

ANSWERING THE CALL

A COMPREHENSIVE AND PRACTICAL APPROACH TO DISCIPLEMAKING.

DEVELOPED BY DR. JOE K. TAYLOR



Then Jesus said to them all: "If anyone
would come after Me, he must deny
himself and take up his cross daily
and follow Me."

- Luke 9:23, NIV



ANSWERING THE CALL

The initial discipleship program for SOUTH RENO BAPTIST CHURCH
specifically designed to help believers become devoted followers of Christ.

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Important Introductory Truths about Discipleship

1. Maturing Believers are called disciples.
2. You cannot be a disciple without being disciplined.
3. The more disciplined you become, the more God can use you.
4. The *mark* of a disciple is cross-bearing.

Luke 14:27, GNT - ²⁷ Those who do not carry their own cross and come after me cannot be my disciples.

5. A disciple must carry his/her cross daily.

Luke 9:23, NASB95 - ²³ And He was saying to them all, *"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.*

6. "Cross-bearing" means doing what-ever-it-takes to give Christ place in your life.

ANSWERING THE CALL

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SRBC MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission Is To Help People Be
Fully Devoted Followers of Christ.

S

Saved and Baptized

We want every member and active non-member at SRBC to be confident of their own salvation and educated in the important theological truths of salvation—to the point of being able to defend their own beliefs to others. We also want everyone to fully understand and be able to defend a biblical understanding and the significance of believer's baptism.

R

Ready to Share

We want every member and active non-member at SRBC to be ready and willing to share their faith—with confidence—with non-believers in a number of settings. We also want everyone to have a basic understanding of non-Christian groups and their beliefs so that they can successfully defend their own Christian belief.

B

Biblical Discipleship Training
On Selected Topics

We want every member and active non-member at SRBC to have a basic understanding of important biblical topics. Topics will include the following: Divine Intimacy; Christian Discipleship; Quiet Times; How to Know the Will of God; Election, Predestination, & Calvinism; Basic Church Discipline; Managing Stress; Spiritual Warfare; Fasting; Scripture Memory; How to Study the Bible; Handling Grief; Why Does God Allow Suffering; How to Minister to Someone in a Crisis; Basic Marriage Update; and other topics (as time allows); and "Twelve Hills on Which to Die" (e.g. The Trinity, God's Holy Word, The Virgin Birth, The Second Coming, The Call to Evangelism, The Security of the Believer, The Priesthood of the Believer, The Sanctity of Life, and The Sanctity of Marriage and Family), etc., etc.

C

Called to Ministry

We want every member and active non-member at SRBC to grasp the important understandings and to answer the call of God to ministry in their personal lives. We want people called, equipped, and empowered to needed and productive places within the Body.



ANSWERING THE CALL is a comprehensive and practical approach to disciple making. A disciple is a person-in-process who is eager to learn and apply the truths that Jesus Christ teaches him/her, which will result in ever-deepening commitments to a Christ-like life style. It is my objective that everyone who completes this course will be saved, baptized, ready to share, trained in selected biblical discipleship topics, and called to a ministry with our church.

- Pastor Joe



Making Peace with God

"I've got some good news and bad news."

A. The Bad News

1. Not everybody will be saved.

Matthew 13:24-30, NLT - ²⁴ Here is another story Jesus told: *"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. ²⁵ But that night as the workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away. ²⁶ When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew. ²⁷ 'The farmer's workers went to him and said, 'Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?' ²⁸ 'An enemy has done this!' the farmer exclaimed. 'Should we pull out the weeds?' they asked. ²⁹ 'No,' he replied, 'you'll uproot the wheat if you do. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.'"*

2. Many People will perish.

Matthew 7:13, NLT - ¹³ *"You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way."*

Think about the following stories from the Bible:

- **Noah and the Ark** (Many were lost—only a few were saved)
- **Sodom and Gomorra** (Many were lost—only a few were saved)

3. Some who think they are saved will be lost.

Matthew 7:21, NIV - ²¹ *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."*

Matthew 7:21, NCV - ²¹ *"Not all those who say 'You are our Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven. The only people who will enter the kingdom of heaven are those who do what my Father in heaven wants."*

4. There is no salvation after death.

Hebrews 9:27, NAB - ²⁷ Just as it is appointed that human beings die once, and after this the judgment, ...

Luke 16:19-31, NIV - ¹⁹ "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. ²⁰ At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores ²¹ and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' ²⁵ "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' ²⁷ "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, ²⁸ for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' ²⁹ "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' ³⁰ " 'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' ³¹ "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' "

5. This very moment may be someone's last chance to make peace with God and be saved.

Proverbs 27:1, NIV - ¹ Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.

