Adam was given direct revelation from God to not eat of the tree that was in the midst of the garden, but Eve was given that directive by Adam, not God. It was passed down. Adam then took it upon himself to add to that a little and he told her, "**...neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.**"—*Genesis 3:3b*.

God's revelation to Adam was not that he should not touch it. It was simply not to eat of it. The spiritual death and separation would come only after eating from that tree. They would begin the death process as they started to age after eating that fruit. When Eve

saw that she did not die after touching it, that action began to place doubt as to whether what God said was actually true or not. That is why it is so important for us to draw a clear distinction as to what our standards are in life and what God's standards are. It is ok to have high standards to keep yourself from sin, but you had better distinguish, especially if you are leading someone, between your tradition and God's Word.

God's Word is our authority for faith and practice. We cannot impose traditions on people, unless those people agree with you that that is the best way to keep God's laws FOR THEM. Our standards are personal standards that we keep for the sake of keeping God's Laws, but if those traditions get in the way of what God is trying to accomplish by the Law (the spirit of the Law), then that is the point when you get rid of the traditions and start to obey God.

STAY ACCOUNTABLE

"**Abstain from all appearance of evil.**"—*1 Thessalonians 5:22*.

The more transparent your life is the better. The more open and honest you are with everyone the easier it will be to help you to stay away from temptation. If you are going to lead transparent life, then you should abstain from any appearance that you are involved in corrupt activity. Do not place yourself into a compromising situation where people can even think that you are doing something wrong. If you look like you have something to hide, the chances are that most people will automatically assume you are doing something wrong. You should be conducting all your business out in the open and on the up and up. When you use a computer, you should have an internet filter that is not able to be cracked by you or anyone you can think of. You should allow your spouse to know what you are doing and where you are going. Doing this allows you to stay accountable to others and this makes it easier to avoid placing yourself in a position of compromise.

"**Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.**"—*James 5:16*.

There ought to be people you can trust in your life that you can talk to and stay accountable to. You should go to your pastor, parents, spouse, or close friend and be able to confess your faults. Do not confess your sins, just your faults and ask them to help you to stay accountable to them in every way they can.

MEMORY VERSE:

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."—*1 Corinthians 10:31*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. What are the three temptations that Satan can throw at us at any given time?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
2. What are some of the names that the Bible gives to Satan?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
   d. _____
   e. _____
3. The Law of God is said to be a prison by some. Is this true? Why or why not?
   a. _____
   _____
4. What are we to do if we are to be free to worship God in good conscience?
   a. _____
5. How can we stay accountable to others?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
6. By obeying the Word of God and staying away from sin, we can:
   a. _____
   b. _____
7. According to Jesus in John 8:34, what happens when we commit sin?
   a. _____
8. In order to defend ourselves against Satan's attacks, what is the first thing we must do?
   a. _____
9. What is the second thing we must do to defend against the attacks of Satan?
   a. _____

CHAPTER 5

"The Godly Example of Job"

"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil."—*Job 1:1*.

In this chapter, we will see the Godly example of a man by the name of Job (jōb). The meaning of his name is, "He who cries, or persecuted."[1] Job's name was indicative of his life. He cried and wept over the souls of his family as he gave sacrifice. He cried and wept as he was being purged by God. He cried, not for earthly treasures, but for heavenly fellowship with God. Job lived during the days of Abraham. This was the first book ever written in the Bible. Genesis was written as an account of the beginning of time, but that book was written by Moses. Moses lived hundreds of years after Job and Abraham did. Therefore, Job was written first as an account of his life. Moses could have read the book of Job, or at least was told about it.

There is no doubt about it; Job was one of the greatest men of God to have ever lived. Job kept his integrity and his testimony all throughout his trials and afflictions. He never lost faith in His God, even when his friends and family did. How did Job become such a great man of God? How was his heart so tender toward the things of God?

JOB MADE A COMMITMENT TO LOVE GOD:

"I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?"—*Job 31:1*.

As a man, Job understood that he was susceptible to the same passions as anyone else. Job understood that if he were to have a close relationship to God, he would have to have a good thought life. It is said that the average male has a sexual thought once every few minutes. While no one truly knows the amount of sexual thoughts that enters men's heads today, one thing is clear—Job made it a point not to think upon a maid. He knew that if he did not look on a maid, he would not dwell on her and lust after her.

Men today are bombarded with images that they should never see. They have billboards, magazines, and women in bikinis walking and mincing around right in front of their faces. You cannot turn on the television, look at an ad on the news or internet or walk into a grocery store without seeing a beautiful woman in her underwear.

Job made a covenant with his eyes not to look upon a maid. He would not dwell on ungodly thoughts that would cause him to have a desire to commit adultery. "**Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.**"—*Matthew 5:27-28*. Adultery of the heart is just as bad as the physical act of adultery. God will judge you for it either way.

"**Thou shalt not commit adultery.**"—*Exodus 20:14*. When God gave Israel the command not to commit adultery, he did not say, "thou shalt not commit adultery…if she is wearing proper clothing." Jesus never said, "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her…has a right to if she is not dressed right." It is clear that the directive given by God not to commit adultery is given to us whether the woman is dressed properly or not. However, that still does not take away the personal responsibility of a woman to dress properly.

While men are not to look at women and dwell on their fleshy parts whether they are dressed modestly or not, it certainly helps a man if a woman were considerate enough to dress so that men would not even have a desire to dwell on their flesh. A woman should dress in such a way that a man has no other choice but to look at her face (not her tight dress, or a lack of it, but her face).

A man has a hard time concentrating on pure thoughts and on the Christ that is in a woman (the inner man) when he is bombarded with images of the flesh. Clothing today is designed to inflame lustful thoughts in men's minds. As Christians, our whole goal in life is to bring glory and honor to God. We should not draw people's attention to our flesh, but draw their attention to the Christ that is in us.

"**He must increase, but I must decrease.**"—*John 3:30*. If we are going to get dressed in the morning, we should do so with an attitude of John the Baptist. We must have an attitude of increasing people's attention to God and decreasing the attention we draw to ourselves. "**And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.**"—*John 12:32*.

Many women today have a "Look at me" mentality. They dress in tight or in as little clothing as they can legally get away with in order to show off their bodies. They are saying, "look at how beautiful I am." However, what they do not realize or care about is that men who look at them are not looking at them for the real beauty they possess, but to lust after them and that lust is disposable. What I mean by that is that men will use a woman to fulfill the desires of their flesh for the moment and then look to find the next hottest thing when he is tired of looking at her. Their desire toward that woman is short-lived. Women are like disposable cups to them. Once they have fulfilled the desires of their flesh and of their minds, they move on to the next one in order to get a better thrill. "**Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.**"—*Proverbs 27:20*.

The same holds true on the opposite end of the spectrum. A woman who desires to have a man look at her is looking for the approval of every man she comes in contact with, unless that man makes her feel uncomfortable. To a woman like that, a man looking at her is just as disposable as she is to the man who is looking. Many times, this happens because a woman is insecure, or was at least at one time.

So, what do we do? As a woman, you should have enough self-respect and security in Christ to know your value, and dress in such a way that does not demean your character or value as a woman. As a man, you should make a commitment to not take a second look at anyone except your wife, whether she is dressed modestly or not. "**So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.**"—*Romans 14:12*. The Bible teaches that we all have a personal responsibility toward God to live for Him. I will not answer for you and you will not answer for me. We must all give an account to God for the things we do. He is our judge and no one else. We should all dress in such a way that brings glory to God and live our lives in such a way as to draw attention to Him and not ourselves or the power or beauty of our flesh.

JOB ESCHEWED EVIL

According to Job 1:1, Job eschewed evil. That means that he had a lot of character and integrity. That means he made a decision that when evil would come around, he would push it away. He allowed nothing to come into his home or near his family that would allow him room to compromise his faith. He did not allow something that would become a temptation to come near him.

I think that you would agree that if a prostitute came to Job's house, he would tell her to leave. In fact, he would eschew her, that is, he would do whatever was necessary to get rid of her in order not to be tempted or to ruin his testimony. I am also sure that most men would not invite a whore into their house if one were down the street, especially if they were married. However, those same men will do so via the internet or cable television. When you have an avenue to watch pornography and open the door to it in your home, you are not eschewing evil, but inviting whores into your home so that you can partake of their evil deeds.

"**I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.**"—*Psalms 101:3*. David said that he would not SET anything wicked before his eyes. That would have included a television SET. David said that if he did not want some evil to cling to him, that is, for him to become addicted to it, that he would eschew the evil by not setting anything wicked before his eyes.

I am sure that as a Christian you would not go to a bar and go drink. However, would you entertain it on a television? I am sure that you would not go to a club, but do you entertain it on the television? The reason why so many Christians get caught up in sinful lifestyles and see nothing wrong with them, is because they have allowed themselves

to be desensitized to the idea of those lifestyles. They have allowed the television to brainwash them into thinking that those things are fine and that they normal things to do. They have allowed evil into their lives via the television and internet and philosophical thinking.

By not eschewing evil as Job did, you have allowed your heart to become desensitized to things that are wrong by God. You have allowed your way of thinking to become corrupted into what the Devil wants you to think. You have been manipulated by the world and its philosophies. That is why it is so important to eschew evil. By eschewing things that are corrupt in your life, you become more and more tender toward the things of God and to His way of thinking. You will begin to hate sin and to hate it when other people commit sin. It will grieve your spirit. You will cry if sin were to happen rather than to laugh at it or partake in it.

Romans 1:17-32

"17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

19 ¶Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 5 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31

Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

As Christians, we need to recognize things for what they are. We need to see sinful lifestyle and behavior for what it is—SIN. The people you watch on the soap operas are lost and are on their way to hell. You should not take pleasure in their sinful behavior, nor should you bring up their ratings by watching their shows. Those people you see partying on the television are lost and need Jesus. You should be more concerned about praying for those people than you are about how much fun you think they are having. What fruit did you have when you did those things? None! They only yielded fruits of death and Hell, and now you have hardened your heart toward the things of God by keeping yourself entertained by others who do the same things you said you repented of! Hypocrites! Fools and slow of heart to understand the things of God!

"For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—*Romans 6:20-23*.

Job withstood the tests of God and came out pure. He could only do so because he had a lot of integrity and faith in God. He lived a clean life and eschewed any evil that could have come near his home. By doing so, his home was safe from Satan's attacks. When Satan did attack, he found that Job's integrity was too strong for him to break, even when he gave him everything he had. Job was more than a conqueror through faith in God and we can be so too, if we have enough faith to obey God's Word, and to eschew evil and corrupt things form our lives and from the lives of our families.

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—*1 Corinthians 15:57*.

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."—*Romans 8:37*.

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—*1 John 5:4*.

MEMORY VERSE:

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—*1 John 5:4*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. Who was one of the greatest men to have ever lived in the Bible?
   a. _____
2. When did he live?
   a. _____
3. What is the meaning of his name?
   a. _____
4. What covenant did Job make to allow himself to keep a clean thought life?
   a. _____
5. What responsibility does a woman have in order to keep a good testimony before God and men, and to help her brothers in Christ not to lust after her?
   a. _____
6. What responsibility does a man have in order not to lust after a woman?
   a. _____
7. Is a man allowed to lust after a woman in his heart at any time, whether she is dressed properly or not? Why?
   a. _____
   _____
8. Who is everyone personally responsible to for their own actions?
   a. _____
9. How does a Christian become desensitized to evil and corrupt deeds?
   a. _____
10. What did David say that he would not do in order to avoid being addicted to sin?
    a. _____
11. Referring to question #9, how does that apply to us today?
    a. _____
    _____
12. How did Job withstand the tests of God and come out from them pure?
    a. _____
13. How are we conquerors and how do we overcome the world?
    a. _____
    _____

CHAPTER 6

"The Perfect Example of Jesus"

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

Earlier we saw a Godly example of a man by the name of Job. While Job was a great man of God, there was still some flaw in him. He was a man and a sinner just as much as we are. His example shows us that we can be just as godly because we too are sinners. However, there is still one more example to look to. It is the perfect example of Jesus Christ. Jesus shows us that as a man, He was not immune to being tempted by Satan. He was tempted, yet without any sin. **"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."**—*Hebrews 4:15*

There is only one perfect person who ever lived. His name is Jesus. Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith. That means that if we desire to know what to do or how to act within the Christian faith, we should look to Jesus. He wrote the Word of God and He finished it. He started our faith and it is He that will end it one day when our faith will become sight.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION:

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."—*Matthew 6:9-15*.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray and ask God not to lead them into temptation. What does it mean for us to ask God a request like this? It is fairly simple. It is not God's will for you to be led into temptation. His desire is to keep you as far from temptation as possible.

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."—*Romans 8:12-15*.

To be led by the Spirit is to be led by the Word of the Holy Spirit (The Word of God), since it is the Holy Ghost that spoke God's Word and guided men's hands into what to write. **"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."**—*2 Peter 1:21*. Therefore, if you are led of God's Word, you are led of His Spirit, which is His direction for your life to follow. By obeying God's Word, you can be like Job and eschew evil from your life. When you eschew evil from your life because you are obeying God's Word, you can be sure that God has not led you into any compromising situations that would leave you to be tempted. By not placing yourself in that position in the first place, you will not be led into temptation.

God does not lead us into places that will tempt us. He leads us into a place of peace and blessings in Him. If we follow Jesus, He will lead us to a peaceful place, even when times get tough.

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."—*Psalms 23:1-6.*

It is important to note that Satan always tempts us, but God always tests us. What does that mean? It means that God will not tempt us with sin, Satan will. God will test our integrity with situations in life. For instance, one might say, "Satan enticed and tempted a

man to commit adultery with his neighbor's wife, but God tested another man with trials and tribulations in order to purify his faith." Satan's desire in our trials is to tempt us to turn away from God and toward sinful lusts or religion. God's desire is always to bring us to a closer relationship to Him. Note what the Bible has to say about this in James:

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."—*James 1:13-17*.

God does not lead His sheep into the slaughterhouse of temptation, but to the peaceful rivers of water and green pastures to feed in. He leads us into a closer relationship with God, even if we must walk with Him through the valley of the shadow of death. His rod and staff will comfort us. **"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."**—*John 10:11*. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, protects us with His life. He will not allow anything to happen to us. He is our Rock and Fortress. Through all the trials and testing God brings to our lives, Jesus is right there alongside of us giving us the strength to go on. All we must do is trust His leadership and follow Him wherever He goes.

Jesus gave us direction in our prayer lives. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." We are to obey the voice of God by reading His Word and trusting in it. By doing so, our lives will be led in such a way as to not have to worry about being in a position that we can be tempted to sin. Jesus never committed any sin, though the Spirit of God led HIM into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan (Matthew 4). After the tests of God and Jesus fasting in the wilderness of Sin for forty days, Satan tempted Jesus with everything the flesh lusts after. Jesus withstood those temptations by obeying the Word of God and making God's Word a greater priority in His life than even His necessary food.

Jesus is our prime example. We should follow His example through the power of God, and read and obey His Word every day in order to avoid being tempted by Satan.

MEMORY VERSE:

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."—*Matthew 6:9-15*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. Does God tempt us? How do we know whether He does or not?
   a. _____
   _____
2. Concerning temptation, what did Jesus teach His disciples to pray in Matthew 6?
   a. _____
3. How are we not led by God's Spirit into being tempted?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
4. As the Good Shepherd, where does Jesus lead us? What Bible Passage in Psalms teaches us about where God will lead us?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
   b. _____
5. Who was the only perfect person that ever lived?
   a. _____
6. How did Job's example differ from that of Jesus' example?
   a. _____
   _____
7. According to 2 Peter, who wrote the Bible?
   a. _____
   _____
8. Who is the author and the finisher of our faith?
   a. _____

CHAPTER 7

"The Two Natures"

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."—*Romans 7:18-25*.

As a young believer, I had a very hard time understanding what was happening to me when I started trying to do what was right by God. There came a point soon after I got saved that I literally felt God tugging on my heart to do what was right by Him. During that time, I literally beat my head against the wall and thought I was going crazy. I kept saying, "This isn't me! I don't understand why I have this desire to do what is right by God!" I thought I was going schizophrenic or something.

What I did not know and came to realize later, was that when I got saved by the grace of God, God changed my heart and put a new Spirit within me. He changed my desires and gave me a new heart to love Him. The nature that was trying to make me do what pleased my flesh was my original sinful nature that I inherited from the first man, Adam. He passed down to all men a nature to rebel against the things of God. However, when someone trusts Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, they get a new nature. The Bible calls it THE DIVINE NATURE.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."—*2 Peter 1:4*.

The word DIVINE means, "That which comes from above", or "knowledge of God," or "pertaining to God." The new nature you get when you become saved is a divine nature. It is a nature that pertains to God. It comes from above and it seeks the affections of God and those things that come from above. "**If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.**"—*Colossians 3:1*.

"**Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.**"—*Ezekiel 18:31-32*.

"**Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.**"—*Ezekiel 36:25-27*.

When God saves us, He gives us new desires. He gives us a new and rekindled love for Him. He starts the fire in your heart, but it is up to you to keep that fire going. I am not talking about your salvation. That is settled when you trust Christ. I am talking about the fire you have in your relationship to God through Christ. When you get close to God and walk in the light as He is in the light, you keep the fire going in your fellowship and your relationship. However, you can quickly quench the flame of God's love in your heart when you walk away to the things of this world.

There is a real spiritual warfare going on in your heart if you are saved. The old man of sin is trying to resurrect and take control of your life and thoughts. If you allow him to run loose, He will consume you. However, if you allow the spiritual man to take control of your life, your old man of sin will have no power over you. God has already given you the victory through His Son. The power is in the resurrection of Christ. Because He lives so can you. Because He loves, so do you.

The Apostle Paul had a real hard time with keeping the desires of his flesh under control. He had all the discipline of being the greatest Pharisee that ever lived, but he realized that the only way to conquer fleshly desire was not through the power of his flesh, but through the saving grace of God. Only the Spirit of God could conquer the flesh. Just think about it. If the flesh desires to have something, how in the world do you think you

can fight the desires of the flesh in the power of your flesh? It is the flesh that is craving. The Spirit only craves for fellowship with God. Therefore, the only way to fight the desires of the flesh is through the power of the Holy Spirit of God. It must be given to you as a gift. It is all a work of the Spirit (Ephesians 2:8). Everything you have to worship God and to love Him is all given to you by God. Even your faith is His gift to you (Romans 12:3). That brings me to an account in Scripture. Let us look at 2 Samuel 10:1-12 and see Saul's salvation.

"¶Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance? 2 When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son? 3 Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: 4 And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands.

5 After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: 6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. 7 And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee. 8 And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do. 9 ¶And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day. 10 And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. 11 And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? 12 And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets?"

When Saul got saved, we find that there was distinct evidence that he was saved and God had anointed him to be a prophet. Saul heard the Word of God, he believed the Word of God, acted upon the Word of God, believed in God to the salvation of his soul, God gave him another heart, and the evidence of his salvation was shown. He found new friends to be with that were Godly, and preached God's Word as God gave him utterance.

"**Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**"—2 Corinthians 5:17.

I would say that Saul had a pretty good testimony of salvation. His salvation caused him to do things that he would not ordinarily think about doing. He now had a heart to love God and to seek the will of God. He now had the divine nature of the Holy Spirit living inside of him causing him to do spiritual things that pertain to the One, True God. You will find this pattern all throughout the Bible. When someone gets saved, they are given a new heart.

"**Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.**"—*Psalms 51:10*. When we get saved God must CREATE in us a clean heart. Prior to our salvation, our hearts were filthy in the sight of God and unclean. "**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?**"—*Jeremiah 17:9*. If we are to have a clean heart it must be a miraculous act of God. it must be a CREATION. Just as God created the Heaven's and the Earth out of nothing by His spoken word in Genesis 1-2, so also, He creates in us a clean heart from nothing by His written Word. "**In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,**"--*Ephesians 1:13*.

"**That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.**"—*Ephesians 5:26-27*. (NOTE: Water refers to the Holy Spirit—John 7:38-39).

"**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;**"—*Titus 3:5*.

To be regenerated means to have NEW GENES. You were born with genes from your mother and father. Your genetic code reflects who you are in your parent's image. When

you are born again (John 3:3) by the Holy Spirit into the family of God, you are regenerated. You are given God's genes and should reflect who you are in His image. This is done by the Holy Ghost. Your salvation is all a work of the Spirit of God. It has nothing to do with you.

The spiritual battle you face every day must be overcome through the power of God's Spirit. If you are to have a clean heart, it must be given to you by God as an act of mercy and grace. It must be created from literally nothing since your heart is desperately wicked. Christ has already given you the victory to win the battle. This victory comes because He has risen from the grave. His resurrection ensures that you have the power through His name to overcome the desires of the flesh and to live in the Spirit where God dwells.