- You may die.
- Jesus may come again.
- The Holy Spirit may move on.



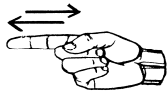
B. The Good News



1. God Cares—God really loves you and has a great plan for your life.

John 10:10 (PME) - "(Jesus said) I came that you might have a full life, and that you might have it more abundantly."

John 3:16 (NASB95) -¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (Greek - Lit. "The life of the ages")



2. All have sinned—All people (including you and me) have sinned and missed God's Plan for their lives.

Romans 3:23 (TLB) -²³ Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious [plan]...

1 John 1:8 (TLB) -⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth.



3. Jesus died for us!—Jesus paid the price for our sins by giving His life on the cross.

Romans 5:8 (NASB95) -⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Corinthians 15:5 (NASB95) -³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures ...



4. We must make a commitment to Christ—We can discover God's great plan for our lives by committing our lives to Christ.

Romans 10:9 (PME) - If you openly admit with your own lips that Jesus is the Lord, and if you believe in your own heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Acts 4:12 (NASB95) -¹² "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name [but Jesus] under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."



5. We are weak—We cannot save ourselves by “doing good things”—it’s not possible to get to heaven except through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NCV) - ⁸... you have been saved by grace through believing. You did not save yourselves; it was a gift from God. ⁹ It was not the result of your own efforts ...

John 14:6 (NASB95) - ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

Romans 10:9, NIV - ⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.



6. If a person makes Jesus their Lord, they win—but, if they reject Christ, they lose.

Romans 10:13 (NASB95) - ¹³ for “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

1 Timothy 2:5 (TLB) - ⁵ ... God is on one side and all the people on the other side, and Christ Jesus, himself man, is between them to bring them together ...

C. Life’s Most Important Decision—“Nothing Else Matters”

1. Is there anything keeping you from making Jesus Christ your Lord?

2. Would you like to make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life *right now*?

You can receive Jesus into your heart as Lord through prayer. (Prayer is simply talking with God.) God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your *exact words* as He is with the *attitude* of your heart.

“Lord Jesus, I need you. I know that you care for me and have a great plan for my life. I also know that my own sin has kept me from you. Please forgive the sin in my life. I know you died for me on the cross. I now commit my life to you. I now make you the Lord and Savior of my life forever. Thank you for coming into my life, forgiving my sins, and for giving me eternal life. -Amen.”

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If it does, pray this prayer right now and Christ will come into your life as Lord and Savior—*Just as He promised!*

Would you pray this prayer right now? You will never regret it!



Welcome to the Family of God

"Here's what you can expect now that you are a believer in Christ."

A. What you give up...

The Point: Paul gave up what he thought was important and gained the priceless knowledge of knowing Christ.

Philippians 3:7-8, TLB - ⁷ But all these things that I once thought very worthwhile—now I've thrown them all away so that I can put my trust and hope in Christ alone. ⁸ Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have put aside all else, counting it worth less than nothing, in order that I can have Christ.

B. What you gain ...

The Point: The apostle Paul has gained four things from becoming a child of God.

A. A New Righteousness

Philippians 3:9-12, TLB - ⁹ ... [I] become one with him, no longer counting on being saved by being good enough or by obeying God's laws, but by trusting Christ to save me; for God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith—counting on Christ alone. ¹⁰ Now I have given up everything else—I have found it to be the only way to really know Christ and to experience the mighty power that brought him back to life again, and to find out what it means to suffer and to die with him. ¹¹ So whatever it takes, I will be one who lives in the fresh newness of life of those who are alive from the dead. ¹² I don't mean to say I am perfect. I haven't learned all I should even yet, but I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ saved me for and wants me to be.

B. A New Priority (i.e. focus)

Philippians 3:13-14, TLB - ¹³ No, dear brothers, I am still not all I should be, but I am bringing all my energies to bear on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God is calling us up to heaven because of what Christ Jesus did for us.

C. A New Home

Philippians 3:20, TLB - ²⁰ *But our homeland is in heaven, where our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is; and we are looking forward to his return from there.* [The point: you are headed for Heaven, not Hell.]

D. A New Body

Philippians 3:21, TLB - ²¹ *When he comes back, he will take these dying bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer all else everywhere.*

Now that you are in this "Family of God" ...