"**But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.**"—*1 Corinthians 15:57-58*.

"**Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.**"—*Romans 8:37*.

You can conquer your addictions and the desires of your flesh. Will you ever be perfect? No! Will you slip up every now and then? Yes! No one can be sinless and perfect, but our faith can be perfected everyday as we spend time with God in fellowship. The difference is that you will serve God with your mind and heart, but because you have a nature to sin, you will slip up every now and then. Just confess your sin to God and ask for His forgiveness. Admit you were wrong and ask Him for help to do better next time—and mean it! Do not make it some meaningless prayer and not put your heart into it. If you find you are becoming addicted to a certain sin, seek help quickly in order to stop it before it is too late for you and you are under its power

"**This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 ¶If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.**"—*1 John 1:5-10*.

MEMORY VERSE:

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—*1 Corinthians 15:57*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. When we get saved, what two natures do we possess?
   a. _____
   b. _____
2. Where do we get these two natures?
   a. _____
   b. _____
3. What happens to our hearts when we get saved?
   a. _____
4. Name one person in the Bible who got a new heart when he was saved:
   a. _____
5. How do we overcome the desires of the flesh?
   a. _____
6. What ensures our victory in Christ?
   a. _____
7. What does it mean to be REGENERATED?
   a. _____
8. What is the Holy Spirit referred to as in John 7:38-39?
   a. _____
9. How does God sanctify the church?
   a. _____
10. What washes away our sins as found in First John chapter one?
    a. _____
11. Your salvation is all a work of what?
    a. _____
12. What is our heart without God according to Jeremiah?
    a. _____
13. What will happen if the old man of sin takes control of your life?
    a. _____
14. When God kindles a flame of love in our hearts at the point of salvation, what happens to that flame of fellowship when we commit sin?
    a. _____
15. Can we ever lose our salvation (Romans 8:38-39)? _____

CHAPTER 8

"The Whole Armor of God"

"¶Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"—*Ephesians 6:10-18*.

INTRODUCTION:

Paul was giving the Ephesians church instructions on how conduct battle every day in the Christian battlefield. During that day, the Roman Soldier made a great illustration for the Christian's spiritual armor. However, the Jews all would have known what he was referring to. The armor of God was not unfamiliar to them. Although Paul was probably making an immediate reference to the Roman Soldier (the easiest object lesson for that day), it is also apparent that because Paul was himself a Jew and very knowledgeable in the Scriptures, he also was referring to Old Testament passages of Scripture which was familiar to the Jews. This chapter on the ARMOUR OF GOD is a reference to several Old Testament passages of Scripture.

"**And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.**"—*Isaiah 11:5*.

"**And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of**

salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke."—*Isaiah 59:16-17*.

"**And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it.**"—*Exodus 28:15*.

"**And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually. And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually.**"—*Exodus 28:29-30*.

"**But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.**"—*1 Thessalonians 5:8*.

The armor of God is meant to give the Christian everything he needs in order to conduct spiritual battle and to take a defensive posture against our enemy Satan. If you go out into the field without this armor on, you are at a high risk for being destroyed and killed. This concept should be familiar to any military member. While out in the front lines, a soldier must wear his armor every day in order to protect against possible attacks from the enemy. If he wears everything else except his helmet, he puts himself at high risk for a head injury, even though the rest of his body is protected. It takes each piece of material to do spiritual battle and each piece is there for a good reason.

So, what is the armor of God, and how does this apply to us? Why is it so important? How does it protect us and how do we equip ourselves to do battle daily as the Bible says?

IT IS A WORK OF THE SPIRIT:

"**¶Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.**"—*Ephesians 6:10*.

Notice that the armor of God is a work of the Spirit of God. We are to be strong, but how are we to be strong? We are to be strong IN THE LORD and IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT. It is by the power of God that we are strong and that power comes from the Spirit. "**Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but**

the flesh is weak."—*Matthew 26:41*. The Spirit of God is where we draw our strength from, not our flesh. If we rely on the arm of our flesh we will fail every time. "**By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,"**—*2 Corinthians 6:7*.

In other words, you cannot put on the armor of God in the power of your flesh. It is a spiritual thing. You must rely on God to put it on for you. You must rely on His protection and the protection comes from the power of His Spirit. As you read more about the armor of God, you will see that the Word of God is the key to the entire armor.

IT IS A COMPLETE WORK:

"**Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."**—*Ephesians 6:11*.

In order to do Spiritual battle and to take a stand against Satan and his devices, you must put on the WHOLE armor of God. If you are missing any part of this armor, you will become a casualty of war. You are taking a stand against Satan, against sin and against the pleasures of this world. You cannot do this with your flesh exposed. You must have spiritual protection around your entire flesh, just as if you were a knight in shining armor.

IT IS A SPIRITUAL BATTLE:

"**For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."**—*Ephesians 6:12*.

There are four things mentions here that we are in a fight against:

1. Principalities
2. Powers
3. Rulers of the darkness of this world
4. Spiritual wickedness in high places

These four things are mentioned in Romans 8:38-39 as being things that will try to separate us from the love of Christ. Notice what the Bible says, "**For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be**

able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—*Romans 8:38-39*.

The word "Principalities" derives its name from the word "prince." It speaks of earthly rulers and people, policies and government that governs men's lives here on earth. The word "powers" speaks of jurisdiction or authority given to rule men's lives by the principalities (Romans 13:3). The rulers of the darkness of this world are the spiritual forces (devils and Satan himself) that set up this world's system. They influence world leaders by many different means. They use the media, the school systems, and principalities to make policies and directives that are anti-Christ in nature. An example of this would be Hitler's Third Reich, where he used the public Schools to convince every child he was a god, and brainwashed the public opinion through the media outlet into thinking that the Jews were an inferior race of people and must be killed in order to speed up the evolutionary process (Ephesians 2:2; John 12:31).

Spiritual wickedness in high places refers to anyone spiritually who holds any kind of power to control your life and uses this for evil. They are not led by the Spirit of God, but by the spirit of anti-Christ. They are authorities in your life that teach you things against God. They may be false pastors, like Jehovah's Witness cultists, or Mormon elders. They may look like angels of light, but are really minister of Satan. The Pharisees were called hypocrites because their traditions made void the Word of God. They crucified Jesus because of their own lust for power. They were an example of spiritual wickedness in high places.

"**And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."**—*2 Corinthians 11:14-15*.

"**But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."**—*Galatians 1:8-9*.

"**Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened."**—*Zechariah 11:17*.

"Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them."—*Ezekiel 22:26*.

IT IS A WAR ZONE:

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."—*Ephesians 6:13*.

This armor is for those who live in THE EVIL DAY. If this does not describe the day in which we live in, then I do not know what does. America and this world are turning into Sodom and Gomorrah. Christians are being attacked on every front. The evil, anti-Christ people are trying to change policies to make Christians look like the bad guys. They are giving sympathy to those who lead an open life of sin. They kill innocent children, and make it very difficult for Christians to live a clean, Christ-honoring life. In many countries Christians are being killed and tortured just for daring to believe in Christ or read His Scriptures—all in the name of religion. We are living in the evil day and we must do all that we can to withstand the attacks of Satan.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."—*Ephesians 6:11*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. How is the Christian to be strong? _____
2. What does "spiritual wickedness" refer to? _____
   _____
3. In order to battle Satan and take a stand against his devices, what must you put on?
   _____
4. What are the rulers of the darkness of this world? _____

Section 1:
Loins Girt About With Truth

"**Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth…**"—*Ephesians 6:14a*.

What does it mean for us to have our loins girt about with truth? What significance does this have for the Christian today? In order to understand this, let us first define some terms.

DEFINITION OF A GIRDLE:

According to Strong's Concordance, THE GREEK WORD USED IS:
G4024 περιζώννυμι; perizōnnumi; per-id-zone'-noo-mee
From G4012 and G2224;
To gird all around, that is, (middle or passive voice) to fasten on one's belt (literally or figuratively): - gird (about, self).

GIRDLE:
The girdle (ḥăghōrāh; Greek zōnē) was **OF LEATHER** studded with nails, and was **USED FOR SUPPORTING THE SWORD** (1Samuel 18:4; 2Samuel 20:8). See GIRDLE.
Figurative: For figurative uses see under the separate weapons.
1. A band or belt; something **DRAWN ROUND THE WAIST OF A PERSON, AND TIED OR BUCKLED**; as a girdle of fine lines; a leathern girdle.
2. Inclosure; circumference.

GIRD'LE, v.t. To bind with a **BELT OR SASH**; to gird.
1. To inclose; to enrivon; to shut in.

Girdle, **BELT.**
And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a GIRDLE of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey. (Mar_1:5)
- Elijah had the same clothes on: 2 Kings 1:8; Matthew 3:4
- The girdle was to cleave to the loins of a man.
  This was symbolic of us cleaving to God and His Word cleaving to man.
  - **In other words, we are to cleave to the truth**
  - **We are supposed to be tied to the truth**
  - **Cleaving to the truth will help us in battle, allow us to be priests, allow us to praise God, and display the glory of God to all.**

Doing a topical study will also help us to gain a better understanding of the context of what is being said in regards to the girdle of truth. For this, we turn to Nave's Topical Bible References.

NAVES TOPICAL CONCORDANCE:

ILLUSTRATIVE OF:

1. **Strength**
    a. Psalms 18:39; Isaiah 22:21
2. **Gladness**
    a. Psalms 30:11
3. **Righteousness of Christ**
    a. Isaiah 11:5
4. **Faithfulness of Christ**
    a. Isaiah 11:5
5. **Truth**
    a. Ephesians 6:14

WORN BY:

1) **The high priest**
    a) Exodus 28:4; 28:39; 39:29; Levitcus 8:7; 16:4
2) **Other priests**
    a) Exodus 28:40; 29:9; Leviticus 8:13
3) **Women**
    a) Isaiah 3:24
4) **Embroidered**
    a) Exodus 28:8; 28:27-28 (The girdle held together the Ephod and the Breastplate); Exodus 29:5; Leviticus 8:7
5) **Made of linen**
    a) Proverbs 31:24
6) **Made of leather**
    a) 2Kings 1:8; Matthew 3:4
7) **Traffic in**
    a) Proverbs 31:24
8) **Used to bear arms**
    a) 1Samuel 18:4; 2Samuel 20:8; 2Kings 3:21
9) **Figurative**
    a) Isaiah 11:5; 22:21; Ephesians 6:14
10) **Symbolic**
    a) Jeremiah 13:1-11; Acts 21:11; Revelation 15:6

Lastly, let us see what Hebrew words are used in context of a girdle. By doing so, you will finally put all the meaning together as you let the Bible define itself based on the context.

Girdle

1) Heb. **hagor,** a girdle of any kind worn by soldiers (1Samuel 18:4; 2Samuel 20:8; 1Kings 2:5; 2Kings 3:21) or women (Isaiah 3:24).
2) Heb. '**ezor,** something "bound," worn by prophets (2Kings 1:8; Jeremiah 13:1), soldiers (Isaiah 5:27; 2Samuel 20:8; Ezekiel 23:15), Kings (Job 12:18).
3) Heb. **mezah,** a "band," a girdle worn by men alone (Psalms 109:19; Isaiah 22:21).
4) Heb. '**abnet,** the girdle of sacerdotal and state officers (Exodus 28:4, 28:39, 40; 29:9; 39:29).
5) Heb. **hesheb**, the "curious girdle" (Exodus 28:8) was attached to the ephod, and was made of the same material. The common girdle was made of leather (2Kings 1:8; Matthew 3:4); a finer sort of linen (Jeremiah 13:1; Ezekiel 16:10; Daniel 10:5). Girdles of sackcloth were worn in token of sorrow (Isaiah 3:24; 22:12). They were variously fastened to the wearer (Mark 1:6; Jeremiah 13:1; Ezekiel 16:10).The girdle was a symbol of strength and power (Job 12:18, 12:21; 30:11; Isaiah 22:21; 45:5). "Righteousness and faithfulness" are the girdle of the Messiah (Isaiah 11:5). Girdles were used as purses or pockets (Matthew 10:9; Mark 6:8).

So, what does all this mean for the Christian? First, we saw that THE GIRDLE WAS SUPPOSED TO CLEAVE TO THE LOINS OF A MAN. Likewise as Christians, we are supposed to have the truth cleave to us. But how do we have the truth cleave to us? "**Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.**"—*Romans 12:9*.

"**I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.**"—*Psalms 101:3*. Because David did not set anything wicked before his eyes, he set what was right and truthful before his eyes. As a man who sets wicked things before his eyes has evil and unrighteousness cleave to him, so too a man who sets that which is right and truthful before his eyes has the truth cleave to him. It is like burning candles. I have several different types of candles. One kind of candle burns with a lot of soot, another one burns with some soot, but there is one that burns clean without any soot. The kind that burns clean without soot is a soy candle. It burns evenly and clean. The wood-wick candle burns with a lot of smoke and that smoke will stick to the walls. "**For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the LORD; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear.**"—*Jeremiah 13:11*.

If you are living a sinful life, the soot of sin will stick to you and cleave to your mind. It will leave you black and tarnished. But when you live a clean life, there will be no sin to cleave to you. That is what it means to have your loins girt about with truth. You are living a truthful life and therefore the truth cleaves to you. You are binding it to yourself. You are cleaving to that which is good. You are holding fast to the Word of God and to the Son of God and they are cleaving to you so that they will never be moved out of place. You are grounded solid in the Word of God and you are living out that truth. "**For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;**"—*Deuteronomy 11:22*.

Secondly, IT LEAVES YOU FREE TO ROAM AROUND. The everyday robes of a Roman soldier were restrictive in nature. They would not allow a soldier to do battle. However, the belt that they wore (the girdle) around their waist and loins freed them from any restrictions. That means that they were more agile and able to fight better. As a Christian, only by having the truth will you be free from any restrictions. Sin is restrictive. Jesus told us that those who commit sin are the servants of sin (John 8:34). However, it is the truth and Jesus (truth personified) that sets us free.

"**And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**"—*John 8:32*.

"**If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.**"—*John 8:36*.

Consequently, in a Messianic prophecy of Isaiah, Christ was predicted to have a girdle of truth about His loins. "**And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.**"—*Isaiah 11:5*. Having righteousness about His loins allowed Jesus to take a defensive posture against the attacks of Satan. In our classic example of Jesus in the wilderness of Sin (Matthew 4), we find that Jesus withstood Satan's attacks by knowing and applying the Word of God correctly.

The same holds true for any Christian today. The Bible is called THE WORD OF TRUTH (2 Timothy 2:15; Ephesians 1:13; James 1:18). If one desires to have the truth girt about his loins, he must study the Word of God and know it. "**Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.**"—*Psalms 8:11*.

"**Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.**"—*Psalms 119:1*.

By knowing and applying the truth as you receive it from your studies, it will leave you free to serve and worship God. This truth does not come from philosophies and religious studies, but from the Word of God written down for us so we can know His will and judgments. By walking in the girdle of truth, you are walking in truth and according to the Law of God. You are walking in His laws and in His judgments (Exodus 16:4; Leviticus 26:3; Deuteronomy 5:3; 8:6; 10:12; 11:22; 28:9; 30:16; Joshua 22:5; 1 Kings 2:3; 6:12; 8:58, 61; Nehemiah 10:29; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 2:10; 5:2; 2 John 1:6; John 14:15; Colossians 4:5; 1 John 1:6-10).

Third, THE GIRDLE REPRESENTED PURITY AND FAITHFULNESS:

JEREMIAH 13:1-11.

"Thus saith the LORD unto me, Go and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water.
2 So I got a girdle according to the word of the LORD, and put it on my loins.
3 And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying,
4 Take the girdle that thou hast got, which is upon thy loins, and arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock.
5 So I went, and hid it by Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.
6 And it came to pass after many days, that the LORD said unto me, Arise, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there.
7 Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it: and, behold, the girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing.
8 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
9 Thus saith the LORD, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem.
10 This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing.
11 For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the LORD; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear."

By examining this passage of Scripture, we can find why the girdle is so important.

God compared Israel to a linen girdle. The purpose of this was to show Jeremiah just how filthy Israel had become and far back she had gone. It was an object lesson meant to illustrate visually what was taking place spiritually. As Christians, we can learn from this object lesson ourselves as it applies to the importance of the girdle. We are to have our loins girt about with truth so that we can walk in truth. Part of that truth is shown here in our text.

ISRAEL HAD NOT WASHED HERSELF IN CLEAN WATER.

When Jeremiah was instructed to put on the linen girdle, God gave him very specific instructions not to put the girdle in water. That is, he was not to wash it before he put it on. Traditionally, the Jews would have washed a girdle like this as it represented purity. Anytime you desire to do a service for God, you need to be a clean vessel. You need to cleanse yourself, just as the linen girdle would have traditionally been cleansed.

Israel was not clean. She had defiled herself by whoring after other gods. She had corrupted her way of thinking and the spots were showing. Anytime you lead a corrupt life, it will come out and others will see it. If we are to serve God, we must be cleansed before doing so, otherwise we are of no use to Him. "**Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.**"—*Matthew 5:8*.

How does one become clean?

1. By Being Saved
    a. Psalms 51; Titus 2:14; Acts 15:9; Romans 10:9-13
2. By Biblical Baptism
    a. Romans 6
3. By confessing sin daily
    a. 1 John 1:6-10
4. By Obeying God from the Bible
    a. 1 Peter 1:22; James 4:8
5. By having a pure thought life
    a. Philippians 4:8; Proverbs 30:5
6. By having Biblical religious practices and convictions
    a. James 1:27

It is important to note that Israel did not do any of these things. If they did, then they did not do them correctly. We find in Isaiah chapter one that Israel tried to sacrifice to God, but He rejected these sacrifices because they were so filthy. He wanted their hearts, not their bullocks. God will not hear our prayers if we are living a dirty life.

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

"Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. 11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. 12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? 13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. 14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. 15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood."—*Isaiah 1:10-15*.

It is so important that we live a clean life and walk in the truth of God's Word. If we do not, then we will not be of any use to God. Babylon had many other gods. By having Jeremiah put the linen girdle in Babylon, God displayed how Israel was dirty and cleaving to other gods. God bound Israel to Himself, but because they did not walk in the truth, they were carried away captive to Babylon where they worshipped other gods and were not good for anything in God's service. God left them to themselves for quite a long time and they festered and rotted on their own. God later had Jeremiah come to get the linen girdle after many days, but by this time it was too rotten to wear.

Do not wait for God to bring you to a place of judgment before you cleanse yourself. If you will not cleanse yourself from your sins, you will find yourself in a place of judgment until your heart gets right and you desire God's help again. By that time, your life will be in such shambles that you may think that God could never use you again. But God can cleanse your heart and make something out of you if you just have the faith to allow Him to work in your life. **"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; 17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. 18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: 20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."**—*Isaiah 1:16-20*.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name."—*Psalms 8:11*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. What does it mean to have your loins girt about with truth?
   a. _____
   _____
2. What is the truth that we are to be girt about with?
   a. _____
   b. _____
3. How does the linen girdle in Jeremiah 13:1-11 show us that we need to be cleansed?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
4. How are we to become clean in the sight of God?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
   d. _____
   e. _____
   f. _____
5. Which chapter in Isaiah shows us clearly that God wants us to walk in truth?
   a. _____
6. Because Israel worshipped other gods, what did God do to them as found represented by the linen girdle?
   a. _____
   _____
7. What are the three things we saw that the girdle represents for Christians today?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
8. What Messianic verse in the Bible shows us that Christ Himself wore a girdle of truth? _____
9. How does the truth of God's Word cleave to us? _____
   _____

Section 2:
The Breastplate of Righteousness

"…and having on the breastplate of righteousness;" –*Ephesians 6:14b*.

In the last chapter, we saw how that the Girdle of Truth is worn on a Christian when he is walking in truth. We also saw that the girdle and the breastplate of the Ephod were inter-connected. Without the girdle, the Ephod would not be held in place. That is because without the truth of God's Word to ground you, you will be trying to establish your own righteousness. You will try to walk around displaying your own righteousness and opinions which can be tossed to and fro.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."—*Romans 10:3*.

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"—*Ephesians 4:14-15*.

Therefore, we conclude that without the girdle of truth, you cannot truly wear the breastplate of righteousness. It is what binds the breastplate to an unmovable position and it is where the breastplate gets its authority. So, what is the Breastplate of Righteousness? How does this breastplate apply to us today as Christians?