1. You can expect some battles

Ephesians 6:11-12, NASB95 - ¹¹ .. stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, ...*

2. You can expect some answered prayers

1 John 5:14-15, NIV - ¹⁴ *This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.* ¹⁵ *And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.*

3. You can expect your sins to be forgiven

Colossians 1:13-14, NIV - ¹³ *For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,* ¹⁴ *in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

4. You can expect a promise—your salvation is forever

Ephesians 1:13-14, NIV - ¹³ *And ... having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,* ¹⁴ *who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.*

5. You can expect to have some responsibilities.

Acts 20:24, NASB95 - ²⁴ *"But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.*

Seek God's will (Ps. 18:1-3) • Trust in God (Ps. 31:23) • Seek fellowship with God (Ps. 63:1-8) • Love God's law (Psalm 119:165)
Love what God loves (Ps. 119:72, 97, 103) • Love whom God loves (1 Jn. 5:1) • Hate what God hates (Ps. 97:10)
Grieve over sin (Matt. 26:75) • Flee sin (1 Jn. 2:15) • Long to be with Christ (2 Tim. 4:8) • Obey God wholeheartedly (Jn 14:21)



What is the Next Step?

1. Tell somebody if you are a new believer in Christ that can celebrate with you.
2. Find a good, bible-preaching church home—let them know of your faith in Christ.
3. Contact your pastor about being baptized—*it is the first step of obedience for a new believer.*
4. Start reading your Bible and praying at least one time every day.
5. Listen to Christian music and/or read Christian books for a while.
6. Stay close to God and stay away from sin. ("Sin" are actions and thoughts that are wrong.)

Just a quick word about "feelings"

Please don't make the mistake of being sure or not being sure about your salvation based on "feelings". Some people experience great feelings when Christ enters their lives. Others do not experience a rush of emotions. The promise of God's Holy Word—not our feelings—is our authority. As Christians, you must now live by faith in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. Remember, "feelings" will not save you—feelings will get you knowwhere—faith in God will. God's word says, "You will know the truth and the truth shall set you free." (John 8:22). **That Truth is Jesus!**

HOW GOD HELPS US!

2 Timothy 4:16-18

"The first time I was brought before the judge no one was here to help me. Everyone had run away. I hope that they will not be blamed for it. But the Lord stood with me and gave me the opportunity to boldly preach a whole sermon for all the world to hear. And He saved me from being thrown to the lions. Yes, and the Lord will always deliver me from all evil and will bring me into His heavenly kingdom. To God be the glory forever and ever. Amen!"

- 2 Timothy 4:16-18 (LB)

God Helps Us, As He Helped Paul, In Three Ways

1. He gives us grace for the disappointments of life.

(Paul) "I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge."

- 2 Timothy 4:16

(Stephen) "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

- Acts 7:60

(Jesus) "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

- Luke 23:34

"This prayer for forgiveness is nothing less than the work of grace in Paul's life."

- Alexander Maclaren, Exposition of Holy Scriptures, vol. 16, p. 467.

"When we hate our enemies, we give them power over us—power over our sleep, our appetites, and our happiness. They would dance with joy if they knew how much they were worrying us. Our hate is not hurting them at all, but it is turning our days and nights into hellish turmoil."

- Dale Carnegie, How to Stop Worrying and Start Living, p. 114.

2. He gives us strength for the trials of life.

"But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished. . ."

- 2 Timothy 4:17 (NASB)

Biblical examples of God "strengthening in" trials: Daniel and the Lion's Den, The Hebrew Children and the Fiery Furnace, David in the "Valley of the Shadow of Death", Jesus at the Cross

3. He gives us hope for the end of life.

"(Jesus) . . . will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom . . ."

- 2 Timothy 4:18 (NASB)

". . . for the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

- 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Baptism Matters



"This is a picture I bought in a flea market years ago of a 'country preacher' baptizing a new believer. It was taped inside an old pulpit I purchased that now stands in our fellowship hall. Both are very old, they date to the late 1800s. This picture hangs in my study as an inspiration to me." - JKT.

One of the first steps of obedience for the new believer in Christ ... the Gospel message is portrayed in the ordinance of baptism."

- The Late Dr. W.A. Criswell



A Word about Baptism

Baptism is one of the first steps of obedience for a new believer in Christ. It really does matter. It matters to God, you, your loved ones, and your church. Your personal baptism should be a meaningful and memorable experience. Understanding what the Bible teaches is important to making your baptism the blessing and witness it is meant to be. It is a great honor to be baptized. It is a great privilege to follow the clear instructions of Scripture. In being baptized, a believer in Christ is following the Lord's own example—He was baptized! Jesus Himself commanded every believer to be "... baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:9)." In being baptized, you join literally millions and millions of people who have given their lives to Christ and demonstrated their faith through the ordinance of baptism. Baptism is a witness of a personal relationship with Christ. Your baptism will bless you and those around you. May this material bring a clear understanding in your heart on why baptism matters.

And now, why delay? Go and be baptized ... calling on the name of the Lord.

- Acts 22:16, The Living Bible

A. What is baptism?

Baptism is a public testimony about your belief in two important truths:

1. **His Ministry:** The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.
2. **Our Salvation:** The fact that you were dead spiritually because of sin and have now been made alive because Christ is now your Lord.

The great news of the Bible is that Christ gave his life for all people. Baptism is a public witness about His Ministry to us. The Bible says that “*Christ died for our sins...He was buried...and rose again.*” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4, GN) In the same way that a person’s wedding ring is a statement to everyone who sees it that that person has a significant relationship with their mate, so baptism is a public statement about our own significant relationship with Christ. Therefore, baptism is a public witness about our salvation. The bible says, ⁹ *If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved.* (Romans 10:9, GNT). Every true believe in Christ can say through their own baptism that they had died to themselves and are now alive in God because Christ lives in them.

Think about it—what better way to give a public witness of your belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and the truth that He lives in you than through *full immersion baptism* (i.e., going all the way under the water and all the way back up).

B. What does the Bible teach about “baptism”?

First, the biblical word itself mean “to immerse, sink, dip or submerge”. Baptism is a transliterated from the Greek word *baptizo* (Gk: βαπτίζω)—again, it means to immerse or submerge.¹

Second, Jesus was baptized through full immersion baptism. The Bible says, ¹⁵ *But Jesus insisted. “Do it. God’s work, putting things right all these centuries, is coming together right now in this baptism.” So John did it.* ¹⁶ *The moment Jesus came up out of the baptismal waters, the skies opened up and he saw God’s Spirit—it looked like a dove—descending and landing on him.* (Matthew 3:15-16, The Message).

Third, every baptism in the New Testament was by full immersion. There is no other recorded means of baptism in the New testament other than *in water*. There is no scriptural or historical evidence of “sprinkling” until the early second century. ³⁸ *And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.* Acts 8:38-39, NIV. The Bible speaks of John the Baptist baptizing by noting, ²³ *John was also baptizing in Aenon, near Salim, because there was plenty of water there. People were going there to be baptized* (John 3:23, NCV). Historically, and specifically archeologically, we know that the early church used baptismal pools (called *mikvahs*) for ceremonial cleansing and later for temple baptisms. They also used lakes and rivers for scriptural baptisms.

Fourth, the act of baptism always followed salvation. The sequence is (a) a person gives their life to Christ and then (b) follows that decision with the witness of baptism. ¹² *But when they believed Philip’s message about the good news of the Kingdom of God and about Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women* Acts 8:12, GNT. The Bible also says in Acts 8:36-38, NKJV - ³⁶ *Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”* ³⁷ *Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”* ³⁸ *So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.*

Fifth, the waters of baptism will not wash away sins—only the blood of Jesus can do that. The “waters” of baptism do nothing physically but get a person wet. They certainly do not cleanse a person of their sins. Good news! The blood of Jesus (and nothing but the blood of Jesus) will. Ephesians 1:7-8, NCV - ⁷ *In Christ we are set free by the blood of his death, and so we have forgiveness of sins.* How rich is God’s grace, ⁸ *which he has given to us so fully and freely.*

There is one more very important point to make (see next page). ➡

¹Strong, James: *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed. Ontario : Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996, S. G907

Finally, the Bible clearly teaches that baptism does not save you—only Jesus can do that. This is a very important point to make. There is no act, action, or “works” that a person can do that will save them other than making Jesus their Lord. *Only Jesus saves!*

Romans 10:9 (PME) – *If you openly admit with your own lips that Jesus is the Lord, and if you believe in your own heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Acts 4:12 (NASB95) ⁻¹² *“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name [but Jesus] under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”*

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NCV) - ⁸... you have been saved by grace through believing. You did not save yourselves; it was a gift from God. ⁹ It was not the result of your own efforts ...

A Fair Question: A Good Answer

Don't some verses in the Bible indicate you have to be baptized to be saved?