THE BREASTPLATE:

What is a breastplate? Why did soldiers have to wear it? The breastplate is a very crucial piece of defensive hardware to the Christian soldier. It is a piece of armor that is meant to protect the heart. When an enemy swordsman strikes you down, many times he will aim for the heart if he can. Without the heart, you are dead. That is why it is so crucial that we wear this piece of equipment. As Christians, it is up to us to guard the area of our bodies that contains the heart. It is our responsibility to guard our hearts so that no enemy can strike it through.

The Breastplate of Righteousness is a means of protection against any evil that should befall us. We are to wear our righteousness as a breastplate. How do we do that? We are to live a life that is righteous before God. God shows us how to do that in His Word. All we must do is follow.

"LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved."—*Psalms 15:1-5*.

"Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once."—*Proverbs 28:18*.

Remember, our righteousness is not grounded in who we are or how we were raised. It is grounded by the solid truth of God's Word. If we are to do any work of righteousness for God as an act of service, then we must do so in the truth of His Word. This brings us to the next point, *Righteousness*.

RIGHTEOUSNESS:

What does it mean to be "righteous?" The word righteous has the word RIGHT in it. Walking and living righteously means that you are walking according to what is right by God. You are walking uprightly. If we walk according to what is right in the eyes of God, then our hearts will be guarded from evil. **"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."**—*Proverbs 4:23*. As a Christian, it is vitally important that you guard your heart WITH ALL DILIGENCE. **"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."**—*Hebrews 11:6*. If you diligently seek the Lord, you will be rewarded. If you diligently guard your heart from being struck down with temptation, you will have a healthy and pure heart to serve God with.

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

"And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."—*Matthew 15:16-20*.

When you do not guard your heart with all diligence by wearing the breastplate of righteousness, it will come out of you one way or another. You can only hide who you really are for so long before your mouth gives away what is inside your heart. Your actions, your

language, your speech, all of it will reflect what is inside of your heart and people will see it eventually. God sees your heart and already knows what is there. Men judge what they see on the outside. However, the inside man will come out and be displayed on the outside.

Let us now see some practical verses which illustrate this:

"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me."—*Psalms 101:3*.

"Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."—*Proverbs 1:23-33*.

As we can see, we live a righteous life first by living it in the truth of God's Word and second, by turning at His reproof. When you are going the wrong direction in life, you need to turn around when God reproves you. Not doing so will result in your own calamity. You guard your heart by guarding the gates that go into your heart. There are five gates that allow entrance into your heart.

1. The Eye Gate—Psalms 101:3
2. The Ear Gate—Jeremiah 29:18-19
3. The Touch or Feeling Gate—2 Corinthians 6:17
4. The Nose Gate—Genesis 27:27; Song of Solomon 4:10-11
5. The Mouth Gate—Proverbs 23:1-3; Psalms 14:4

All of our senses can cause us to either get closer to God or to draw farther away from Him. **"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."**—*Matthew 6:21*. What you treasure is going to be evident by the life you lead. If you treasure worldly things, you will lead a worldly life, but if you treasure Godly things, you will lead a Godly life. Your eyes will treasure Heavenly things. Your ears will treasure Heavenly music. Your feelings will treasure touching only that which is clean in the sight of God. Your nose will not smell evil and corrupt things to eat or drink, such as alcohol or foods that are harmful to you as an individual or that go against the diet that you are on. Your mouth will treasure foods to

eat that are healthy for you personally and will not eat the bread of wickedness, but that which you have worked for with your own hands (Ecclesiastes 3:13; 5:19).

In order to put on the Breastplate of Righteousness so that your heart will be guarded, you must first know how to obtain it and put it on. Therefore, the question is asked, "How is righteousness obtained?" Remember, our righteousness comes from God. It is His righteousness, not ours. "**As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:**"—*Romans 3:10*. Let us see from the Bible how one can obtain the righteousness of God, since ours is not good enough.

HOW TO OBTAIN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD:

Many people think they are righteous enough to get to Heaven on their own. They believe that their righteousness is good enough to stand before an all holy God. That is a lot of arrogance. It is arrogant to think that you are holy enough to stand in the presence of God because of anything that you do. It is arrogant to think that you are good enough gain entrance to God's kingdoms because you lead a good and moral life. If you desire to be righteous before a holy God, then you must obtain His righteousness—and no one can do that on his own, not even the Catholic Pope. You must obtain His righteousness His way and there is only one way to do that—salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.

"**But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.**"—*Isaiah 64:6*.

"**As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:**"—*Romans 3:10*.

"**For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**"—*Romans 6:23*.

No one can be righteous enough to stand before God. The Bible clearly tells us that all of us are sinners and none of us have obtained to God's glory. No person on earth is holy enough to stand before the Judge of the world. We are all guilty of sin and we all deserve to be separated from God forever in a place called Hell.

Let us see from Zechariah chapter three exactly where we get our righteousness from.

"**And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will**

clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by."—*Zechariah 3:1-5*.

In this passage of Scripture, we see the judgment of the high priest Joshua. This is not the same Joshua we read about in the book of Joshua, but another Joshua who lived later and was the high priest for God in Israel. Notice some things from this text. Notice that not even the high priest Joshua was righteous enough to stand before God on his own. His robes of righteousness were as filthy rags in the sight of God. He needed the imputed righteousness of Christ for him to be justified in the sight of God his Judge. Though Satan accused him rightly of his sin, Joshua's faith was not in his own righteousness. He counted on the righteousness of Christ to cover him as a garment. Jesus Christ made Joshua righteous before God through an act of grace and mercy. We are not as holy as Joshua was, being the high priest, but not even the most holy man on earth was holy enough to stand before God in judgment. "**For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."**—*Matthew 5:20*.

When it comes to our judgment as Christians, we are going to have to stand before God in the righteousness of Christ. John alluded to Zechariah in his first epistle. "**My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:"**—*1 John 2:1*. God's desire is that we do not commit sin, but if we do we can be sure that Jesus Christ will be our advocate, our defense attorney in God's courtroom as long as we have placed our faith and trust in Him.

"**Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.**"—*Romans 4:6*.

"**Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:**"—*Romans 3:22*.

"**For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.**"—*Romans 10:3*.

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

"**Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:**"—*2 Peter 1:1*.

If you desire to be saved from your sins and to have the imputed righteousness of God placed upon you as Joshua had when he was judged, then you must believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are all sinners in the sight of God. We all deserve death in Hell, as we have seen. However, there is good news! "**But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.**"—*Romans 5:8-9*.

"**For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**"—*John 3:16-18*.

"**And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:**"—*Philippians 3:9*.

"**But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. ¶For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"—*Romans 10:8-13*.

If you desire to be saved from your sins, forgiven, and covered under the blood of Jesus Christ, then all you must do is ask. All you must do is call upon the name of Jesus Christ for salvation and He will save you right where you are. He will save you right where you are, because no matter where you are in the world, you can always meet Jesus at the Cross by faith. "**Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.**"—*John 16:24*.

If you wish to be saved, then below is a prayer of faith that you can pray. If this prayer reflects the desires of your heart to obtain the righteousness of Christ, then you can say this prayer from your heart and with your mouth. God will hear your cry for help and will save you from having to pay the penalty of your sins. Pray this prayer:

"Dear Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Up until now I thought I was good enough to stand in judgment of you. I see now from the Bible that I was wrong. I believe that Jesus died for me and that you raised Him up from the dead three days later. I would like to place my full faith and trust in the work He did on the Cross to save me and make me clean. Please forgive me and make me your child today. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen."

If you just prayed a prayer like that from your heart, then God heard your faith and heart cry out to Him. He promised to save you if you call on Him and He did. Trust that God will never leave you or forsake you. You will always have the imputed righteousness of God applied to your life. **"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished."**—*Isaiah 51:6*.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—*Romans 8:35-39*.

The righteousness of Christ now covers you like a garment and you are now holy in the sight of God. Satan cannot accuse you for long before Christ steps in and says, "Forgiven in my Name!" He is your Advocate; He is your defense. Trust always in Him.

HOW TO OBTAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH GOD:

After you have been saved by the grace of God and been made righteous by Him, there is another righteousness you should consider. It is the righteousness that MEN CAN SEE. God sees the righteousness of Christ IN YOUR HEART, but men see the righteousness YOU LIVE. Your testimony as a Christian depends largely on how much you love God and keep His commandments. Men cannot see the change that took place in your heart unless you make that evident to them by your actions. For this, let us consider a couple of Bible texts.

THE TWO JUSTIFICATIONS:

There are two ways you can be justified. You can be justified before God (your spiritual salvation), and you can be justified before men (How men see you live out your faith). To understand this Biblically, we turn to what the Scripture says about Abraham.

"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose

sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."— *Romans 4:3-8*.

"**And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.**"—*James 2:23-26*.

To some people, Romans 4:3-8, and James 2:23-26 seem to contradict what is being said. However, upon closer examination, we find that there is no contradiction at all. Some people have a mindset that there is only one justification mentioned in the Bible, but in fact there are two. Abraham was justified in TWO WAYS. The first way we see as found in Romans chapter four was that HE WAS JUSTIFIED BEFORE GOD. Abraham's faith in God was counted to him for righteousness. The Scripture makes it very clear that Abraham did not work to obtain his righteousness by any deeds of his own. Only His belief in God's salvation made him justified before God.

"**But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.**"—*1 Samuel 16:7*.

God looked on the heart of both Abraham and David. They both had an unwavering faith toward God. Their trust in God and love for Him allowed them to have the righteousness of God imputed onto their lives and hearts. God looked on their hearts, but it goes further.

Man looks on the outward appearance. Abraham was therefore justified in another way. His faith in God caused him to do something very hard for anyone to do. He was willing to bind his son as a sacrifice on the altar of God and make him ready to be a burnt offering. He was going to slay his son at the command of God. Abraham believed God's promise that Isaac's seed was the promised seed and that Isaac would bring about a great Nation.

Because this had not happened yet, Abraham believed that God would raise him from the dead. This was a perfect picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of Abraham's faith in God and His Word, he was willing to go through extremes to prove his sincerity. His works justified his faith in God before men. Men could see his good works as a testimony to his faith. He was justified in the sight of men as being a man of God. God saw fit to have his story recorded in His eternal Word so that others may read about it and fear God as Abraham did so long ago.

APPLICATION TO THE BREASTPLATE:

As we apply this knowledge to the Breastplate of Righteousness, we know that it is to our advantage as Christians to lead righteous lives. Doing so will allow us to have hearts that are guarded and kept with all diligence. As we guard our hearts and keep them, we are free from emotional scars that can be left behind. We are free to think soberly and purely in a corrupt world. We are secure from the attacks of Satan when he tries to tempt us to sin. With a pure heart, we see the mighty hand of God working in our lives. We see more answered prayers and greater fellowship with God daily as we draw closer to Him.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."—*Galatians 5:16-25*.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."—*Titus 2:11-14*.

As a Christian, your faith justifies you in the sight of God. You are forever forgiven and absolved of sin from the past, present and the future. However, men look at your life and can tell whether a change has taken place in your heart. You cannot tell them about the power of God if it is not evident in your life. Therefore, you must strive to be the best Christian you know how to be and leave the rest up to God. Let God do all the work from the inside-out, but make sure your faith is evident by the life you lead. Someone once said that we should pray like it all depends on God and work like it all depends on us. I think there is a lot of wisdom there. Just don't get so prideful about your work that you think you don't need God. Only He can give you what you need to do His service. "**I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.**"—*Philippians 4:13*.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."—*John 15:5*.

If we desire to win others to Christ, we are going to have to live a righteous life. No one will want to hear what you have to say until they see you are living out your faith. **"Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame."**—*1 Corinthians 15:34*.

"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men."—*Romans 14:13-18*.

Notice that Romans 14:18 says that Christians who serve God in the capacity that is listed in this text are acceptable to GOD and APPROVED OF MEN. This verse shows us the two justifications. God sees your heart, but men see your faith lived out as holy vessels of God. Working like this will allow you to win others to Christ. Once you have a clean heart as a righteous man of God you can teach others about how to be clean.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."—*Psalms 51:10-13*.

No one can teach others how to be clean unless they are clean themselves. No one can teach someone else the ordnances of God unless they are living out their faith. Wearing the breastplate of righteousness will allow you to guard your heart, which in turn will allow you to have a clean mind and serve God as a clean vessel. You will live a clean life and have a good testimony before others. By building a keeping a good testimony, you will have a chance to win many people to Christ as God uses you as His chosen vessel of honor. Notice that even Jesus grew in favor with both GOD, AND MAN. **"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."**—*Luke 2:52*.

Remember God sees your heart, but men see your work. **"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."**—*Matthew 5:14-16*.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."—*Proverbs 4:23*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. What does the Breastplate of Righteousness guard?
   a. _____
2. How is the Christian supposed to wear the Breastplate of Righteousness?
   a. _____
3. What is the breastplate closely connected to and in fact inter-woven with?
   a. _____
4. Abraham was justified before two entities. Who were they?
   a. _____
   b. _____
5. What are we free from when we guard our hearts with all diligence?
   a. _____
   _____
6. What are the two ways to obtain righteousness, in regards to God?
   a. _____
   b. _____
7. How does God see a man's faith? Where does He look?
   a. _____
8. How do men see other men's faith? Where do they look?
   a. _____
9. What two entities did Jesus find favor with as a young boy and as He grew up?
   a. _____
   b. _____
10. When are we the most secure from Satan's attacks of temptation?
    a. _____
11. According to Galatians chapter five, how are we not to fulfill the lusts of our flesh?
    a. _____
12. If you desire to be saved from sin and covered under the blood of Jesus, what must you do? _____
13. No one can teach others how to be clean unless they are what?
    a. _____
14. What was Joshua given when he was judged?
    a. _____

Section 3:
Spiritual Combat Boots

"**And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;**"—*Ephesians 6:15*.

As Christian soldiers, we are supposed to wear the proper shoes in order to help us in the battlefield. As a veteran, I understand the importance of wearing proper combat boots. To that end, let us see why the Christian soldier is supposed have the right combat boots on. The Bible tells us that we are to have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. What does that mean?

FIRST, WE ARE TO BE A PREPARED PEOPLE:

To have your feet shod with the PREPARATION of the gospel of peace means that you are to be prepared to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. You are to be prepared:

1. AT ALL TIMES TO PREACH THE GOSPEL
    a. "**But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:**"—*1 Peter 3:15*.
2. TO GO ANYWHERE TO PREACH THE GOSPEL
    a. "**And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**"—*Luke 24:47*.
    b. "**And the gospel must first be published among all nations.**"—*Mark 13:10*.
3. TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO ANYONE
    a. READ: **Ephesians chapter two**

Having your feet shod with the proper spiritual combat boots will help you when you go into the mission field. My combat boots in the military were made of leather. They were rugged and tough. They were made to withstand rugged terrain. As Christian soldiers, you too may hit some rugged terrain. Life will get rough, persecution will arise, but if you prepare yourself with the gospel, you can withstand all of that and keep pressing on through the field of duty.

SECOND, WE ARE TO PREACH THE GOSPEL OF PEACE.

What is the gospel? Why is it called the gospel of peace? The Apostle Paul said in a letter to the Corinthian church, "**For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!**"—*1 Corinthians 9:16*. Paul pronounced woe on himself if he did not preach the gospel. Why? It is because the gospel is the message that if people believe it and call on Jesus, has the power to save someone's soul from Hell. "**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**"—*Romans 1:16*.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of peace. Why? According to several Bible passages, we find that we were at enmity with God until we came to know Him as Saviour. God did not come to this world to condemn us, but to save us and to put our lives and souls at peace with Him. He is at peace with us and we are at peace with Him.

"**For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.**"—*Romans 5:7-10*.

1. FIRST, WE GET PEACE WITH GOD
   a. "**Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:**"—*Romans 5:1*.
2. SECOND, WE GET THE PEACE OF GOD
   a. "**And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**"—*Philippians 4:7*.
   b. "**And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful**"—*Colossians 3:15*.

To have peace WITH God means that you are no longer at enmity with Him. You are now called the friend of God because of your faith, just as Abraham was called the friend of God for his faith. "**And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.**"—*James 2:23*.

To have the peace OF God means that "God's peace rules and reigns in your heart." You are free from the anxieties you once had. You are free from ever worrying about whether or not you will go to Heaven. You are at peace when life does not go your way. You are no longer leading a life of sin, which causes you to always be on the move and look over your shoulder. You have God's peace.

"There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked."—*Isaiah 48:22*.
"There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."—*Isaiah 57:21*.

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."—*Psalms 23:1-6*.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."—*Matthew 11:28*.

THE GOSPEL IS THE DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST:

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"—*1 Corinthians 15:1-4*.

To believe the gospel of Jesus Christ means that one must believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus died to pay for the sins of the world (Romans 5:6-9). After he died, he was buried for three days and on the third day, He was rose up from the grave conquering sin and death. God accepted His sacrifice for our sins once and for all, never more to die, and always alive seated on the right hand of God's throne until He comes again (Acts 10:40; Luke 18:33; 24:7, 46; Psalms 16:10; Acts 2:27; 13:35; Psalms 22; Isaiah 53).

THOSE WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL HAVE BEAUTIFUL FEET:

"And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"—*Romans 10:15*.

Feet are pretty ugly; at least they are to me anyway. Some people like them; I cannot stand them as a matter of opinion. They smell bad; some have corns, fungus, some are gnarly, large toenails—you get the picture. Feet are very important, but to me they are very ugly. However, the Bible tells us that those who preach the gospel of peace have beautiful feet! A gospel messenger is a beautiful sight to God. Even though your feet may have to endure harsh conditions, they are still very beautiful.

THE GOSPEL IS NOT BAPTISM:

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."—*1 Corinthians 1:17*.

The Apostle Paul was very clear that the act of Christian (water) baptism is separate from the gospel of the Cross. Christ had His own baptism on the Cross. **"But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able."**—*Matthew 20:22*. When Christ said this, He had already been baptized by John the Baptist. This baptism He was referring to was the Baptism of the Cross, His death, burial and resurrection. **"For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."**—*Matthew 12:40*.

The Baptism for the Christian is an ACT OF OBEDIENCE TOWARD GOD and has NO bearing on someone's salvation from his or her sins. It is belief in the Baptism of Christ on the Cross (His death, burial and resurrection) that we are saved. We are saved by our faith in Christ, not through an act of obedience. Baptism was attributed by Jesus to be an act of righteousness **"And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him."**—*Matthew 3:15*, No one has his or her soul saved by an act of righteousness. **"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"**—*Titus 3:5*.

MEMORY VERSE:

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"—*Isaiah 52:7*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. What is the Gospel?
   a. _____
2. Why is it called the Gospel of Peace?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
3. What are the two kinds of peace we get when we believe the Gospel?
   a. _____
   b. _____
4. Which verse shows us that Christian baptism is not part of the Gospel?
   a. _____
5. What is Christian Baptism?
   a. _____
6. What are three ways we can be prepared to preach the Gospel?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
7. What does it mean to have peace WITH God?
   a. _____
8. What does it mean to have the peace OF God?
   a. _____
9. Why are combat boots so rugged and tough? How does this apply to us as Christian soldiers?
   a. _____
   _____
10. According to Ephesians chapter two, what two groups of people did Jesus bring together who were once separated by a middle wall of partition in the Temple worship?
    a. _____
    b. _____
11. According to this same chapter, by what means did Jesus do this?
    a. _____
12. What is the Jewish and Gentile body of worship (local church worship) called in Ephesians chapter four, and verse twelve?
    a. _____

Section 4:
The Shield of Faith

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."—*Ephesians 6:16*.

What is the shield of faith and why do we need it? The answer is clear. It is so that we can deflect and quench all the fiery darts that Satan has to throw at us. Satan is on the offense against Christian soldiers. He is a terrorist and he plans to terrorize us with everything he has. He is throwing fiery darts at us every chance he can get. But what are those fiery darts? Why does it take faith to quench them?

"In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart."—*Psalms 11:1-2*. Notice the context here. It is the wicked (wicked people) that shoot flaming darts at you. In context, and in understanding the poetic language and nature of the King James Bible, we understand this to be PEOPLE WHO JUDGE OR CONDEMN YOU AS A CHRISTIAN (Proverbs 18:21; James 3:6).

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."—*John 3:17*.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."—*Romans 8:1*.

The wicked will make accusations about you (Titus 2:6-10). They mock you, criticize you, demean your faith in God, try to make your faith and beliefs into a laughing matter, call you unscientific, and lie about you. These are fiery darts meant to be thrown at you. If you do not have your faith grounded solid in the Word of God and in Christ, these fiery darts can hurt and kill you. They cannot truly condemn you if you are walking in the Spirit and not after the lusts of the flesh. As long as you are right with God, you will have nothing to worry about. You do not need to worry about their faces or their words, God will judge them soon enough. **"Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD."**—*Jeremiah 1:8*.