There are some verses in the New Testament that “seem” to indicate that you have to believe *and* be baptized to be saved. Once a person clearly understands the technical system of *periphrastic construction* in the Greek and has a grasp of the historical context of the verses in question, these arguments fail. For example, Acts 2:38, NKJV - ³⁸ *Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* It would seem that this verse indicates you have to be baptized to be forgiven of sin. Consider the historical context of this verse. In understanding it we must remember that it was originally stated as a message to Israel concerning their national crime of murdering their Messiah. It is unwise to link baptism with the remission of sins for nowhere do the Scriptures teach that salvation is dependent on baptism (see I Cor 1:17*; cf. I Cor 15:1–4**, where Paul clearly states what the gospel is and baptism is not included). Those who insist upon baptismal regeneration literally “rob Paul to pay Peter” (see II Pet 3:15–16).² Grammatically, if one understands the complex issues of periphrastic construction (the understanding of which words magnify which words—a process primarily based on word “endings”). What Acts 2:38 literally states (periphrastically) is *“Repent in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins and (also) be baptized.”*

The Bible Says ...

* *Christ did not send me to baptize people but to preach the Good News. And he sent me to preach the Good News without using words of human wisdom so that the cross of Christ would not lose its power.*
- 1 Corinthians 1:17, NCV

** *Now brothers, I want to clarify for you the gospel I proclaimed to you; you received it and have taken your stand on it.* ² *You are also saved by it, if you hold to the message I proclaimed to you—unless you believed to no purpose.* ³ *For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,* ⁴ *that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...*
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, HCSB

Summary Statement

Believing in Jesus Christ as your Lord is the **substance** of salvation. **Baptism** is the **symbol** of believing in Jesus as Lord. Baptism represents *His Ministry* and *Our Salvation*—the fact that we were dead spiritually because of sin and have now been made alive because Christ is now our Lord. The Bible says that, *“By our baptism then, we were buried with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead...so also we may live a new life.”* (Romans 6:4, GN) Please realize that **it is the teaching of the New Testament that baptism DOES NOT save a person from their sins, only faith in Christ saves.** The Bible does teach the following truths about baptism*:

- Your baptism must be by full immersion (in water).
- Your baptism must take place after you have asked Christ into your heart.
- Your baptism is a public testimony of your belief in His ministry and your salvation.
- A person is baptized not to be saved but because he/she is saved.

² KJV Bible Commentary. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1994, S. 2132.

C. A *Helping Hand* About Baptism

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1. The thumbprint is a mark of identity.

Identity (i.e., thumbprint) shows who you are. In salvation, each believer enters into the death, burial, and resurrection life of Christ. In baptism, each believer *symbolizes* that new identity going into the water—your death and burial in Christ’s death and burial—coming out of the water—raised in Christ to walk a new walk. One baptized in the “name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” is showing a new identity as a member of a new family, the family of God.

Matthew 28:18-20, HCSB - ¹⁸ Then Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

2. The index finger (i.e., the pointer) speaks of a new direction.

The new direction in life is now following Jesus as Lord and Savior. In baptism, one comes out of the water to walk “in newness of life” (cf., Romans 6:3-4).

Romans 6:3-4, HCSB - ³ Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in a new way of life.

3. The middle finger stands out above the rest as a “witness”.

The middle finger stands out above the rest. In baptism, one gives a new “testimony” or “witness” about his/her life. What now stands out is a personal knowledge of Jesus as Lord and Savior. Through baptism, one gives a physical testimony of what has happened spiritually (cf., Acts 10:47-48).

Acts 10:47-48, MSG - ⁴⁷ “Do I hear any objections to baptizing these friends with water? They’ve received the Holy Spirit exactly as we did.” ⁴⁸ Hearing no objections, he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

4. The ring finger speaks of relationship.

Baptism is like a wedding ring. Both are external symbols that point to an internal reality—each speaks of a new relationship of the heart. Jesus as a ring does not make one married, so baptism does not make one a Christian. As a wedding ring symbolized the commitment of one’s life to another so baptism tells of a heart surrendered to Jesus as Lord and Savior (cf., Romans 6:3-11).

Romans 6:2-3, TLB - ² ... For sin’s power over us was broken when we became Christians and were baptized to become a part of Jesus Christ; through his death the power of your sinful nature was shattered.

5. The little finger speaks of one small (but important) step of obedience.

This small (but very significant) step of obedience to the Lord’s own command. In baptism, one simply goes into and out of the waters of the baptism as part of a new walk of obedience (cf., Acts 16:27-34).

Acts 16:30-33, HCSB - ³⁰ ... “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” ³³ Right away he and all his family were baptized.

Baptism symbolizes these five realities: (1) a new **identity**, (2) a new **direction**, (3) A new **testimony**, (4) a new **relationship**, and (5) a new walk of **obedience** to Jesus Christ and His Word. – Richard L. Shepherd

D. Other questions about Baptism.

How do I make My decision known about giving my life to Christ?

If you are considering a decision or are sure of your decision, it is a good idea to either make an appointment with the Pastors or visit with a decision counselor during an invitation. The decision to trust Christ as Lord and/or make formal ties to a church via membership is very important. *We want to make sure that you understand your decision* and we want to answer any questions that you might have. When the invitation (the song after the message) is given, please walk forward and share with the Pastor that you are making a decision. He will ask you about your decision. If you have not already visited with him about your decision, you will meet briefly with a deacon or decision counselor to make sure everything is in order and that you don't have any questions. You will be presented to the Church Membership for a vote on your decision at a later service. This is a very routine part of *Baptist Life*, so if you have any questions, please visit with a Pastor, a deacon, or your Bible Study Leader.

* **Setting an appointment with a Pastor:** You can set an appointment to meet with one of our pastors to answer any questions you might have, discuss your decision, and/or give you more information about what the Bible teaches (and what Baptists believe) about certain things. To set an appointment, contact the Church Office at (775) 827-3227. Our Office hours are from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Thursday. The Church Office is closed during lunch. Our Pastor's secretary, Karen Sagarra, will set the appointment up for you. Remember, we want to help you in any way that we can; **we mean that!**

Why must I be baptized if I was baptized and/or confirmed as a child?

Some churches practice "baptism of confirmation" for children. This practice began years (i.e., early second century) after the Bible was completed and is different from the baptism talked about in the Bible (which was only for those old enough to believe.) At *SOUTH RENO*, we wait until our children are old enough to believe and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them. The Bible clearly teaches that the first requirement for baptism is that you believe in Jesus as Lord. Acts 2:41 says, ***"Those who believed and accepted His message were baptized."*** Acts 8:12 says, ***"But when they believed Philip as he preached the Good News . . . and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."*** Please understand, ***at SOUTH RENO, it is a membership requirement that every member must have been baptized the way Jesus demonstrated and in keeping with what the Bible teaches about baptism.*** SRBC asked children be baptized after they are saved and not before they turn eight years of age.

What should I wear when I am baptized?

Women should wear shorts and a top or a modest one-piece swimsuit. The less colorful the garment the better. Men may wear a swimsuit. Bring a change of clothes and a plastic bag for your wet clothes. We will provide a changing room (and a towel) for all baptismal candidates.

What about baptism and a special need I have?

We understand that there will be special circumstances from time to time. Matters like physical handicaps, aqua-phobia, terminally ill, bed ridden patients, and other situations are understandable and should not stand in the way of your baptism. Please contact the Pastor and he will discuss your situation with you. Together, we can come to a solution about receiving your baptism.

Should I be baptized before or after trusting Christ as Lord?

Baptists believe that baptism is one of the first steps of obedience for a new believer. You should be baptized as soon as you have believed and trusted Jesus as Lord of your life. The Bible says in Acts 2:41, that ***"those who believed . . . were baptized . . . that day."*** **It is important to remember that baptism is a personal statement of your faith in Jesus as Lord.** Baptism doesn't make you a believer—it shows that you *already* believe. Baptism does not "save" you, only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring—it's the outward symbol of the commitment you have made in your heart. It is what our Lord commanded to symbolize your belief. We encourage you to invite all your relatives and friends to attend your baptism. This is a very special time and our service will be designed with this in mind. Pictures are appropriate and encouraged during your baptism. The pastor will introduce you and tell a little about you before your baptism. You will not have to say anything.

How can I get the most out of Church Membership?

"You get out of church what you put into it" When God leads you to make formal ties with a Church, do it with all your heart. There are many good reasons to unite with the church. (1) A Biblical Reason: Christ instituted and is committed to the Church. The Bible says in Ephesians 5:25 that, ***"Christ loved the church, and gave His life for it."*** (LB) (2) A Cultural Reason: It is an antidote to our society. We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything (e.g. a job, a marriage, a country, etc.). Be committed to what Christ said He would use to help change the world. (3) A Practical Reason: Every team needs a roster and every army has an enlistment. Membership identifies our family. It helps the church know who can be counted on to help win our area for Christ. (4) A Personal Reason: You need the church as much as the church needs you. It produces spiritual growth, helps hold you accountable, provides for your need of fellowship, supports during a crisis, offers ministry via weddings, funerals, baby dedications, special prayer, etc. We know many will just be "attendees" and not "members." We welcome attendees because it is our prayer that God will grow them in their commitment to Him and to the church. Why be committed? God gave His life for the church. Be committed! Live your life for Him!

If I decide not to join the Church, may I still attend South Reno?

Yes! We strongly encourage church membership, but we realize that not all people will join. Realize that there is a difference between joining the Church and joining the Sunday School. Joining Sunday School does not require making a public decision or baptism yet does help you "get involved" in the Church.