"And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"—*1 Peter 3:13-15*.

THE SHIELD OF FAITH

If you are going to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, you must take the shield of faith. It is your undying faith in God that will quench the fires of men's accusations against you. It is your faith in God that will make you invulnerable to any condemnation or persecution that would come from wicked and vile men who wish to discourage you from believing in God. You must trust that God is right, even when no one else on earth believes it. You say, "That would be hard to do!" I say that Noah did just that in Genesis chapter six.

When everyone else was laughing at Noah and condemning him for his faith in God and the prophecy that there would be forty days and nights of rain, Noah held fast to his integrity for one hundred and twenty years of no rain. Only he and his family were saved from the judgment of God. Noah armed himself with faith as a shield from all those who would condemn him and laugh at him and scorn him.

"Plead my cause, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help. Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt."—*Psalms 35:1-4*. God is a shield and buckler to all those who trust in Him. A shield was smaller and used to defend against direct close attacks, while a buckler was also a shield, but covered the entire body. Notice what Noah Webster said about it in his 1828 dictionary of the English Language:

"**Buckler**—A kind of shield, or piece of defensive armor, anciently used in war. It was composed of wood, or wickers woven together, covered with skin or leather, fortified with plates of brass or other metal, and worn on the left arm. On the middle was an umbo, boss or prominence, very useful in causing stones and darts to glance off. The buckler often was four feet long, and covered the whole body."

If you are going to quench all the rhetoric that wicked men would throw at you and any condemnation, you are going to have to have an unwavering faith in God and live out your faith so that no one can say anything about you. Even when they do, you can be sure that your faith will quench their fire, for the fires of Hell cannot prevail against the church.

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—*Romans 8:33-39*.

"For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up."—*Isaiah 50:7-9*.

"Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause."—*Psalms 25:1-3*.

"Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave. Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous. ¶Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues."—*Psalms 31:17-20*.

MEMORY VERSE:

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."—*Romans 8:1*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. In context, who are the wicked? _____
2. What do the wicked do to throw fiery darts at Christian soldiers?
   a. _____
   _____
3. What example do we have from Genesis chapter six of someone using the shield of faith?
   a. _____
4. How is our faith like a shield?
   a. _____
   _____
5. What is a buckler?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
6. What did God tell Jeremiah not to be afraid of in Jeremiah chapter one?
   a. _____
7. What two verses of Scripture show us that people have power in their tongues to kill us and to set fire to us when they are CONDEMNING us?
   a. _____
   b. _____
8. What verses in Romans show us that no one can condemn us?
   a. _____

FILL IN THE BLANKS (KJV):

Matthew 5:10-11 Blessed are they which are _____ for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall _____ you, and _____ you, and shall say all manner of _____ against you _____, for _____ _____.

Luke 6:22 Blessed are ye, when men shall _____ you, and when they shall _____ you from their _____, and shall _____ you, and cast out your _____ as _____, for the Son of man's sake.

Section 5:
The Helmet of Salvation

"**And take the helmet of salvation,…**"—*Ephesians 6:17a*.

What is the Helmet of Salvation? How does it protect us against Satan and his followers? To understand this, we must understand our earthly illustration of a soldier on the front lines of battle. A soldier needs a good, strong helmet. If he does not have one, he risks getting hit in one of the most crucial places on his body—his head. Most people can survive a wounded arm, but not a wound to the head. If someone is struck in the head, they can get a concussion. If someone is shot in the head with an arrow, they are probably not going to survive. Therefore, we see the helmet is one of the most crucial elements of a Christian soldier's uniform.

Satan always attacks people in one major area—the mind. "**Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.**"—*Titus 2:6*. Satan cannot truly attack a sober minded Christian. He is always on the hunt for a weak minded one. Satan can only possess weak minded people. Those who are strong in the mind can lower their mind to a weak state by doing drugs and drinking alcohol. Narcotic drugs, alcohol, and any prescription drug that alters the mind will lower the soberness of a person to a point that they can be possessed by Satan or heavily influenced by him.

Hallucinogenic drugs and alcohol will make people hallucinate and see things that a sober minded person cannot see. However, these drugs can also be used to open the door to the spiritual world and allow people to see into that world. Many hallucinations people see of the devil could actually be the devil himself. It is not a world anyone would want to see, but many people get involved with drugs because they do not know the danger they are placing themselves in. Anyone I have seen that has been possessed by a devil has always had a history of drug use or mind-altering drug use (prescribed drugs).

This modern-day use of prescription drugs by Psychologists has gotten out of control. Behavioral issues for the common person such as anger, depression, and anxiety are not conditions of the mind, but of the heart. They are spiritual issues, not diseases of the mind. The Bible calls them things like "an angry spirit," "a broken and contrite spirit," "a spirit of fear," or "a lying spirit." (Eccl. 7:9; Psalms 34:18; 2 Tim. 1:7; 1 Kings 22:22-23).

Jesus came to heal the broken hearted and bind up the wounds of those who are hurt (Luke 4:18). Behavioral issues are issues of the heart and of the spirit, which is the level where Jesus deals with men. Conversely, Satan likes to attack the mind and lower people's soberness to where he can attack them. By turning a behavioral issue into a mind problem and a disease, Satan has effectively allowed God to lose ground even in a Christian's mind. "**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:**"—*1 Peter 5:8*.

"**Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;**"—*1 Peter 1:13*.

Satan likes to take Christians out of God's good ground where God can protect them, and make them fight on his turf. Satan has the home-field advantage in the life of a Christian if he is taking medicine to solve his behavioral problems. God doesn't get any glory for a pill! Christians are fighting in enemy territory, losing every battle, and living defeated lives. Instead, we should be on our home-base which is centered in the Word of God and let God do all the defending for us.

"**But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.**"—*1 Thessalonians 5:8*.

Your mind is a battlefield. Your imagination is where you see God by faith. He is not visible to your eye. You can only see Him when you search your heart and use your imagination. God gave us the imagination to be able to see Him by faith. The imagination is only as good as what you desire. It is a window into your heart. What you think about is what you love. Because of the fall of man, our imaginations became corrupt. Someone who constantly dwells on the wrong things will have a terrible imagination and will imagine doing some very evil things. They will invent evil things, and will commit horrible acts of sin. "**And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**"—*Genesis 6:5*.

By having the helmet of salvation, you are GRIDING UP THE LOINS OF YOUR MIND. 1 peter 1:13 shows us that our minds should have a girdle on it too. As we saw from our previous lesson, this involves the Word of God. Our thought life should be pure and we should think on pure things. "**Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.**"—*Proverbs 30:5*.

"**Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.**"—*Philippians 4:8*.

"**And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;**"—*Ephesians 5:18*.

Your salvation is like a helmet. It protects your mind from attacks by Satan. Satan cannot possess a Christian. Christ and Satan cannot occupy the same heart as a dwelling place. When Jesus saves us, He takes up occupancy in our hearts and lives there forever. Satan has no way to get inside a Christian and possess his mind. "**Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.**"—*1 John 4:4*. However, Satan can certainly have a heavy influence on a Christian and entice him while his mind state has been lowered. A saved person will hope in the salvation of God to a point that he will not need worldly narcotics to aid his behavior. His hope is in the Word of God and in His promises.

"**If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.**"—*Colossians 3:1*. The hope of God's salvation helps us to keep our eyes on heavenly things. It keeps us knowing that God is in control and that Satan can never defeat us. Satan is already a defeated foe, but he tries to make us think we are the defeated ones. The sad truth is that he does gain a lot of victories in our lives because of a lack of knowledge on the part of a Christian. Instead of getting our theology and faith from God, we get it from men's ideas, traditions, and philosophies. "**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.**"—*Hosea 4:6*.

Men today are "**Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**"—*2 Timothy 3:7*. The truth is found in the Word of God. There is no place else can that we find such pure truth. "**Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.**"—*John 17:17*. You must protect your mind and not allow Satan to gain control of it. Drugs, alcohol, and narcotics all allow Satan access to your mind and allow him to influence you heavily. Perhaps you have heard the term, "Under the influence." It is Satan's influence that you can be under. Do not fall into that trap. Trust Christ and hope in His salvation. He has the power to help your behavioral problems and change your heart into another person.

MEMORY VERSE:

"But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."—*1 Thessalonians 5:8*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. What does the helmet of Salvation protect?
   a. _____
2. What is Satan's main area of attack?
   a. _____
3. On what level does Jesus deal with people?
   a. _____
4. Why has modern-day Psychology become so dangerous in respects to behavioral issues?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
5. Why are God's people often destroyed? _____
6. In the battlefield, what is the most crucial place you need to protect on your body?
   _____
7. Where are we supposed to learn our truth from? _____
8. What are we girding up when we wear the helmet of salvation?
   a. _____
9. Why can Satan never possess a Christian?
   a. _____
   _____
10. What can Satan do to a Christian's mind once it has been lowered?
    a. _____
11. Satan attacks _____ - _____ people.
12. Behavioral problems are conditions of what?
    a. _____
13. Where do we see God by faith?
    a. _____
14. When did our imaginations become corrupt?
    a. _____
15. What should we think on? _____

Section 6:
The Sword of The Spirit

"**...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:**"—*Ephesians 6:17b*.

The art of swordplay is extremely difficult and very unpredictable. When you wield a sword in your hand, you are wielding a dangerous and potentially deadly weapon. It can be used to protect someone, defend yourself, or murder someone. It requires a great deal of skill and intuition. The same holds true for the Sword of the Spirit. God deals with men on the spiritual level. The Word of God is the Word of the Holy Ghost. It is referred to in context as being like a sword. Why is it like a sword? The Bible shows us what it cuts into.

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

A double-edged sword is very sharp. In battle, it is one of the best swords you can have. It gives you a lot of flexibility in your technique. However, as sharp as man can make a sword to cut into the flesh, the Word of God is even sharper than that. It does not cut into the flesh, but into the heart and spirit of a person. It is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. "**Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand;**"—*Psalms 149:6*.

When you preach the Word of God to someone, it can cut them like a knife. They can fall under such deep conviction that they feel it in their own heart. The Word of God has the power to change men's lives. It has the power to tell you what you are thinking and whether you are wrong or not.

If you are going to be effective in the ministry and as a Christian soldier, you are going to have to learn how to wield your sword. "**Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**"—*2 Timothy 2:15*. Every Christian should study the Word of God carefully and learn how to use it. They should learn first how it applies to their lives and then to the lives of others around them. This will allow the Christian soldier to answer Bible critics who try to preach heresy and philosophy as the truth.

The Sword of God's Spirit has several attributes. Let us examine some of them.

1. IT IS A PURIFIED SWORD

"The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."—*Psalms 12:6*.

The Word of God is pure. Notice that it doesn't say "His thoughts," but "His Words." The Word of God is an "every word" Bible. We must have every word of God or it is not THE Word of God. The Word of God must contain every Word God spoke otherwise it is a product of man. God inspired His Word and gave it to us. He preserved His words through meticulous and perfect copies over the years. He further has allowed those words to be translated into other languages so that every tongue may know He is Lord. We must live by every word of God. Without the pure words of God, we are not armed against the vile attacks of Satan.

"Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him."—*Proverbs 30:5*.

"And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."—*Luke 4:4*.

"And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel."—*Joshua 8:32*.

"The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it."—*Psalms 68:11*.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"—*2 Timothy 3:16*.

"But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."—*Job 32:8*.

Today, we have the pure words of God written down for us. In English, we find it in the King James Bible, AV 1611, edition 1769. It was translated mainly from William's Tyndale's English as a model and guide, which came from the pure Received Text of Antioch. However, the King James Bible itself was purified seven times. It took seven years to finish,

and it went through seven editions to correct spelling and typographical errors (not word changes or versions, but things like commas, accidental publisher and printing errors). The King James Translators were not inspired men of God, but spirit led men of God. They were already working with inspired scriptures taken from the Received Text (TR) of Antioch. The translators did not need to be inspired. God had already inspired His Word through the Apostles (New Testament) and the prophets (Old Testament).

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."—*2 Peter 1:21*.

There is no purpose for God to have inspired His Word if He was not prepared to have it miraculously preserved. He preserved His Word through meticulous, word-for-word copies so that every word you are reading today is the perfectly preserved and pure Word of God.

"For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."—*Psalms 100:5*.

"Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever."—*Psalms 119:160*.

Seven is the number of purity, perfection, and rest in the Bible (Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 12:15; 16:30; Psalms 119:164; Proverbs 9:1). A pure sword will be tried seven times in the fire. Each time the metal is tried, dross (impurities) is brought to the surface and it is purged away until all the dross is clear gone. What is left is a pure and strong metal that will not oxidize (rust) and has a lot of temper (integrity).

The metaphor God uses here is simply to show us that the Word of God is a pure sword that we can use. It has perfect integrity and it never gets old. It will never let you down in battle. It is a sword that is pure and you can count on it. This leads me to my next point:

2. IT IS A PROVEN SWORD

"The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations."—*Psalms 33:10-11*.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:"—*2 Peter 1:19*.

The Word of God is a proven sword. It has been proven since the beginning of time to be true and right. The counsel that you get from the Word of God will always help you. You can never go wrong when applying God's Word to your life. The Bible says that we have a MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY. That means that if someone is giving you any kind of counsel, advice, or prophetic statements, you should check it against what the Word of God says.

The Word of God is surer than anything else you can get out there. No man or so-called prophet can ever replace the authority of God's Word. It is where we get our sole authority for faith and practice. It has been proven repeatedly to work, if applied correctly. **"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."**—*Hebrews 12:2*.

"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward."—*Psalms 19:7-11*.

Psalms 19:11 says that there is great reward in keeping the commandments of the Word of God. It helps you, guides you and protects you. This leads me to my next point:

3. IT IS A PROTECTIVE SWORD

"Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight:"—*Psalms 144:1*.

David, the writer of this Psalm, was a man of war (1 Chronicles 28:3). He fought the mighty giant Goliath when he was but a youth with only a sling shot (1 Samuel 17:33). David's faith in the Lord allowed him to defeat any enemies that came his way. His strength and wisdom on the battlefield came from the Lord.

"The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name."—*Exodus 15:3*. It seems to me that the best person to learn from on how to do battle is the LORD. He teaches us how to fight in the battlefield. His Word shows the Christian soldier how to fight the Devil and defend against his attacks. The Devil has a sword—the law. He means to use the law against us because we fall so short of it. However, our sword is the Sword of the Spirit. The letter of the law is how Satan likes to attack us (*1 Corinthians 15:56*). He accuses us and tells us we can never be good enough for God (*Revelation 12:10*). But God's Spirit gives life. **"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."**—*2 Corinthians 3:6*.

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:"—*Romans 5:20*.

God's grace covers it all. It teaches us how to counter-attack the Devil with verses that show him God's love and grace. The sword of the Spirit is a protective sword that, if wielded right, can protect us against Satan when he slashes at us with his accusations (*Matthew 4:1-11*). The Word of God can slash back at Satan when he accuses us. It is stronger than his sword and it is completely pure. God will teach you how to wield the Sword of the Spirit if you study the Bible and allow the Holy Spirit to be your teacher.

4. IT IS A PRECIOUS SWORD

"I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches."—*Psalms 119:14*.

"Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it."—*Psalms 119:140*.

"And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision."—*1 Samuel 3:1*.

The Word of God is very precious. It is the most prized possession that you could ever own. So many people take for granted that they can have the Word of God readily available in their hands at any time. When you look at the rest of the world and throughout history, you will find that the Word of God has been banned from most places. It has been scorned, blacklisted and burned. However, throughout all ages, God has left His Word in tact somehow so that His truth can endure to all generations. **"For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."**—*Psalms 100:5*.

The sword of the Spirit is your most prized possession. Through it you can learn about the saving grace of God. Through belief in it, you and anyone else can have their souls saved. By it, your life can be transformed. You can help others transform their lives. You can read about the truth of God's Word, His love for you, His judgments, and His marvelous works. Every answer to the questions that life presents are found right inside the Word of God. Where did we come from? Where are we now? Where are we going? All these questions can be answered by the Word of God.

As you read the Word of God, recognize that it is altogether precious. It is more precious than gold or rubies. You possess the wisdom of God right at your fingertips. It is a privileged position that not many people throughout history has ever had. You have been given a precious gift. Do not throw it away or treat it like it is just another book. It is God's book. It is THE WORD OF GOD. Reverence it, respect it and cherish it. "**How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!**"—*Psalms 139:17*. Let us see our last point on this subject:

5. IT IS A PROFITABLE SWORD

"**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:**"—*2 Timothy 3:16*.

"**For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.**"—*1 Timothy 4:8*.

"**For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?**"—*Mark 8:36*.

In a world that is always out to get a profit, we often miss what is truly important in life. Our bodies will decay, the money we earn will vanish away, but God's Word will endure forever. True profit comes from knowing and obeying the Word of God. God's Word is shown here to be profitable in four areas. It is profitable for:

1. DOCTRINE
2. REPROOF
3. CORRECTION
4. INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

DOCTRINE:

"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:"—*Titus 2:1*.

What is doctrine? Why do we need to learn it? Biblical doctrine is Biblical truth. It is the truth of God's Word when it has been rightly divided and placed in its proper context. Doctrine is THE INTERPRETATION OF GOD'S WORD. There is only ONE primary interpretation to the Word of God, but there are many APPLICATIONS that can be made to the life of a Christian. Do not think that the application is the interpretation. There is only one way to interpret the Bible, and that is literally, unless the Bible itself lets you know (either in context or in words) that the interpretation is figurative or allegorical. Never assume that the Bible is allegorical unless there is a direct or indirect situation that can be made. For example, let us look at the life of Abraham and Sarah.

- READ GENESIS 17-18 (The story of Abraham and Sarah)

GALATIANS 4:21-31

"Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."

Notice what happened in Galatians 4. The Apostle Paul was in context trying to help the Galatian church understand the difference between the Law of God and the grace of

God. The church at Galatia had started out well in preaching and believing the grace of God and assure their victory over sin (Galatians 5:7). The Jewish believers were starting to try and reconcile the liberty of Christ and keeping the Law of God. They had a hard time understanding that their sins were forgiven and how they could now conceivably do something awful and still be redeemed without a sacrifice. The Jews were starting to bring their old traditions into the church (The body of Christ) and as a result, they started thinking that Jewish Law was a part of salvation.

They had not known that liberty in Christ does not mean that they could do what they wanted and get away with it. Paul had to address this problem with several churches and spent a lot of time clearing the issue up (Romans 6; Galatians 1-6; 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23). So, Paul was making a spiritual application from the life of Abraham and Sarah specifically for the purpose of explaining the truth of liberty in Christ and the new birth.

The primary interpretation of Genesis chapters seventeen through eighteen is a literal and historical account of what happened in the lives of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar. The application that was made by Paul was that our salvation was like the two births of Isaac and Ishmael. One was born free and the other was born from a slave woman. Isaac was the promised child, but Ishmael was born into bondage. Christ is the promised seed of God (Galatians 3:15; Isaiah 9:6), while Ishmael represented us who are born in sin. Those who are born in Christ are born free according to the promise of God. They are children of promise, because we rely on the promise of God to be born again into His family by faith.

Those who are born by the will of the flesh are born under the law. Those who are born under the law have always persecuted those who were born free. As children of God, the children of men, who are natural and have not experienced the new birth, are born only of the flesh. They are carnally minded and they like to commit sin because that is all they know. Those who are born of the will of God by His promise are persecuted by those who wish to have a heritage in the family of God, but still be under the law. They cannot stand our liberty and are jealous. They want to come to the Father as children, but like to remain in the bondage of the law.

Paul was trying to explain that from a familiar story that is found in the book of Genesis. There is one interpretation, but there are other applications you can make. Doctrine is the truth of the interpretation of God's Word.

REPROOF:

Getting reproved from the Word of God means that God will show us what we are doing wrong. His moral Laws are still in effect for us today. Murder, stealing, coveting, adultery, and all His other moral Laws still apply to us as Christians and citizens of our countries. If we do something wrong, God will show us in the Bible as we read it or as we hear it being preached. The Holy Spirit will reprove you in your heart as you hear it or read it. You will feel a conviction about your sins that you did not feel before you were saved by His grace.

People do not like to be reproved. They do not like to go to church and hear a sermon that applies to their lives personally in regards to their sinful behavior. However, it is a necessary part of our lives. We all need the reproof of God's Word. Only God is perfect. If we are to draw closer to God, we are therefore going to have to accept that reproof with all readiness of mind and cheerfulness of heart. We are to be ready always to change our lives to the glory of God and know that we will need to be reproved sometimes.