How old should a person be before they are baptized?

The most important issue is that each person be old enough to understand their need for Christ. It is urgent that everyone knows that Jesus died to pay for our sins and we must realize our need to surrender our lives to Christ so that we can be saved. Once a person is saved, a person is generally ready to be baptized. Pastor Joe will make the final decision of whether a child is old enough to understand salvation; know that input from parents is very important to him. (His own personal counsel is that the child should be able to give a reasonable accounting of the Gospel story and verbalize their own need for salvation.) Because baptism is not a "salvation issue," Pastor Joe encourages parents to allow the child to be at least eight years old so they will be sure to remember this important event in their lives. Though not a hard-and-fast-rule, it is a guideline to help parents know when baptism should take place.

I have other questions about God and/or baptism that have not been answered, what should I do?

Set an appointment with Pastor Joe or anyone one our church staff. The church number is 775.827.3227.

Very Important: Because the ordinance of baptism is an ordinance of the church, SOUTH RENO BAPTIST CHURCH will recognize (or consider recognizing) only those baptisms performed by a Bible-believing church in a public setting that has a published theological position on baptism. This is our way of protecting what we believe to be the "high standards" of biblical baptism.



The Power of One Hour

Your Personal Devotional Time with God

ANSWERING THE CALL
DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Luke 10:38-42, NASB95 - ³⁸ Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then

tell her to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered and said to her, "*Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; ⁴² but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*"

*"A man is never in so perilous a position as the man who has lost divine intimacy with God...
... he will be like a painted flower without a fragrance ...
... or a painted tree without fruit ...
... or a painted fire without heat."*

- Dr. Tom Elliff

The Bible speaks of those who demonstrated Divine Intimacy (in Heb 11)...

Abel offered ... Enoch walked ... Noah built ... Abraham went out ... Moses forsook...

POINT: They did something! It demonstrated "divine intimacy" with their God!

The Bible speaks of about Divine Intimacy ...

Matthew 1:23, NASB95 - ²³ "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us."

John 15:4-5, NASB95 - ⁴ "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. ⁵ "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

Exodus 33:8, 11, NASB95 - ⁸ And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent. ... ¹¹ Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend.

Matthew 4:19, NASB95 - ¹⁹ And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Mark 14:37-38, NCV - ³⁷ Then Jesus went back to his followers and found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn't you stay awake with me for one hour?" ³⁸ Stay awake and pray for strength against temptation. The spirit wants to do what is right, but the body is weak."

A thought about *Divine Intimacy*...

Luke 10:38-42, NASB95 - ³⁸ Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered and said to her, "*Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; ⁴² but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*"

1. Mary Demonstrated "Divine Intimacy" with God.

Luke 10:39, NIV - ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.

- Notice her posture ([she] sat ...)
- Notice her proximity (... at His feet...)
- Notice her preference (... listening to the Word of the Lord.)

2. Martha was Distracted from "Divine Intimacy" with God.

Luke 10:40, NIV - ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

Luke 10:40, KJV - ⁴⁰ But Martha was cumbered about [with] much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

"Divine Intimacy with God is not the same as praise and worship ... productivity ... activity ... prayer."

- Dr. Tom Elliff

"We used to have a theology that said 'know God or die' ... for the last two or three years, [Southern Baptists] have flooded our country with church growth experts ... seminars ... conferences on how to grow churches. Unfortunately, these [people] are giving our next generation of pastors a thought that there is something better than knowing God."

- A persecuted Russian Pastor to Dr. Elliff

"Success is going to your death bed knowing that you helped one soul find breath and life."

- Ugandan Pastor to Pastor Joe

3. Each Of Us Should Desire "Divine Intimacy" With God.

Luke 10:41-42, NASB95 - ⁴¹ But the Lord answered and said to her, "*Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; ⁴² but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*"



Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

- Acts 4:13, NASB95

Your walk with God determines everything about your life. This does not mean that life will not have moments of suffering or challenge. Suffering will always be a part of life. What it does mean is that the degree to which you walk with God will determine the degree of everything else you experience in life. Through your walk with God you will keep perspective ... know where the Lord is leading you ... have power to endure the challenges of [your] life today ... live above the temptations and ethical challenges of our culture ... through your walk with God you will be able to win over the flaming missiles that are hurled toward you by Satan himself. As your walk with God goes, so goes the rest of your life.

- Dr. Ronnie Floyd ³

³ Floyd, Ronnie, 10 Things Every Minister Needs to Know, in his chapter titled, "The Power of One Hour", Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, © 2007, pp. 24-25.