God has the authority to reprove us because He is holy and we are not. It is good to be reproved by God because we are sinners. We will do things by nature that will violate God's Laws and our own conscience. We reprove our children, and so does God when He sees fit.

CORRECTION:

Correction is God showing you in the Bible that which is the correct way. Reproof is God showing us what the wrong way is, but correction is Him guiding us to the right way. **"For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."**—*Proverbs 3:12*. God will not just beat you over the head with the Bible and tell you that you are doing wrong, but He corrects you into doing what is right.

For instance, as we read Psalm chapter one, we see that God shows us that there is a wrong way to go and then He tells us what the correct way is. God shows us the WAY of the ungodly and the WAY of the righteous. God reproves the wrong way (the way of the ungodly), but He lets you know that there is a correct way to go (the way of the righteous). If you go the correct way, you will be blessed, but if you go the wrong way, you will be cursed by your own doings.

INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS:

God not only shows us the way in which we should go, but He tells us how to do it. He instructs us in how to carry out going that way. For instance, a soldier is told He must wear a certain uniform, but his instructor or his guidebook tells Him exactly how to wear it, clean it, press it, and take care of it. The same holds true with God's Word. God corrects us in showing us the right way in which we should go. He then goes further and tells us exactly how to do that. This ties right back in with knowing sound doctrine. It is like God tells us to drive to a certain place in a faraway country, but also gives us a detailed map on how to get there.

"**If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.**"—*Colossians 3:1*.

"**Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.**"—*1 Peter 2:11*.

Heaven is our country and that is where we are heading. God has given us a destination and the Word of God contains the road map. Our destination is a holy place, and the map to holiness is found in the Word of God. He tells us how to do everything He wants us to do. We are responsible to apply the doctrine that we learn to our lives once we know and understand it. We believe it by faith and live it by faith. We are a peculiar people to those who do not understand why we have such faith in God. "**Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.**"—*Psalms 25:8*.

"**What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.**"—*Psalms 25:12*.

"**I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.**"—*Psalms 32:8*.

"**Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.**"—*Proverbs 3:5-6*. If you are trying to do what is right, then do not rely on your own wisdom. Do it God's way. His way is the best way every time.

MEMORY VERSE:

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

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. How is the Word of God related to a Sword?
   a. _____
   _____
2. What are the five attributes of the Sword of God's Spirit we listed?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
   d. _____
   e. _____
3. What are the four things that the Word of God is said to be profitable for?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
   d. _____
4. How did God inspire His Word?
   a. _____
   _____
5. How did God preserve His Word?
   a. _____
   _____
6. What is Biblical doctrine?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
7. What is to be our most prized and valued possession?
   a. _____
8. What three things does the number seven represent in the Bible?
   a. _____
9. How is God's Word pure? _____

CHAPTER 9

"Illicit Drugs, Prescription Meds, Alcohol and Chemical Addictions"

MIND-ALTERING PHARMACEUTICALS AND OTHER PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS:

What are prescription drugs? How do Pharmaceuticals help or destroy us? The Bible is very clear on this matter. Pharmaceutical drugs (mind-altering) have a long and dark history behind them. Look at what Noah Webster wrote about Pharmaceutical drugs in his 1828 dictionary of the English language:

"Pharmaceutic
PHARMACEU'TIC

PHARMACEU'TICAL, a. [Gr. to practice witchcraft or use medicine; poison or medicine.] Pertaining to the knowledge or art of pharmacy, or to the art of preparing medicines."

Why did he write that? Why did Noah Webster believe that people used pharmaceutical medicines to practice witchcraft?

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."— *Galatians 5:19-21*.

In Galatians 5:20, we find that one of the works of the flesh is witchcraft. We understand from the Bible that witchcraft is something God hates.

"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king."--*1 Samuel 15:23*.

"And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger."--*2 Chronicles 33:6*.

If you were to look this word up in STRONG'S CONCORDANCE OF THE BIBLE, you will find that the Greek root word of this English word witchcraft is found as follows:

"G5331,
φαρμακεία,
pharmakeia;
far-mak-i'-ah
From G5332; medication ("pharmacy"), that is, (by extension) magic (literal or figurative): - sorcery, witchcraft."

During ancient times, and even in modern times, people used mind-altering drugs as a gateway into the spiritual realm in order to practice witchcraft. Hallucinations and Satanic influences are all part of the reason why people do it. It helps them to escape from reality, gives them a sense of power and gives them false hope and false courage.

The modern-day use of prescription drugs has gone out of control. Those who seek to find help outside of the power of God have a place they can run to in order to escape the consequences of their sin and to have a false sense of forgiveness and relief from guilt. They will run to the Psychologist who tells them that if they have a problem with stealing that they are a sick person. They are diagnosed as a kleptomaniac and are given a pill and endless therapy sessions. In the meantime, the Psychologist and pharmaceutical industries are making billions of dollars every year.

Millions of people are getting falsely diagnosed with behavioral problems that they are supposed to have corrected by God and His Word. While there is some small use for Psychology (for organic problems), that does not excuse the fact that they have delved into the realm of God's authority. Doctors are supposed to deal with the physical aspect of people's problems. Their physical organs or ailments should be their specialty. Controlling behavior through a chemical pill is way out of their role and steps into God's realm.

The idea that a pill can control behavior comes from the false premise that we are all evolved and come from a complex chemical soup. The idea is that because we are nothing but a bunch of complex chemicals, those chemicals can sometimes get out of balance and a chemical pill must fix it. While there is only some justification to this in dealing with people who have real organic problems, the majority of people are overwhelmingly diagnosed falsely as having a chemical imbalance for the purpose of making money.

Once a normal person starts taking pills that alter the mind for a prolonged period of time, that person then becomes abnormal. It changes the state of the brain from a normal state to an abnormal state. A person who could have once had his behavior corrected by God through the conviction of God's Word and some self-discipline, is now under the power and control of a pill. The chemical make-up of his brain has been altered and has become dependent upon that pharmaceutical pill. He is now hooked on those drugs and must depend on that doctor to constantly adjust the medicine he is taking for the rest of his life. The doctor has just insured himself a job for the rest of his life.

How can we compare it? This might sound harsh, but the following comparison is just like what happens to normal people. A young girl who struggles in life and runs away from home finds herself out on the streets in the big city. A young man finds her and offers her food and shelter. He brings her to an apartment where he tells her how beautiful she is. He romances her and she gives her heart to him. He tells her about this fantastic drug called heroin. It will help her to forget her problems and make her feel good. She believes him.

The troubled and confused young lady takes a shot of heroin into her arm and she gets hooked right away. She is addicted to the euphoric feeling and the false reality she gets from it. The young lady soon finds that she does not have the money to pay for this addiction, but the man offers her a way to do so. He tells her that if she sells her body on the streets for so much money, she can pay for a certain amount of the drugs and room and board at his house. She finds no other way to pay for the drugs and has nowhere else to go. Believing that the pimp loves her and cares for her and has her best interest in mind, she agrees and now she is forced to sell her body to satisfy her fleshly addiction.

A worldly Psychologist who pushes drugs on normal, unsuspecting people is no better than a pimp on the street. He convinces you that he has your best interest in mind. He tells you that you cannot live without him. He tells you that drugs are the answer to your problems. He gives you an escape from the reality of the sin you have committed through the use of mind-altering drugs. He tells you that you are sick and you need him to help you. You then get hooked on his drugs and are stuck with him for the rest of your life because no one has the gall to tell you that he does not care about you and does not have your best interest in mind. If someone does, then he attacks them with everything he has in order not to lose his patient.

That is the harsh reality of what is happening today in the world of modern-day Psychology. Normal people have lost the knowledge of God who loves them and can heal their soul's diseases, and have turned their hearts to the men of this world who are only trying to make some money. Unfortunately, millions of people today are convinced that their behavioral issues like anger, depression, stealing and anxiety are all a chemical imbalance in their brains, when the truth is that they do not truly understand their sinful nature and the power of God.

"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:"—*Isaiah 29:13*.

"**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."**—*Hosea 4:6*.

People's lives are being destroyed because of all the false philosophies that have taken over the lives of even God's people. God's people do not truly understand today the Biblical view of what is happening because it is so accepted by society. The harsh truth is that much of what is happening in Psychology today is nothing but a bunch of ill-informed drug pushers who have been convinced that they are doing the right thing.

"God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."—*Romans 3:4*.

"There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand."—*Proverbs 19:21*. The father of modern-day psychology is Sigmund Freud. He was a worldly man and an unbeliever. He was a heathen according to the Bible. As a heathen, he has developed his own method of counsel to counsel people. However, this counsel never offers any real promise of help. While some of it can be helpful, the best thing to do is go to God for help.

Freud was born in the mid 1800's, and during the early 1900's he published several books dealing with his new theories concerning psychology. His first studies were in hysteria, and later in sexual development. He developed a treatment method called "talk therapy." Freud's theories are based solely from a humanist stand point. He developed a theory to replace God in the life a person. His theory stated that every person had an "Id", an "ego", and a "super-ego." Have you ever heard anyone use those terms before? They came from Freud's modern theories.

Freud replaced the Biblical tracheotomy of man, which is found in the book of First Thessalonians. He redefined what man is made of. He took away the spiritual definition and redefined it with a humanist one. **"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."**—*1 Thessalonians 5:23*. God says that we have a SPIRIT a SOUL and a BODY (In that order). Freud replaced these three aspects of humanity with the "Id", the "ego", and the "super-ego." Freud already started off in his theories by redefining the terminology. He got his readers off track right from the very start and had them thinking in the wrong direction. People have based their entire life studies on a false theory that has nothing to do with God!

One of these days, modern psychology will catch up with the Bible. Today, Freudian theory and psychology states that these negative emotions are a disease. Therefore, the one with a disease must need a doctor to fix him. However, the psychologists will never make a guarantee that their patients will get better. The Freudian theory of psychology couples its talk therapy with psychotropic (mind-altering) drugs, which end up harming someone more than it helps them in the long run.

The talk therapy tries to trace back the patient's problems to an event in life that triggered his/her emotional problems. It then takes away any and all responsibility from the patient by stating it was someone else's fault. The person who is blamed is further examined and his problems are said to come from someone else or some other life changing event. The blame gets buried under a sea of other people until you can no longer trace back its origin. Freudian psychology is all about taking the responsibility away from the patient and placing it upon someone or something else. The anger, the depression, the lying, the sexual sins—all of these are a disease and so the patient is therefore not guilty of any sin.

"**O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!**"—*Deuteronomy5:29*. God is crying out from Heaven! We have lost the fear of God and have learned to trust in the arm of the flesh and in false theories by unbelieving heathens! God desires us to have a heart to fear Him and to obey His commandments. He has given us everything we need right here in the Word of God. God is all sufficient for us in our lives. Therefore, the Word of God is all sufficient for us in our lives. And if the Word of God is so all sufficient, why do we seek our help from anywhere else but the Word of God and from the power of His Spirit?

We should leave the Spiritual things up to God. Men have no right to interfere with matters of the heart, except where there is a real physical ailment. God's realm is the spiritual realm and desires the heart of a man. O that there was such a heart in us to fear the Lord and to obey His commandments! "**Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.**"—*Romans 1:21-25*.

Today, the wisest men on earth cannot even discern the difference between a boy or a girl. That is how far gone the American Psychological Association (APA) is. That is what happens when you reject God's truth and follow man's so-called science and wisdom, when you change the truth of God into a lie and follow cunningly devised fables. Trust the Word of God. It has been proven throughout history to be true for all our needs.

NARCOTICS, MIND-ALTERING, AND / OR ILLEGAL DRUGS:

As a kid, I grew up around the drug culture. The rap music and rock music I listened to glorified the use of illegal drugs, rebellion toward society, murder and hatred. That music has done more to destroy our urban cities and degrade our society into a lawless generation that hates police and rebels against any kind of authority than anything else I can think of.

Christians should not be using any form of mind-altering or hallucinogenic drugs. As we have seen earlier, they open the door to the satanic world. As Christians, we are to be controlled by God's Spirit and not experiment with harmful chemicals that can destroy our minds and bodies. Unless those medicines are prescribed to help you with an organic problem (like getting rid of cancer), then you should not do it. You must let God be your guide in everything you do and talk with your doctor about any side effects prescribed drugs will have on you as an individual.

Why Should Christians not take Mind-altering / Illegal Drugs?

1. It goes against God's mandate to be sober minded—(Titus 2:6)
2. It lowers your inhibitions—(Daniel 5)
3. Taking illicit drugs violates the laws of the land—(1 Peter 2:13)
4. They destroy your life and the lives of others—(James 1:15)
5. They kill children who get caught up in it—(Matthew 18:6)
6. They bring you under their control and cause you to commit other sins, like lying, stealing coveting, murder, ect.—(John 8:34)
7. You listen to the voice of another spirit—(Galatians 5:16-26)
8. They destroy your physical health—(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
9. They are a gateway into the satanic realm—(1 Thessalonians 5:6-8)
10. If you have children, that kind of a sinful life will provoke them to wrath—(Ephesians 6:4)
11. If you have children, you are violating the biblical mandate to raise them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—(Ephesians 6:4)
12. If you have children, you put them at risk for the State to take them away

ARE DRUGS THE ANSWER?

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."—*Proverbs 22:6*.

I believe that one of our major problems today with the battle against drugs and drug abuse is that we have raised up at least a couple of generations to believe that drugs are the answer to life's problems. When our children have emotional problems like anger, depression or anxiety, and we send them to a drug pushing Psychologist, those children are going to get the idea that drugs are the answer to life's problems.

They are going to think that when they have a problem, they are sick and need drugs to solve their problems. The long-term effects of psychotropic drugs are more damaging than what good they do in the short term. Psychotropic drugs bring short term results, but long lasting psychological, emotional and physical damage to a person when they get older. The chemistry in their brains change over time, they become dependent on the chemicals used, the side effects of those drugs destroy their hearts, liver, kidneys and all kinds of other things.

When kids get older and they no longer can get those drugs, or those drugs stop having the same effect on them as they once did, they will turn to other more potent drugs. They look for other drug pushers on the streets who tell them the same lies that a Psychologist will tell them. They will tell them that drugs will help them to forget their poverty and that getting high will make them feel good.

We have brought up a generation or two that have been brainwashed by satanic lies. We have trained them in the way that they should go, and it is the wrong way and now that they are older, they will not depart from it. That is why it is so important for Christians not to get caught up in lies like this. The Word of God is the answer to our emotional and behavioral problems, not a drug pushing doctor who cares only for his own pocketbook.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."—*Romans 12:1-2*. Christians need to renew their mind and hearts as to what is right and what is wrong. We need to agree with the Word of God and trust it.

ALCOHOL:

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."—*Proverbs 20:1*.

There is no doubt that the Word of God is against Christians drinking alcoholic beverages. Before I was saved, I saw nothing wrong with drinking alcohol, even though it was slowly ruining my life. Before I was saved, I started out drinking with my so-called friends. By the way, those guys at the bar do not care about you. Just read Luke chapter fifteen for that. I can tell you from personal experience that your bar-buddies aren't real friends. I drank hoping to gain acceptance and friendship. They were only my friends for what they could get out of me.

Soon, I started drinking out of hopelessness and despair. I tried to fill an empty, eternal void in my life with a very temporary feeling. I soon found out that alcohol could not fill the void that was in my heart. The more I drank, the thirstier I became. I was deceived by the false promises of alcohol. It promised me happiness and fun, but what I got was misery and despair. One day, I found out that what I was looking for could not be found in a bottle, but in a Book. The Word of God changed my life forever. Two weeks after I became a Christian, I dumped all the liquor and alcohol I had down the drain. I did not need it anymore, and I never had a desire to drink it again.

Even though people did drink wine during Bible times, we must understand that there was a form of wine that was non-alcoholic. It was essentially grape juice. If the wine is spoken about in a negative context, it is alcoholic, but if it is seen in a positive light then it was freshly squeezed grape juice. People used to drink of "the fruit of the vine" back in Bible times. It was good for their stomachs (1 Timothy 5:23), and was very healthy for them. In the New Testament, the Greek word is OINOS. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible shows us what it means:

"G3631
οἶνος;
oinos;
oy'-nos
A primary word (or perhaps of Hebrew origin [H3196]); "wine" (literally or figuratively): - wine."

Total KJV Occurrences: 33

wine, 32 (Matthew 9:17 (3); Mark 15:22-23 (5); Luke1:15; 5:37-38 (3); 10:33-34 (2), John 2:3 (2); 2:9-10 (3); 4:46; Romans 14:21; Ephesians 5:18; 1Timothy 3:8; 5:23; Titus 2:3; Revelation 6:6; 14:8, 14:10; 16:19; 18:2-3 (2), 18:13)

winepress, 1 (Revelation 19:15)

That word OINOS is translated as wine and the only way to tell if it is alcoholic or non-alcoholic wine is by looking at the verses' proper context. It can be literal wine, or figurative (the wine of God's wrath).

Wine will do three major things:

1. WINE IS A MOCKER
2. STRONG DRINK IS RAGING
3. IT WILL DECEIVE YOU

When some people drink, it turns them into a very silly person. This is what it means when it says that wine is a mocker. But it is also raging. Some people will get very angry and upset when they drink. It depends on your personality and the iniquity that is in your heart. Neither one of those are behaviors that a Christian should exhibit. We are always to be in control of our bodies and our emotions by the power of God's Spirit.

"**And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;**"—*Ephesians 5:18*. Christians are to be controlled by God's Spirit. Just as alcohol can influence you into doing what is wrong, so the Spirit of God will influence you into doing what is right by Him. We should spend so much time with God in Bible reading and prayer that we become under the influence of His Spirit. Wine has been called "spirits." Why do you think they call it that? It is because it changes your spirit and you are controlled by another spirit than God's. We should always be in control of our spirit by God's direction and strength.

"**It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted. Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more. Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.**"—*Proverbs 31:4-9*.

Wine also helps rulers to pervert judgment. Money will do the same thing. However, alcohol will lower a person's mind to the point that he perverts right judgment. A father who has a son will chastise his son wrongfully after he has drunken too much alcohol to think properly. Notice the context of Proverbs thirty-one. It is seen as being a very negative thing to drink and is strongly cautioned against.

Some Christians believe it is fine to drink alcohol. There are some who name the name of Christ, yet still wish to hold on to their old habit of alcoholic social drinking. Every drunk in the world will tell you that Jesus Christ turned water into wine. SATAN uses this situation to convince drunks that it is OK to drink. So, to this end I wish to address the subject of alcohol in the Bible.

First, I want you to notice that our text puts alcohol in a very NEGATIVE CONTEXT. Alcohol is a MOCKER. If you are to act Christ-like, then you should not be mocked by those around you for your sin. The Bible says, "**Be not deceived; GOD IS NOT MOCKED: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.**"— Galatians 6:7. Now we know that Christ turned water into wine, but it was not alcoholic wine. Jesus is God according to the Bible, and God is not mocked. "**And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.**"— *1Timothy 3:16*.

There is more than one kind of wine mentioned in the Bible. I will try to name most of them so that you may have a better understanding. The wine that Jesus turned the water into was not alcoholic, but rather it was what we would call today as "grape juice." The word "grape juice" was not used back then, but it was just called wine. The Greek word in the New Testament is the same one used interchangeably between alcoholic wine and non-alcoholic wine (grape juice).

The way to determine whether or not it was alcoholic depends on the context of what was happening and what was being said. For instance, in context, the first reason why we know that Jesus did not make alcoholic wine at the wedding feast in Cana was that because He is God and God is not mocked. Jesus never broke a Law of the Bible. Proverbs chapter twenty and verse one warns people to stay away from alcoholic beverages.

Secondly, we see from the text that **strong drink is raging**. Have you ever seen a drunk before who always seemed to have a bad attitude when he drank too much? It is because one of the effects that alcohol has on certain people is that it triggers certain sins in their hearts by lowering their defenses. It makes them vulnerable to the attacks of Satan and allows the flesh to hunger more. Man's heart is wicked. The only way a person can control that is by the Spirit of God and keeping his guard up.

If you let your guard down in a boxing match, there is a good chance that you will lose the battle. Christ was the meekest man who ever lived. To be meek is to have power under control. Christ was not a raging person. He had righteous indignation, but never harmed anyone. He healed those who needed healing and loved those who would receive it. This is the second reason why Christ did not turn the water into alcoholic wine.

The third reason we see that Christ did not turn water into alcoholic wine is because Christ was not deceived. "…**and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.**" We can all agree that Christ was the wisest man on earth. Throughout the Gospels we see accounts of the Pharisees and Sadducees continually trying to trap Christ in His words to deceive Him. However, Christ exercised much wisdom in dealing with those hypocrites. There came a point when, "**…no man after that durst ask him any question.**"—*Mark 12:34c*.

They did not ask any more questions because they got tired of looking so bad when Christ in His great wisdom turned their tricks back around on them. They would be embarrassed because of how foolish they looked trying to deceive Him. They were only deceiving themselves. We know that Christ is God, and that Jesus Himself is the Word of God manifested (made known) in the flesh and that He made the world by speaking it into existence according to *John 1:1-3, 10, and 14*.

According to the Bible, "**THE LORD BY WISDOM hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.**"—*Proverbs 3:19*. Do you think that the wisest man on Earth, the "Only wise God and Saviour" would be "Not wise" by drinking alcohol or becoming a bar tender and condoning it? NO! NOT ON YOUR LIFE! "**Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.**"—*1Timothy 1:17*.

"**To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.**"—*Jude 1:25*.

"**Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.**"—*Proverbs 23:31*.

"**Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.**"—*Proverbs 4:14*. The Bible repeatedly warns us to STAYAWAY FROM DRINKING ALCOHOL. This is a serious matter. Many lives have been ruined by it. Statistically speaking, more people die in drunk-driving accidents than do in the war. Bush Gardens right now (which is owned by Anheuser-Busch) honors the fallen soldiers in the war; however what they don't tell you is that their products of beer and alcohol kill more of those soldiers each year in a dishonorable way than do an honorable bullet. Their products ruin more lives and destroy more marriages than any other on product the market, yet they are praised amongst men. Something is seriously wrong with that!

There are many other kinds of wine listed in the Bible. The reason I show this is for you to see that the word wine is ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD BASED ON CONTEXT. You may study what these are later if you'd like on your own with a King James Bible. Wine is not only alcoholic, but also non-alcoholic. It is used as an analogy for God's wrath (*Psalms 60:3, Rev. 14:8, 10*), for wicked behavior (*Proverbs 4:17*), Wine was used to be offered to idols (*Amos 2:8*), and was used as analogy for idolatry from God (*Rev. 17:2; 18:3*).

The word "wine" is used many different contexts in the Bible. Do not let anyone convince you that it is fine to drink alcohol as a Christian, because it is not right according to Scripture. Get your convictions from the Word of God, and not the philosophies of man.

TOBACCO AND NICOTINE:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."—*1 Corinthians 3:16-17*.

Tobacco products have been around for a very long time. People have been smoking tobacco in pipes, rolled up cigarettes, and chewing for thousands of years. If people have such a history of smoking tobacco, why is it so bad? There are a great many of reasons why smoking is bad. Here we shall list several.

TOBACCO AND NICOTINE ARE HIGHLY ADDICTIVE.

Television has done a lot to glorify the use of tobacco products. That is because it is a huge, multi-million-dollar industry. They make their products look so appealing on the advertisements. They use the same trick that Satan uses. Satan likes to show you the very beginning of something. He blinds you to what is down the road. He makes sinful pleasures look so appealing to the eye. He gives false promises and false hopes of a better life if you can only "do this" and "live like this."

The truth is that nicotine and tobacco products are HIGHLY ADDICTIVE. Jesus told us that whoever commits sin is servant to that sin.

"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."—*John 8:34*.

At first, tobacco and nicotine products start out pleasing you. They serve you. However, soon you become a servant to a little white stick. It enslaves you and becomes more and more your master with every puff or chew you take. You become so enslaved by those little white sticks that you spend hundreds of dollars a year just to satisfy your never ending, fleshly appetite for sinful pleasure.

I have known many people who are called "chain smokers." I am sure you have seen them. They get finished with one cigarette and then light one up as soon as they are done. They continue like that all day long. They go to sleep with one in their mouths! That is because sin never satisfies. It always leaves you wanting for more, and the more you eat of its dainties, the hungrier you become, until one day you end up in the hospital or it kills you. That is the harsh reality of sin. That is the harsh reality of tobacco and nicotine use.

You can tell yourself that you can stop any time, but who are you kidding? You are a servant to your sinful lusts! Sin will take over you and your way of life. A little white stick controls you; tells you where to go, where and when to take a break, whether or not you can sit in church long enough to hear a sermon, what hotel room you can get (smoking or

non-smoking), and renders you useless as a servant of God. God can't use a dirty vessel! You need to purge your life of that dirty habit so you can fulfill your true role in the local church. If you're in a church that lets you set a bad example and smoke and still serve God, then you should talk to the pastor about it.

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."—*James 4:4-10*.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"—*2 Corinthians 6:17*.

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

¶If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."—*1 John 1:5-10*.

The ungodly appetites for sin and pleasure are holding you captive to their will. They have you chained in a dark room and cry out to you from inside, held in by the bars of iniquity. Sin has you shackled by a very heavy weight, one which you cannot move, nor can you break one link that you have forged for yourself. God desires to break you free from this addiction. He wants you to stay free and never be in chains again.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,"—*Luke 4:18*.

THEY ARE MADE OF POISON!

If I were to tell you of a fairy tale where the wicked witch gave a poison apple to the beautiful princess and the princess ate the apple because it looked appealing, would you not say that the princess should have been wiser and not eaten an apple from a witch? Yet that is exactly what people do today!

They buy a box of little white sticks that look appealing and cool because that is how they are advertised by wicked people. They do not realize they are buying a box of poisonous and toxic chemicals that are designed to kill them slowly. You don't believe me? Here is a list of a few chemicals you can find on your good-looking box of cigarettes. You are sucking poison into your lungs with every cigarette.

- Acetone—found in nail polish, used to clear out paint spills
- Ammonia—floor cleaner, cleans urinals and toilets
- Arsenic—Found in rat poison
- Benzene—Used for dye and synthetic rubber
- Butane—lighter fluid, highly flammable.
- Carbon monoxide—Cars produce this and is deadly when inhaled
- Cadmium—That acid found in some rechargeable batteries
- Cyanide—This is used to kill people (poisonous)
- Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT)—Insecticide (legally banned!)
- Lead—Very poisonous and can slowly kill you and destroy your brain.
- Formaldehyde—What they put in a dead body before the funeral!
- Hydrogen cyanide—Used in gas chambers to kill people!
- Methoprene—A harmful insecticide
- Naphthalene—Found in mothballs
- Mercury—Very poisonous, used in thermometers.
- Methyl isocyanate (MIC)—Very poisonous: Causes coughing, irritable eyes, nose and throat, chest pain, skin damage.
- Polonium—This is a radioactive element that can lead to cancer
- Tobacco-specific N-nitrosamines (TSNAs)—Cancer causing in tobacco products
- Vinyl Chloride—Used to make PVC Piping (Plastic)

And you want to tell me cigarettes are appealing? What is appealing about that? You become addicted to poisonous and very toxic chemicals that destroy your organs and you think that is a good thing? Why don't you come to my house, because I have an apple to sell you? Tobacco and nicotine products are very hazardous to your health. They can give you cancer, and destroy your lungs with different diseases. You might have a hole in your throat one day and suck soup through a straw. Is that what you want? I hope not!

TOBACCO PRODUCTS ARE VERY COSTLY:

1. THEY COST YOU MONEY THAT GOD ALLOWS YOU TO MAKE:

Imagine that you worked for a company. That company gave you a Christmas bonus check of about one thousand dollars. The year before that, they gave you five hundred dollars, and the year before that they gave you fifty dollars. Now imagine that each year you have a Christmas tradition. You take that money, you roll it up and you burn it all just because you think it is cool, makes you look cool, is funny, or gives you some other satisfaction.

There are not a lot of people that I know that would just burn their money just because they thought it was cool or it gave them satisfaction. Yet they do that very thing every year when they add up how much money they have spent on tobacco products! When you spend money on tobacco, you are burning up God's money. It is going up in smoke to heaven and it is a stench in the nostrils of God. People literally spend hundreds of dollars per year, and sometimes thousands in order to make themselves look cool, or satisfy the desires of their flesh.

Don't burn up the money God has allows you to make. Instead take that same money and give it to the church as an offering of a sweet-smelling savor unto the Lord.

"Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."—*Philippians 4:17-19*.

You can have more money for tithing, or to give to a missionary, or to give toward someone in need. Perhaps you can use it to pay your bills and make ends finally meet again! You pray about it and let God be your guide.

2. THEY COST YOU YOUR FREEDOM:

As we have seen, tobacco products will cost you your freedom. They place you in such bondage that you must do what they say or you will be mighty uncomfortable. They are a horrible taskmaster to serve. They make you do things that go against your integrity as a Christian. They tell you how often to get up at night. They lie to you and tell you that you need them or you will die. You are dependent upon them for your happiness. That sounds to me like they are idols to be worshipped.

3. THEY COST YOU'RE YOUR TESTIMONY AS A CHRISTIAN:

Along with the idea that they cost you your freedom, they also will cost you your testimony as a Christian. I am always appalled when I see that someone tells me how much that God has brought them through, but has not brought them through the power of their bondage to their tobacco products. As a Christian, I understand that I am not to judge anyone's salvation.

I do not judge someone's salvation based upon the fact that they still have not overcome their tobacco habits. I base it off a clear testimony of them calling on the name of the Lord after a firm belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, I am also aware that though Christians are not supposed to judge other Christians' salvation, the lost world does. The lost world will take one look at you and see that you have not been delivered from this and they will be turned off to the idea that they need Jesus.

"What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?"—*Song of Solomon 5:9*.

In this text, the Shunammite woman (who represents the Gentile bride, the Church) that was married to Solomon (who represented Christ, King of the Jews who married a Gentile bride) left such a bad testimony of her love for Solomon that the other women were asking her, "Why is Solomon so special? Who is he above anyone else around here?" That is exactly what happens to a Christian who lives an open life of sin. They leave a bad testimony of their love for the God they serve and the result is that no one will want to hear about Him.

"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."—*1 Samuel 16:7*.

Man looks on the outward appearance. They see only what happens in front of their eyes. God sees your heart. If you have been born again by the grace of God, then God sees your heart and knows that you love Him. However, man can only see what they see. If they see you living a life of open sin, they will ask you, "Why do I need Jesus? I am trying to break this habit. If He has not even helped you, then why do I need Him?" "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" Why is Jesus better than some secular program?

If your desire is to bring others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, then this is one thing that you are going to have to quit. You need to keep a good testimony with the world. If you are trying, ask God to do the work and trust that His timing is perfect, but if you were not convinced you need to stop, then I hope this has helped to convince you.

4. THEY COST YOU YOUR LIFE!

According to research done by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), tobacco products will shorten the life-span of a person by about 14 years! Research by the CDC has shown that there are about 49,400 deaths per year from secondhand smoke exposure, 269,655 deaths annually among men, and 173,940 deaths annually among women.

Not only does it cost your life, but it has been proven that second hand smoke kills others around you and gives them cancer. Children in the car with you must inhale the same poison you inhale against their will while you drive them to school. They inhale the same nasty smoke you inhale while you smoke in your home. People who are trying to quit must smell that nasty stuff while you blow it in their faces. Second-hand smoke can be smelled up to about fifty feet or more. Smoke travels into other people's air conditioner units and gets into their house while you smoke next to their window.

It has been my experience that smokers do not care about their own health; neither do they care about anyone else's health. They are inconsiderate of other people's feelings and only seek to satisfy their own desires. If you are reading this and you are a smoker and that is not you, then you are among the few. However, think back and try to remember any time when you were like that. I am sure you will find a time when you did not consider that there could have been people inhaling your poisonous fumes.

Tobacco products cost you your life and the lives of others around you. They give you cancer and other unnecessary organic diseases you might not have gotten if you had not started. They destroy your teeth, your lungs, your organs and shorten your life significantly. It ruins your teeth and skin. The cowboy on the billboard always ends up looking like the Indian in the cigarette store! Most people who start almost always desire to stop later and cannot, or have a hard time with it. Do not be fooled by the satanic lies this world has to offer. Trust in the Lord and in His wisdom.

"**Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.**"—*Proverbs 30:5*.

Could you honestly see Jesus smoking a cigarette? We are supposed to be Christ-like. The Jesus I serve is not some cigarette smoking "cool dude." He is the Holy One of Israel and we are called to be a holy people and strive to be like Him.

"**But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.**"—*1 Peter 1:15-16*.

How would you like to stand in front of God with a cigarette in your mouth! How would you like it if the rapture happened and Jesus saw you with a cigarette? Christians have a lot to answer for. Do not be fooled. Smoking is not holy, but harmful and dangerous to the smoker and to those around him.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:
9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.
10 ¶But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."—*1 Peter 5:8-10*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. What does the word "Pharmaceutical" mean according to Noah Webster?
   a. _____
2. What Greek word does God use in the Bible for our word "Pharmaceutical?"
   a. _____
3. How does this Greek word translate into English in the King James Bible?
   a. _____
4. What did ancient witches use in order to open the doors to the spiritual realm?
   a. _____
5. If people want help for their emotional problems, but do not want Godly counsel, what avenue do they use? _____
6. Most people today are convinced that their emotional problems are due to a what?
   a. _____
7. What happens to a normal person after he starts taking mind-altering pills?
   a. _____
8. Name five reasons why Christians should not take mind-altering / illegal drugs?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
   d. _____
   e. _____
9. How have we raised up a couple of generations to believe that drugs are the answer to all of life's problems? _____
   _____
10. What is the Greek word used in the New Testament for the translated English word "wine?" _____
11. Does the Greek word distinguish between alcoholic or non-alcoholic wine? _____
12. How can we tell whether or not the word "wine" is alcoholic or alcoholic when it is mentioned in the Bible? _____

13. What three things does alcoholic wine do according to the Bible?
    a. _____
    b. _____
    c. _____
14. How do we know that Jesus did not make alcoholic wine at the marriage ceremony in Cana of Galilee as found in John chapter two?
    a. _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
15. What are some verses of scripture that give strong warning to stay away from drinking alcohol? _____
16. List some poisonous / toxic chemicals found in cigarettes and tobacco products?
    a. _____
    b. _____
    c. _____
    d. _____
    e. _____
17. What are four ways that tobacco products cost you?
    a. _____
    b. _____
    c. _____
    d. _____
18. What usually happens to the cowboy on the billboard?
    a. _____
19. **Critical Thinking:** Look at your budget. How much money can you potentially save by not participating in sinful activities like using tobacco products? If you smoke, look at how much you spend personally, and then calculate how much you can save per year:
    a. _____
20. How can the money you save from not smoking or chewing tobacco be used to glorify God? _____
    _____
21. What do <u>men</u> look at when they see a Christian? _____
22. What are some other analogies for "wine" does God use in the scripture other than the kind you drink? _____
    _____
    _____

CHAPTER 10

"How to Overcome Once you are Hooked"

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.
17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.
18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.
19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,
21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.
25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."—*Galatians 5:16-26*.

If you are going to overcome any addiction by the power and grace of God, there are some Biblical principles you must follow if you are to make your salvation work out for you. **"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."**—*Philippians 2:12*.

You are going to have to work your salvation out. Work through your problems by the Spirit and power of God. You are to do this through strict adherence to the words of the Holy Spirit, the Bible and trusting that God's Word is sufficient to meet your every spiritual need.

You must know that God is ready and willing to help you through this. All He asks from you is a little faith and trust. My God is able! **"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,"**—*Ephesians 3:20*. God is able to deliver you. Trust that He will!

Principal # 1: Fast and Pray:

"**And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.**"—*Matthew 17:14-21*.

When the disciples tried to cast out a devil from a boy, they could not. Jesus told them that they had a lack of faith. He attributed their lack of faith to a lack of effort on their part to fast and pray. He said, "THIS KIND goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting." There are some things in life that will not be remedied other than through prayer and fasting.

Casting out a devil from a boy is obviously one of them. However, there is another kind of exorcism that can be done this way. It is the exorcism of the Devil's influence in your life. There is no other way to get rid of Satan other than to resist him by staying close to God and obeying His Word.

"**Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.**"—*James 4:7-10*.

What is fasting and praying? FASTING is starving out the flesh so that the spirit may live. Fasting is burying the old man of sin and letting the spirit take control of your life. Fasting is a way to reset your body. It puts your flesh and its hungers and desires under subjection to the will of God and allows the Spirit of God to dominate your life.

Fasting is the most powerful way to get a hold of God on His throne as you pray. It is by far the most effective way to get rid of your fleshly desires and create new spiritual desires. It is God's way of helping you to purge your life from sin and to cleanse yourself from impurities. It is submission to God's will and resisting the desires of the flesh. It will work!

PRAYING is your way of communicating to God. It is your telephone hotline to God's throne. Praying is a one-way form of communication. You pray up to God, He does not pray to you. How then does God speak to us? "**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:**"—*John 10:27*. The voice of God can be heard through the written Word of God. It is there that God speaks to your heart and leads you.

If you are to be led by the Spirit of God, you are to be led of His Words, not by some false word of knowledge as some people claim to have. "**We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:**"—*2 Peter 1:19*.

When you pray, you are petitioning God to help you during your time of need. Your greatest struggle is right now. You are trying to overcome an addiction. You have taken the bold step of fasting from doing whatever it is that you are having trouble with. You now are in a position where you are totally dependent upon God for help. Now, more than ever, you need God's strength because your flesh is going to get weaker and weaker as the moments go by.

"**And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**"—*2 Corinthians 12:9*.

HOW TO FAST

"**So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.**"—*Ezra 8:23*.

"**As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.**"—*Acts 13:2-3*.

We know what fasting is, but how do we do it? Remember, fasting is starving out the flesh so that the spirit may live. Therefore, if you are addicted to something, then you must fast from it altogether. For example, if you are addicted to pornography, you must guard your eyes heavily from seeing or participating in anything remotely sexual. You are going to have to replace that with time spent in the Word of God. There will be more on this later, but for now, know that you are going to have to quit doing whatever it is you are doing and replace it with something Godly.

A good time for fasting is forty days. This is God's time of purging. After that forty days are up, you should no longer desire those things any more, making it easier for you not to have the old man of sin resurrect and rule your life again.

HOW TO PRAY (READ: MATTHEW 6:1-18)

1 ¶Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.
2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:
4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.
5 ¶And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.
7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.
8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.
9 ¶After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
11 Give us this day our daily bread.
12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.
14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:
15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
16 ¶Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;
18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

When you are praying and petitioning God, you must remember who you are speaking to. You are speaking to the Almighty God of Heaven and Earth. He has all authority, all power, all control, and all knowledge. He is Holy and to be revered above all. He is your Heavenly Father. You should respect and trust Him as a child does a Father.

"He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name."—*Psalms 111:9*.

In Matthew 6:1-18, we find the MODEL PRAYER. Jesus' disciples saw that He had a very effective prayer life. They saw the intimate bond that Jesus had with His Father in Heaven. Jesus created a desire in the hearts of His disciples to pray and be close to the Father. Jesus gave them a model by which to pray. It was not to be repeated by using vain repetitions like it is done in the Catholic Church for penance. That is clearly explained in the text. It is rather to be done from the heart out of repentance.

- Our Father—We are addressing our Father (Romans 8:15).
- Which art in Heaven—He is high and lifted up, in authority over all (Luke 11:13)
- Hallowed be thy name—His name is Holy and Reverend (Psalms 11:9).
- Thy Kingdom come—The kingdom of Heaven, peace on earth.
- Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven—The Millennial reign of Christ will bring this to pass. We are to pray for this day.
- Give us this day our daily bread—We are to pray for God's provisions and to speak to us from the Word of God (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4).
- Forgive us our debts—We owe a great debt that we cannot pay, but Jesus paid a debt that He did not owe (Romans 6:23).
- As we forgive our debtors—We were forgiven of so much, shall we not forgive others? (Ephesians 4:32; Matthew 18:35)
- And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil—It is not the will of God that you are led into places that will tempt you to sin, but He will deliver you from all evil if you are found in a place that is not good for you (1 Corinthians 10:13; James 1:13-15).
- For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever—This speaks to the eternal power and majesty and throne of God. He is in control of all and is in authority over everything. He has the power to change your life and the authority to do so (Jude 1:25; Revelation 19:6)
- AMEN—This means, "Surely, and Trustworthy." (Rev. 3:14; 1 Tim. 1:15; 4:9).

AN EXAMPLE OF A MAN OF GOD PRAYING AND FASTING (NEHEMIAH 1:4-11)

"And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,
5 ¶And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:
6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.
7 We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.
8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:
9 But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.
10 Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.
11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer."—*Nehemiah 1:4-11*.

We can learn a lot about prayer and fasting when we read about people in the Bible who prayed and fasted often. Great people of God like Daniel, Hannah (1 Samuel 1), Anna (Luke 2:36-37), and Nehemiah (as found in our text) were men and women that we can look to that set forth such great examples for prayer and fasting. In our text, we find Nehemiah praying and fasting to God. Remember that model prayer that Jesus gave us in Matthew chapter six and how we saw that we are not to repeat it over and over again, but to pray to God from our heart? Well, this is a great example of how that can be done.

Here, Nehemiah was praying to God out of his heart. As he prays, notice how he addresses God. He used the model prayer as a guide. You say, "How could he do that if Jesus lived much later than he did?" I believe you have the idea mixed up. This is the way great men of God pray. Jesus knew the Scriptures perfectly. He prayed like Nehemiah and others in the Bible prayed. Jesus taught His disciples nothing new. Everything He taught them could have been found in the Old Testament if they would have believed God and His Word. Grace, redemption, salvation, and any other New Testament truth is all found in the Old Testament. Fasting and praying as we read in the model prayer is one of those truths.

As you read Nehemiah's prayer, see how it follows the model prayer almost to perfection. He addresses the God of Heaven, speaks of God's holiness, His kingdom and authority to reign supreme, and His will being done. He petitions God to deliver him from evil. He asks for forgiveness for himself and his people. Just about everything you can find in the model prayer is found in Nehemiah's prayer. Study this prayer. As you pray, pray from your heart and not just with your lips. Confess your sins, and know that God has the power and control to change your life and break the shackles you are in.

MEMORY VERSE:

"**After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.**"—*Matthew 6:9-13*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. What prayer is found in Matthew chapter six that Jesus taught His disciples?
   a. _____
2. What is fasting? _____
   _____
   _____
3. What is prayer? _____
4. Which religious organization today stresses the use of vain repetitions for penance rather than a heart-felt prayer of repentance? _____
5. How does God speak to us? _____
6. Who are four people in the Bible that had an effective prayer and fasting life?
   a. _____
7. When Jesus taught doctrine to His disciples, where did He get His doctrine from?
   a. _____
8. What are some common New Testament doctrines that can be found in the Old Testament? _____
9. What is the most powerful way tool you have in combating addictions?
   a. _____ and _____
10. How does Nehemiah's prayer reflect the model prayer that Jesus taught His disciples? _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

Principal # 2, Read your Bible and Pray Every day:

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. ¶The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."—*Psalms 1:1-6*

If you are struggling with an unhealthy addiction, then you need to establish Godly addictions in place of them. Instead of getting up in the morning and smoking a cigarette, try replacing that cigarette with prayer and Bible reading time. Establish a Godly schedule that will enable you to love God more and get closer to Him. This book is entitled "Addicted to God." The reason I titled it this way is because my hope is that by the time you have gotten done with your counseling, you will have already established convictions against sinful lusts, hardened your neck against doing evil, and replaced those bad habits with good ones.

If you desire to establish a Godly habit of prayer and Bible reading, you need to do it God's way. After this session, you will be required to write up a feasible schedule that you will be able to adhere to that will allow you to read the Bible and pray. There will be a sample schedule for you to look at, but develop your own that works well for you.

PRAY AND READ YOUR BIBLE IN THE MORNING AND IN THE EVENING:

The Bible tells us in Psalms chapter one that our delight should be to read the Word of God day and night. A good way to start doing this is to get up in the morning and immediately start trying to have fellowship with God.

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. ¶Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments."—*Psalms 119:1-6*.

Pray in the Morning and the Evening:

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."—*Mark 1:35*.

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

"But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee."—*Psalms 88:13*.

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

"Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."—*Psalms 141:2*.

Sing Praises unto God in the Morning:

"But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble."—*Psalms 59:16*.

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."—*Psalms 100:4*.

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night, Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound."—*Psalms 92:1-3*.

Go to Church in the morning and the evening when they are having services:

"And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him."—*Luke 21:38*.

"And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them."—*John 8:2*.

Read your Bible Day and Night:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and

they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."—*Deuteronomy 6:4-9*.

As we can see, God gives us instructions on how to draw close to Him. It is imperative that we establish and keep Godly habits of reading our Bibles, singing praises unto God, and prayer both in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. Replace the ungodly habits with good, healthy, Godly ones that will make you feel good about yourself at the end of the day. It is such a good feeling when you have had victory over your addictions. Living a clean life gives you a good feeling at the end of the day. You can lay your head down at night and know that your fellowship with God and other people is in a right state. It just feels good to do good things and to live a clean life!

MEMORY VERSE:

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

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. When should we pray to God, praise God and read the Bible?
    a. _____
2. How do we get rid of old habits? _____
3. What is the Christian believer to delight himself in? _____
4. How can we feel good about ourselves at the end of the day?
    a. _____

SAMPLE SCHEDULE:

5:00 am—Prayer/Praises to God
6:00 am—Bible Reading/devotions
7:00 am—Get ready for the day / work
Noon time: Lunch/Prayer/praises
7:00 pm—Prayer/Praises
8:00 pm—Bible Reading/devotions
9:00 pm—Get ready for bed

Be sure to schedule time in for exercise, rest, family, friends, your children, and relaxation along with scheduling in time for bible reading, study, devotions, prayer / praise, work, sleep, school, and church. Always schedule your time to serve God through in and through your local church. Try to make time for others.

HINT: There are only twenty-four hours in a day. You will not be able to do everything you want every day. Schedule your days to accomplish certain tasks. For example, you can schedule a date night with your wife once a week, play time outside with your children on three days a week for an hour. Exercise three times a week an hour in the

morning, and church on Sunday's and on Wednesday nights. A good schedule is key to having low stress and establishing and keeping good habits.

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."—*Ephesians 5:16*.

In the Below Schedule, plan out your day. Schedule your day so that you are not wasting time with the things you need to do. Some people say that they have no time at for Bible reading, prayer or anything Godly. Meanwhile they have at least four to six hours per day that they watch television! Use one time management sheet for your ACTUAL DAY NOW, and the other for how you plan to cut out any wasted time and use it to God's glory. Make copies for different days if you have to, and fill them out individually.

☐ Sunday ☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday

☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday

ACTUAL DAY

Time	Event	Actual Duration
12 am		
1 am		
2 am		
3 am		
4 am		
5 am		
6 am		
7 am		
8 am		
9 am		
10 am		
11 am		
12 pm		
1 pm		
2pm		
3 pm		
4 pm		
5 pm		
6 pm		
7 pm		
8 pm		
9 pm		
10 pm		
11 pm		

☐ Sunday ☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday

☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday

RE-PLANNED DAY

Time	Event	Actual Duration
12 am		
1 am		
2 am		
3 am		
4 am		
5 am		
6 am		
7 am		
8 am		
9 am		
10 am		
11 am		
12 pm		
1 pm		
2pm		
3 pm		
4 pm		
5 pm		
6 pm		
7 pm		
8 pm		
9 pm		
10 pm		
11 pm		

Now, compare both schedules. Do you see how that by scheduling your day properly, you can have time to do all sorts of things you did not think you could do? You should have time to read your Bible, pray, look for work, go to work, take care of the house, spend time with your wife and kids, and everything else. You probably need to schedule one day differently than you do another in order to meet different needs. For instance, you may have to schedule Monday as laundry day you, and Tuesday as laundry day for your wife. Tuesday will be your lawn mowing day, while Tuesday is her day to organize the house. Doing this will keep you out of each other's way as you seek to work around the house and not fight over who gets to do laundry. You may schedule time with the kids, while your husband is at work or time with God while the kids are at school so you can have some peace and quiet. A good schedule is the key to a good day.

Principal # 3, Accountability and Transparency:

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—*James 5:16*.

Christians today have lost this idea about accountability. We are called to be accountable to one another as a church body. Husbands and wives should always accountable to each other. There should be no secret conversations that take place between a man and a woman unless they are married. Women should not get on the email or social networking sites and have private conversations with men they do not even know. They can become emotionally involved and captivated with someone who is not their husband. They can have "emotional affairs" which will lead to adultery.

Husbands should not have a computer that can hook up to the internet unless it has a web filter that is effective. Generally, the account should be controlled by someone else other than the person using the computer. It should be someone responsible and trustworthy that you can count on like your wife, pastor, teacher, or parent. People who have medical addictions need to make themselves accountable to someone they trust and perhaps even give a member of their family a specific power of attorney to speak about and make medical decisions for them.

Accountability is when someone keeps his sin nature in check by having another person that he trusts to watch his life. Transparency is when you live your life in such a way that people see you are blameless. Your life is an open book and you live in a glass house. Everyone can plainly see you are not doing anything wrong.

When you live a transparent life, you become more trustworthy to others. You remain accountable to others because you may have a moment of weakness, but your accountability partner(s) are there to help make sure you do not give in to temptation. You do this for your own benefit, because your spirit may be willing, but your flesh is very weak.

"Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak."—*Mark 14:38*.

Just assume that you will have moments of temptation. Do you remember when Jesus was tempted of the Devil in Matthew chapter four? He was tempted AFTER He was hungry from fasting forty days. It was when His flesh was the weakest. Satan is a roaring lion and will wait until you are weak. It is then he will tempt you. Having an accountability partner will help ensure that when your flesh is weak, they are there to do the battle for you. They will keep you from being shot down as a soldier does in the field.

The Bible says that we are supposed to confess our FAULTS to one another, not our SINS. The Greek word used in James 5:16 for "Faults" is "Paraptōma" and means "a side slip,

or a deviation (unintentional)." Faults are the things that trip us up, and are not intentional. Admit that you have an addiction to a drug or to something else. If you deny it, you are violating the Biblical mandate to confess your faults to others you trust.

"If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:"—*Job 31:33*.

The Bible says that Adam HID his transgressions. That means that he did not confess his faults to others. He was ashamed of it and did not wish to speak about it. We are not supposed to cover up our transgressions. We are supposed to confess our sins to God and seek help from others we trust so that we can be accountable to them and live transparent lives.

Hiding your sin and not staying accountable to others will only lead to more wrong behavior and enable you to keep doing it. God brought Adam's transgression out in the open in order to deal with it. If you do not bring it out in the open, one day God will.

"But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out."—*Numbers 32:33*.

If you hide your sin, God will bring it out into the open somehow. You will either destroy yourself, or God will make some circumstance happen that will reveal your sin and iniquity. The best thing to do is to confess your faults to others you trust so that you can stay accountable to them. Doing so will help you to live a clean life knowing that someone is watching out for your spiritual well-being.

MEMORY VERSE:

"But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out."—*Numbers 32:33*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. What is accountability? _____
   _____
2. What is transparency? _____
   _____
3. What will happen if you try to cover your sin? _____
   _____

RECONSTRUCTING OUR LIVES:

"And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it."—*Ezekiel 36:35-36*.

GOD'S PROMISE OF RESTORATION

As we seek to overcome our addictions, one thing that is important to know is that God is going to have to do the work for us. In this text, we see that God give us a couple of thoughts. Often God will say the same thing in a different way for the reader to understand what is beings said very easily. This is a Bible study tool for your belt. Look for key words that will help you to see the same thing beings said twice in the text you are studying.

For instance, the word DESOLATE is used in connection with GARDEN, LAND, and PLANT. The word WASTE is connected in these verses with RUINED CITIES, and RUINED PLACES. So, then we see that the desolate land is become like the Garden of Eden. The desolate land was planted, and the ruined cities are become fenced and inhabited. The ruined places are built.

There are five things that the Lord speaks of in these two verses that He will do for the believer who was ruined and desolate. He will:

1. BUILD HIM UP (Psalms 127:1; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 6:16)
2. FENCE HIM IN (Job 1:10).
3. TURN DRY GROUND INTO FERTILE SOIL (A new heart)
4. PLANT HIM, GROUND HIM (In the truth)
5. MAKE SOMETHING OF BEAUTY OUT OF HIM (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

It is these five things that we are going to study today. This text should be a real encouragement to the believer who is lost, desolate, and in desperate need of help. God wants to do a great and marvelous work in your life and in your heart. Other people will see it and know that the Lord has the power to change hearts and help them with their problems as well. Will you let Him work in your life? Will you lose control and let God take the helm?

He Will Build Him Up:

Addictions will leave your heart desolate. They will destroy your mind, will, spirit, and make you feel worthless. You will feel like a worthless piece of land that no one wants. That is where this world will leave you. The world promises you power, prestige, fame, and glory, but will only use you for what it can get out of you. As soon as the people of this world are finished with you, they will throw you aside like a used paper cup or a piece of old chewing gum. You may be feeling the effects of following the world. You may be desolate and feel like your life has been wasted.

There is good news! God takes the base things of this world and turns them into something great. He can take a useless tract of land that is as dry as the desert sand and turn it into an oasis paradise. God wants to build your life. He wants to start construction on you right away and it begins with the salvation of your soul. Jesus is the Great Carpenter of Galilee and He is always in the construction business. He would love to transform your life and construct you into the Temple of God that He would have you to be.

If you feel like you are nothing but a waste of space, God can help you with that. He wishes to build you up from the ground level. He wants to lay down the foundation, which is the Word of God (Luke 6:47-48). He wants to construct pillars to hold you up so that the walls are secure, which are found in His wisdom (Proverbs 9:1). He wants to construct walls round about made of stone so that you are safe from any storm (Psalms 18:2). He wants to construct a roof to keep you shaded from the scorching sun of persecution and judgment (Psalms 91:4; 121:5-8). The Lord wants to build you up, but be careful, because the world wants to tear you down.

As Christians, we should always follow God's example and be in the construction business. We ought to be helping men to construct their lives and build them up so that they are encouraged to stay in God's service. We are to restore the fallen, not tear them down. "**Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.**"—*Galatians 6:1*. Do not try to build yourself up by your own strength. Do not think that because God called you out of this world and into His marvelous light that you are able to do the task of building your own life. "**Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?**"—*Galatians 3:3*. What does the Bible say?

"**Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.**"—*Psalms 127:1*.

"**Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.**" –*1 Thessalonians 5:24*.

"**This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.**"—*Psalms 118:23*.

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."—*Ephesians 2:10*.

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

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."—*2 Corinthians 6:16*.

Breaking free from addictions is not about turning over a new leaf. People try that all the time and it does not work. It is not a New Year's resolution. It is about the saving power of God. It is about the work of the Holy Spirit of God changing your heart's desires and doing a work in you from the inside-out, and not the outside-in as religion attempts to do. We don't come to God all dressed up thinking that we are some great person. That is prideful and it is an abomination to God. We come to God as we are, but we do not leave the same as we came.

We are different because of the work He does in our hearts. We come to Him as strangers and sinners in need of a Holy God; we leave as forgiven sinners still in need of Him, only now we are His children. God will construct our lives and build us up into something great that He can use, if we let Him do so.

He Will Fence Him In:

"Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land."—*Job 1:10*.

God can create a hedge of protection around you and your family. Primarily, this is done by obeying the Word of God from the heart. We covered this principle in detail on page forty-one of this book. Without God changing your heart to obey Him, you will never live a victorious Christian life. He will give you a heart to love Him. When you have that heart, you will obey God's Word and a spiritual hedge will be placed around you.

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."—*Ezekiel 36:26-28*.

The Word of God is your hedge or fence. It will protect you from all evils that lurk on the outside. By obeying the Word of God as you understand it, your hedge or fence of

protection will be placed around you. By obeying God's Word and not drinking alcohol, you are protected against the effects of that sin on your life. You are not led into temptation because the words of God's Spirit never leads you into a place that can tempt you, like a bar, a strip club, or a cable or internet channel that allows nudity.

You must leave the rest of your life up to the will of God. Whether you live or die from something out of your control will not be a big deal. When you are right with God nothing else matters. However, God takes care of protecting you when you obey Him. God will place a spiritual hedge around you like the one we find in Job, where Satan was not able to break into. The only passage in was when God allowed that hedge to come down and He told Satan exactly what he could do and what he was not allowed to do. God was in control the whole time and we see how it turned out in the end.

God not only wants to build you up, but He wants to fence you in. He wants to shelter and protect you. He wants to guard you from all evil. You are His building and He wants to protect it. There are hedges that we can build here on earth that will enable us to keep God's Word. There are barriers that we can create to keep our sin nature in check. This falls back on the idea of accountability and transparency. There are things you can do to keep yourself accountable to others and have a transparent life.

1. Every man of God ought to have an effective internet filter on every computer he owns. Do not allow the Devil an opportunity to slip through the cracks. Make that filter accountable to others so that your life is transparent.
2. Every man of God ought to have effective communications with his wife or pastor. A good accountability partner will or can know where you are at all times and there should be no secrets (like secret internet chat rooms, secret place you go to be with someone, being alone with a member of the opposite sex, secretly buying drugs or alcohol).
3. When you set up a barrier, make sure you cannot break through it. Make your fence impenetrable. Close the door and nail it shut so you can never open it again. Burn your bridges to sin and never leave an open or cracked door.
4. Do not go places that will entice you to sin. "**Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.**"—*Proverbs 4:15*.
5. Make sure you do everything publicly so there can be no misconceptions. "**Abstain from all appearance of evil.**"—*1 Thessalonians 5:22*.

Setting up barriers in your life will help you to keep God's Laws. For instance, "I wish to not smoke, therefore, I will not go to the gas station without someone to keep me accountable, that way I can lead a transparent life and keep a good testimony in the community." Also, "I do not wish to look at pornography, therefore I will have an internet filter, not have a cable or satellite dish account and have someone monitor my activities when using internet or television."

When you desire to keep God's Laws, sometimes it is necessary to set up standards in your life in order to help you to keep them. Never confuse standards or traditions with the Law of God. God's Laws are doctrinal, not man's. However, it is not a bad thing to have standards of conduct in order to help you obey God. Having standards to keep from committing sin is nothing to be ashamed of. They will help you to lead a life that is accountable to others, to God and to be transparent in order to keep a good testimony before this lost, dark world.

He Will Turn the Dry Ground into Fertile Soil:

"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."—*Isaiah 55:6-13*.

"¶Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."—*Psalms 1:1-3*.

"Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the

good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."—*Matthew 13:18-23*.

We read a great deal of Scripture to illustrate this one point, that your heart is ground on which Jesus plants His Word. Your heart can get hardened and scorched by the dry desert heart. That is, if you do not spend any time in the water of God's Word, your heart will become dry as the desert and stony. It will be hard to penetrate the outer layer. When water finally does come, it will not seep down into the soil and hold. It will take a whole lot of water and a lot of time to transform a dry, stony heart into one that is soft and fertile.

When you live a life of sin and outside the Word of God, your heart will become hard. When the Word of God comes and is planted, it will not take root in your heart. However, if your ground is to become fertile, you must recognize that GOD WILL DO IT. It is a work of God's Spirit, and a work for the words of God's Spirit. The more time you spend with God, the more you will grow to love Him. You will understand just how much He loves you and how far He went to prove His love. The more you learn of that, the more you will stand in awe of Him! God's Spirit will perform a great work in your heart as you spend more and more time with Him.

The Lord's ultimate goal is to get you to a place where your heart is fertile ground. He will supply you with the water, all you must do is stay planted near it. Psalms chapter one shows us that by delighting in the Law of the Lord, we will be as trees planted by the rivers of water. Our leaves will not whither. That means we will be in fertile ground. He will change your heart and transplant you from the old, dry desert sands of sin, to a place flowing with waters of righteousness.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."—*Galatians 5:22-25*.

When you stay planted near the water of God's Word, you will become a lively tree that produces fruit. People will see what kind of a tree you are. You are a tree that God planted because they will see evidence of it. They will see joy displayed in your life as an ornament of grace, and he same for all the other fruit.

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."—*Acts 4:13*.

He Will Plant and Ground Him:

God said that He would plant in the desolate land. He will turn a dry wilderness into a land of fruitfulness and beauty. In what ways does the Bible say that Jesus will plant a Christian? We find that there are three ways in the Bible that the Christian is planted.

HE WILL GROUND HIM IN THE TRUTH

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."—*Matthew 7:24-25*.

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."—*Psalms 1:3*.

The Bible says that those who delight in the Law of the Lord will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. Those who hear the sayings of God and do them are like a man who built his house upon a solid foundation. When you put your trust in the Lord and in His Word, it is guaranteed that your faith will be in the solid truth. When you ground yourself in the truth of God's Word, there is nothing that can move or shake you. Your life will be one of stability and peace in Jesus Christ.

Those who build their houses on the sinking sands of this world's philosophies are always subject to change. They are always moving around with every opinion that comes. To them, everything is truth and there are no absolutes. A man who believes that can never get any better. A man like that will be left desolate because his foundation is not sure. **"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"**—*Ephesians 4:14-15*.

If God is going to make us fruitful in His service, He must first have us grounded in the truth of His Word. If you live your life with good intentions, but not according to God's Word, then you are subject to believing anything that comes your way. The only sure foundation you can ever have is found in the Word of God. It is there that you will receive your counsel and that counsel is never wrong. Men are sinking sand. They will let you down, but God is holy and His Word is forever settled in Heaven. His Word takes precedence over everything, including His very name. **"I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."**—*Psalms 138:2*.

HE WILL GROUND HIM IN LOVE

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,"—*Ephesians 3:17*.

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"—*Ephesians 4:15*.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."—*John 13:35*.

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."—*1 John 5:1*.

Christians cannot have the truth without having love behind that truth.

"And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."—*Matthew 17:20*.

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."—*1 Corinthians 13:2*.

"And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."—*Ecclesiastes 4:12*. Faith, charity and the truth (hope) are the three cords that are twisted together to form a strong tie with God. **"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."**—*1 Corinthians 13:13*. In order to have faith, you must possess truth. Your faith must be in the truth of God's Word. But with the truth, you must possess the love in your heart to exercise your faith.

Someone can say that they have faith to get their prayers answered and to remove mountains, but without the truth of God's Word and living in that truth, and without love for God and His will, that prayer will go unanswered. If you desire to move a mountain of sin that is in your life, but desire it for prideful reasons, then your life will never experience the blessings of God. Some people want to make money from answered prayers. They want to market God's Spirit. The so-called miracles they perform are only shallow at best. You must do your service to God and pray to Him in faith, hope (in the truth) and charity (the love of God). When God plants you, you will be planted in love and as a result, His love for you will be displayed as you show love toward God and others around you. Your speech will be loving and graceful as you proclaim His truth.

HE WILL GROUND HIM IN THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL

"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;"—*Colossians 1:23*.

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."—*Hebrews 11:6*.

Your faith will be grounded and settled in the truth of God's Word. It will be grounded in the faith of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is your hope. **"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;"**—*1 Timothy 1:1*. Your hope of eternal life is found in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the author and finisher of our faith. **"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."**—*Hebrews 12:2*. Your faith is not in a religious sect of Jesus Christ, but in Christ Himself. Once you put your faith in Christ and in His Word, your doctrine will be straight.

Many people put their faith in themselves. They put their faith in their good deeds or religious affiliation. They put their faith in how good they are. However, they do not understand the holiness or the love of God. **"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."**—*Romans 10:3*. Because God is holy, He must judge sin. His judgment on sin is death. His love is also holy and therefore, because sin must be paid for, and God loves us, His love caused Him to pay the ultimate sacrifice. **"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."**—*Romans 6:23*.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—*Romans 5:8*.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"—*Titus 3:5*. The Christian's faith must be in the saving faith of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Only through belief in the death, burial and resurrection can a person find forgiveness and redemption with God. It is not found in some self-help program, but through the faith of the gospel. We can only experience true victory through Christ, the victorious One. When one plants a seed, one plants in faith that God will bring life to that seed, though the seed itself is planted in death. You are the seed. When you are planted by rivers of water (God's Word) and in the faith of Christ, you will grow up into a fruitful tree of life. Instead of the works of the flesh, you will display the fruit of the Spirit.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE HEATHEN

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—*Matthew 5:14-16*.

Those who do not worship the true and living God will see the great work that God has done. They will see that God can take a man, who was left desolate by this world, and rebuild his life and make him like a green olive tree. God will perform such a work in you that there can be no denying that this was the Lord's work. It will be marvelous in the eyes of the heathen round about you and you can use that testimony to help save others. Many people can come to know the Lord Jesus Christ through your testimony.

Jesus said that we are the light of the world. In another Scripture, He said that He was the light of the world. "**As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.**"—*John 9:5*.

"**Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.**"—*John 8:12*. How then do we reconcile this? It is like the sun and the moon. The sun, as long as it is the world, is the light of the world. There are twelve to thirteen hours in the day in which the sun is the light of the world. However, during the night, the moon reflects the sun's light onto the world. The light of the world is seen when the moon reflects it.

The light of Jesus Christ is the light of the world. While He was yet on earth, he was a burning and shining light. However, since He ascended into Heaven and has hid his face from us, we can only see His light as it is reflected off a Christian like the moon does with the sun. Christians are to reflect the light of God and His Word in a dark world. Men know by faith that the sun is just over the horizon and will come again soon because they see that light reflected off the moon. They know that if the moon shines light, the source of that light is the sun, and so by faith they see the sun in a dark world.

When God does a mighty work in you, you will show the world the light of Christ. People will see Jesus by faith, because they see His light reflecting off you. They will see your life has been changed and that will be enough to let them know that there is a God in Heaven. They will be drawn to the light of the Gospel as a moth is drawn to a burning light. Be that light. Show the world that Jesus saves, not just with your words, although that is needful, but also by the way God has worked in your life. "**And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.**"—*Ezekiel 36:23*.

MEMORY VERSE:

"And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it."—*Ezekiel 36:35-36*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. What are five things that God said He would do when reconstructing or restoring our lives?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
   d. _____
   e. _____
2. What are three things that God grounds us in?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
3. What is the three-fold cord that a Christian should have in his life if he is to see victory over sin?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
4. In reference to question #3, what is the greatest of these things?
   a. _____
5. How do lost people see the light of Jesus?
   a. _____
   _____
   _____
6. Where does Jesus plant the seed of His Word?
   a. _____
7. How does Jesus turn your heart into soft soil?
   a. _____
8. How does God fence us in and protect us from sin, Satan, and slavery?
   a. _____
   _____

Principal # 4, Never Go Back Once you Have Stopped:

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation."—*Matthew 12:43-45*.

Jesus was giving a warning to the Pharisees and religious hypocrites of his day. The Pharisees were seeking a sign (a miracle) from Jesus to let them know that God was approving of His message to them. However, the Pharisees had already seen many miracles and wonders done by Jesus that proved his authority over the elements, life and death, and his creation. The Pharisees had more than enough signs from God to show them that this was the Messiah. Jesus sharply rebuked them for their unbelief.

When Jesus interrupted the conversation with this story about an unclean spirit (a devil) he was speaking to the Pharisees and the unbelieving generation. Verse forty-five tells us that just like an unclean spirit goes out of a man and returns with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, so also will it be to that generation because of their unbelief. It was story that gave us a small window into what happens in the spiritual realm. There are two truths being presented—a spiritual truth and an earthly truth. The spiritual truth deals with how devils possess men and influence them, and the earthly truth is seen in how God judges those who reject the Holy Spirit of God and the truth of God's Word. Both truths are very important to study, but we will only examine the spiritual truth today for the sake of our subject.

We are speaking about addictions and the spiritual battle that takes place when people have them and try to rid themselves of them. An addiction is a very powerful form of bondage. We will relate an addiction to this story about the unclean spirits and see a powerful truth from the Word of God that will help you understand the nature of addictions and a stark warning to never go back once you have quit.

Once you have quit an addiction, you should never go back. Jesus gives you the power to not go back. We have seen this in previous chapters. God never allows more in your life than you can handle spiritually. If there are temptations in your life, then you have the power to overcome them through the Holy Spirit of God. You are already a victor in Christ. Because Christ resurrected from the dead, so do you.

After you have quit an addiction or are fasting from it for any length of time, your body will begin to experience a stronger craving for that lust. Your fleshly appetites will be starving and you will feel like you will die without fulfilling your lust. Part of you will die, but it won't be physical. You are trying to crucify your old man of sin and allow the spiritual man to walk in newness of life. **"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."**—*Galatians 5:16*.

Your addiction is like an unclean spirit. After you have fasted long enough, it is as if the unclean spirit that was in you has left you. That unclean spirit now walks around in dry places. It is thirsty for sinful behavior. You are starving it out and it has no food or water. You are not feeding your sinful appetites and that unclean spirit is trying to find something to feed it. If you ever feed it again, it will bring back seven other spirits more wicked than itself and the bondage that they bring you in will be even harder to break.

Once you sin after you have rid yourself of an addiction, it will be easier to commit that form of sin. If you stop viewing pornography, or stop drinking alcohol, or stop tobacco use, and go back to doing it later, it will be harder to quit. Your heart will grow hardened to that sin. At first, you will be very sorry for it. You may ask for forgiveness from God, but then you do it again, and ask for more forgiveness, and the cycle just repeats itself until finally you are sinning and praying like a ritual. You will say, "God will forgive me, so I can do it just this once. I will be fine later and will quit."

The problem is that you have seven other unclean spirits plaguing your soul that are harder to get rid of than the first. Your heart will get harder and harder to sin until you start to justify it. You start to say, "It is not that bad." It will feel normal to you and acceptable. You start to accept it as a part of your life, and any power you used to have, or any tenderness you used to have for the things of God, or any Bible convictions you used to have are now gone. You find a church that accepts your dirty habits instead of trying to help you get through them. You lose sight of the fact that you are going to have to stand before the Holy God of this universe who has the power and authority to do anything He wants, except break His Word.

Don't go back to your sin once you have stopped! You will find that you will have the hardest time getting rid of it and will probably get to a point to where you think God accepts your behavior. Your heart will become extremely hardened to sin. It can become an endless cycle. However, God does have the power to break you of your habit through His Spirit, His providential hand in your life and perhaps even chastise you for it. He is a jealous God that is jealous of your affection. Do not lose sight. Do not go back!

MEMORY VERSE:

"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."—*Psalms 19:13*.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. What should we never do once we are free from an addiction?
   a. _____
2. What happens to someone when the sin after they have stopped sinning for a long time? _____
3. What does the story of the unclean spirits show us about addictions?
   a. _____
   _____
4. How can we overcome addictions?
   a. _____
   _____
5. How do we not fulfill the lusts of our flesh?
   a. _____
6. According to Psalms 19:13, what happened when a man sins "presumptuously?"
   a. _____
7. What did Paul say in Galatians 5:13 about Christian liberty?
   a. _____
8. Read ROMANS CHAPTER SIX in its entirety. What is the central theme of that chapter in regards to sinful behavior and Christian liberty?
   a. _____
9. I have read ROMANS CHAPTER SIX in its entirety: YES / NO
10. What are some things people will say once they go back to a dirty lifestyle, after having stopped for a while?
    a. _____
    _____
    _____
11. What are the two kinds of truths presented in Matthew chapter twelve verses forty-three through forty-five?
    a. _____
    b. _____
12. READ: Galatians 2:20. How is the Christian supposed to live? _____
    a. _____

CHAPTER 11

"Finding Forgiveness"

"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."—*Matthew 18:21-22*.

One very big part of your addiction recovery effort will be to know and understand the forgiveness and grace of God in all of it. People can be very hard on themselves when they make a mistake, and even worse, others can be just as hard on you. All of us are sinners and all of us need the grace of God. We all let God down every day. That does not give us an excuse, but it is comforting to know that God will always forgive our sins.

Peter asked Jesus about forgiving others. He wanted to see if there was a point when he did not have to deal with someone any longer, when he could just give up and write someone off for being hopeless. But what Jesus showed him and us is that no one is hopeless and everyone deserves another chance if they are truly seeking forgiveness and help. "**For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.**"—*Proverbs 24:16*.

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

No matter how many times we mess up, God will always be there to forgive us and to help us through it if our hearts are in the right place. We must honestly come to God in sincere repentance if we are to find that forgiveness. If we say, "I can sin because God will forgive me later," then we regard iniquity in our hearts and the Lord will not hear us for it. "**If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:**"—*Psalms 66:18*. To regard iniquity in your heart and pray for forgiveness is called PRESUMPTUOUS SIN and THE GREAT TRANSGRESSION. "**Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let**

them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."—*Psalms 19:13*.

Presumptuous sins will eventually HAVE DOMINION over you. They will get to a point that your life will be dominated by them. In other words, you will be addicted to sin if you do it presumptuously. If you sin with the mindset that God will forgive you then you have just used your liberty in Christ for an occasion to the flesh and your grace will eventually run out. You will hurt yourself and others and God will judge you for it. That is why it is called the great transgression. The Bible says that a just man will fall seven times and get back up again, but a wicked one will fall into mischief. That means if you sin presumptuously, you will be overcome by your own sin and it will consume you. "**For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.**"—*Galatians 5:13*.

Romans 6

1 ¶What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?
3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:
6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.
7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.
8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:
9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.
10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.
11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.
13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.
14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.
15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?
17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.
18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.
19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.
20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.
21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.
22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.
23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans chapter six is an excellent place to go to in order to understand the difference between law, grace and holy living. This chapter says that sin shall NOT REIGN IN OUR MORTAL BODIES and it should NOT HAVE DOMINION OVER US. We no longer serve sin and are free from it and are become SERVANTS OF GOD. We should not continue in sin thinking that the grace of God will always be there. He will judge us for it on this earth if we continue in it long enough. He does this because it is for our own good and not to our hurt, that is, to bring us back to purity and in fellowship with Him.

However, for the one who truly is struggling and desires to be right with God, know that there is nothing that can separate you from His love. You will always find forgiveness so long as you truly desire to be in a right relationship with Him. It is not a careless whim, but a pure heart of faith seeking help and forgiveness. God hears your heart more than He hears your lip service. He sees your tears before He hears your prayers. Confess your sins to God from a pure heart of faith and repentance and He will surely hear you, but to pray to use God's grace to your own advantage will never work. You will never be able to outsmart, outrun, or out-do God.

If you are truly sorry, then you will be forgiven as many times as you ask. However, God gives us a test to see if we are truly sorry for our sins. "**For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.**"—*2 Corinthians 7:10*. When you are truly sorry, it WORKETH SALVATION NOT TO BE REPENTED OF. You are saved from your infirmities. You are free from the power of sin and you never have to go back. However, the sorrow of this world WORKETH DEATH. The wages of sin is death. "**But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.**"—*James 1:14-15*.

The litmus test for whether you truly are sorry or not for your sin is whether you go back to it or not. When you sorrow after a Godly sort, you are broken over your sin. You have a real hatred for it and for what it does to you and to others. You hate to see others involved with it because you know how terrible it is. You will not go back to your sin once you truly hate it. However, crocodile tears will never cover you under God's grace. You will just keep going back to your sin repeatedly. You have not developed a hatred for it, but just a shallow guilt that you feel at that time will and eventually you forget about. To truly find forgiveness with God and with yourself, you need to make sure you are not praying out of feigned lips, but a pure heart of faith that reaches out to God with outstretched hands. **"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."**—*John 8:12*.

EXAMPLE OF SOMEONE WHO FOUND FORGIVENESS:

The Bible is full of examples of people who have found forgiveness with God and have never turned back to their sin. They developed a Godly sorrow for their sin and never turned back to it. Some people include Paul the murderer, David the adulterer, the repentant sinner at the altar (Luke 18:10-14), and the demoniac of Gadara (Matthew 8:28-34). True salvation will do that to you. The Spirit of God will work on your heart from the inside-out and grieve you when you are in sin. You will never be happy as a Christian unless you are in fellowship with God through a pure heart of faith. You will never be happy as a child of Light when you are walking around in the dark.

The Adulterous Woman

"Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.
2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.
3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,
4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.
5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?
6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.
7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.
8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.
9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?
11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."—*John 8:1-53*.

One of the greatest stories of forgiveness is found right here in John chapter eight. The Pharisees in this text could care less about what this woman was doing. In fact, I would go so far as to say that they probably indulged a little in her services. The Pharisees were corrupt and that is the sort of thing that they would do. Because there is no Scripture to base that on, it is therefore not a dogmatic statement, merely a speculation. Whatever the case, they brought this woman before Jesus Christ to find reason against Him, not her. The law said that they were to stone both perpetrators for what they did. Even though they claimed to have caught her in the very act, they still did not bring the male counterpart that was supposedly with her. This hypocrisy led to their ultimate defeat when Christ said, "**He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.**"

The Pharisees knew in their hearts that what they were doing was very wrong. They knew that they were sinners, even though they did not like to admit it. They knew they needed the forgiveness of God, even though they were not ready to extend that forgiveness to others. Forgiveness is what saved this woman from ever going back to that wicked life again. God's mercy broke her heart and that is the only sacrifice that God wants from a sinner like you and I. Here is a woman that led an open life of sin.

She had exposed herself to all kinds of sinful pleasures and created appetites that would be hard for anyone to get over. Yet, Jesus forgave her and told her to go and sin no more. He said He did not condemn her, and that she had a new start in life. That is the purpose for God's forgiveness. It is not so that we can continue in sin repeatedly, living a hypocritical life, but so that we can have a fresh, clean start in life.

Jesus gives you the power to overcome your sin through the mercy and grace He has on you. Such mercy and grace should not be taken lightly. It costs Jesus everything, including His own blood to grant you that forgiveness. "**There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**"—*Romans 8:1*. Those who walk after the Spirit shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh according to Galatians chapter five and verse sixteen.

"**This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.**"—*Galatians 5:16*.

Therefore, we see that no one on earth can condemn you if you are living for God. This adulterous woman was not condemned by Christ, even though she was a sinner. However, no one around her was also able to condemn her. As long as she did not lead that sinful lifestyle any longer, there was no one else who could condemn her either. Praise God for His forgiveness, mercy and grace!

MEMORY VERSE:

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

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY:

1. What did Jesus show Peter when He told Peter that seven times was not enough to forgive someone, but seventy times seven?
   a. _____
2. What chapter in the Bible shows us the difference between Law, grace and holy living?
   a. _____
3. What sins are called the "Great Transgression" in the Bible?
   a. _____
4. What is another way of saying that sin has dominion over you?
   a. _____
5. What is the litmus test for whether you are truly sorry for your sin or not?
   a. _____
6. Name some examples of people who found forgiveness with God?
   a. _____
7. What is the purpose for God's forgiveness?
   a. _____
8. How can no one condemn us?
   a. _____
9. What does the sorrow of this world bring to us?
   a. _____
10. You will always find forgiveness as long as you truly desire to do what?
    a. _____
11. According to the first epistle of John, what happens when we confess our sin to God?
    a. _____
12. Jesus gave the adulterous woman power not to sin anymore. How did He do this?
    a. _____
13. To truly find forgiveness with yourself, you need to make sure that you are not praying out of what?
    a. _____
14. As long as our hearts are in the right place, what will God be there to do for us?
    a. _____
15. What happens when you regard iniquity in your heart?
    a. _____
16. According to Luke 18:10-14, who went home justified in the sight of God?
    a. _____

CHAPTER 12

"Seeking Help"

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

If you are reading this book, then you have already shown that you need and desire help to overcome your addictions. However, as we have read, this book will disappoint you if you are not actively having help from a multitude of counsellors. You must have accountability, transparency and a sincere desire to overcome your sinful lusts and appetites. If you do not already have a Biblical counselor to help you, then you need to get one. The first place to go is the Pastor of your church. If he does not have the time, perhaps he can recommend a deacon or officer in the church that can take the time to be your counselor and friend. It will be someone he trusts and is confident that can help you.

You will be utterly disappointed in your purpose without having a counselor to guide you and help you through the process. The other thing that you must know is that when you do decide to take that step, you must be absolutely committed to doing it. There can be no backing out. As a general rule, if I feel that the person I am counseling has missed three or four meetings at the most and it is because he is making excuses about it, then I will discontinue the sessions because he is wasting my time. People are willing to help you, but you cannot waste their time over it. You must be resolved to getting the help you need and not back out on it. Otherwise, your purpose will be disappointed and you will never overcome your addictions.

"The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect."—*Psalms 33:10*. Make sure that you are seeking Godly counsel from the Word of God and not worldly counsel that cannot help you. Worldly counsel for the most part will not change your behavior, but give you a reason and an excuse for having that behavior. Worldly counsel makes no promises of success, but God does if you seek Him diligently by faith. **"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."**—*Hebrews 11:6*.

MEMORY VERSE: **"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. 7 ¶Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. 8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones."**—*Proverbs 3:5-8*

Conclusion

We all commit sin every day. However, it is when we continue doing the same sins repeatedly that we become addicted to them. Overcoming your addictions is only partly medical if you are addicted to drugs or alcohol. It is mainly a battle that takes place in the mind and heart of a person. It is a spiritual warfare that cannot be won except through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I pray this book has been a blessing to you and that the counseling you received during the time you read it was good, Godly counsel. I pray that you never go back to a sinful lifestyle again. Jesus gave you everything you need to overcome it. He loved you, died for you, forgave you, and gave you a fresh new start in life. Go and sin no more and I look forward to hearing how God blessed you in your recovery from the power of sin.

Sincerely,

Brother Manuel Fernandez

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Record of Counseling

Name of counselee(s)	Date mmddyyy	• Reason for Counseling, • Chapter in book covered, • Notes on progress made, • Homework and exercises to be accomplished	Counselor's Initials
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