Your Personal Devotional Time with God

Definition: A *Quiet Time* is a daily time of worship and personal fellowship with God through Bible study and prayer.

WHY SHOULD WE HAVE A QUIET TIME?

1. Because we need fellowship with God.
 - We were created to have fellowship with God.
 - Jesus Christ died on the cross so that fellowship could be restored.
 - The regular quiet time during Jesus' ministry was a source of His strength.
 - Every great man or woman of God throughout history has spent much time alone with God.
 - We cannot be healthy, growing Christians without daily fellowship with the Lord.
2. Because it is our privilege as followers of Christ.
 - We give devotion and glory to God.
 - We get direction from God.
 - We get to know God and gain delight from Him.
 - We grow more like God.
3. Because we get tremendous benefits from it.
 - Joy (cf. Ps. 16:11; 119; 47; Jer. 15:16)
 - Peace (cf. Isa. 26:3; 48:18; Rom. 8:6)
 - Stability (cf. Ps 16:8-9; 46:1-3; 55:22; 57:7)
 - Success (cf. Josh 1:8)
 - Answered Prayer (cf. John 15:7)
 - Others will notice a difference in our lives (cf. Acts 4:13)

AN IMPORTANT SUMMARY QUOTE ABOUT PRAYER

Perhaps the critical nature of prayer is summarized by two contrasting verses:

(1) "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

(2) "*I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.*" (John 15:5)

*"How much can be accomplished through supernatural empowering? **ALL THINGS!** What can be accomplished apart from supernatural empowering in Christ? **NOTHING!** It is not that we can achieve a limited amount without prayer; we can achieve nothing of eternal significance. The height of carnality is to hold to a form of godliness, but to deny the power of it. When we attempt to (live out our lives) devoid of prayer and time with God, we hold to a form of godliness, but we deny the supernatural power available to us."*

- Dr. Ken Hemphill, The Antioch Effect, p. 63.

Summary Thought:

How much can be accomplished through supernatural empowering? Answer: All things!
What can be accomplished apart from supernatural empowering in Christ? Answer: Nothing!

HOW TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL QUIET TIME

Four Essential Elements

1. Start with the proper attitude.
 - Expectancy
 - Reverence
 - Alertness
 - Willingness to obey
2. Select a specific time.
3. Select a specific place.
 - Secluded
 - Where you can pray and read aloud
 - Where you have good lighting
 - Where you are comfortable
 - Special
 - Sacred

*"Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and His disciples followed Him."
- Luke 22:39 (NASB)*

4. Follow a simple plan.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED...

- A Bible
- A notebook (journal/prayer list)
- Hymnbook/songbook
- Christian book that focuses on discipleship

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

- Brief prayer to open
- Read and study the Bible
- Deep praying (cf., prayer list)
- Worship God (Hymns or songs)
- Read to “sharpen” yourself

CLOSING COMMENTS ABOUT COMMON PROBLEMS

• The Problem of Discipline:

- Go to bed on time
- Get up immediately on waking
- Be aware of quiet time “robbers” (e.g., newspaper, internet, children, email, etc.)
- Be accountable to someone

• The Problem of “dry spells:”

- Please expect “dry spells” in every area of your life (e.g., God, marriage, work, kids, etc.)
- Disobedience/sin
- Your physical condition
- “Too many fires—and only one iron”
- Being in a rut
- Spiritual warfare
- Not being accountable to someone

• The Problem of Discouragement:

- Consider making a covenant with God
- Put it into your weekly schedule
- Expect and be prepared for the devil's excuses and attacks
- Leave your Bible open the night before to the passage you intend to read/study
- Be accountable to someone

“A Formula for Developing a Habit”

1. Make a strong (public) resolution/vow.
2. Never allow an exception to occur until the new habit is securely rooted in your life.
3. Seize every opportunity and inclination to practice your new habit.
4. Have a Measurable, Attainable, Personal, Specific plan.
5. Have high accountability.
6. Know that most “habits” are *rooted* in as little as six weeks—three months for sure.



Bible Study

How to Get a Grasp on Your Bible in Your Hand

Six Way's to Get a Grasp on the Bible

[Trace your hand in the space below]

"The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone."

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (LB)

Six ways to get a better "grasp" on the Word of God. (Starting with the "pinkie" finger)

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1. Hear it | 2. Read it | 3. Study It |
| 4. Memorize it | 5. Meditate on it | 6. Apply it |

Hearing the Word of God

*"Faith comes from **hearing** the Word of God" - Romans 10:17 (GN)*

1. Know where to hear the Word of God.

- Tapes · Church Services · Bible Studies · _____
- Sermon CDs/DVDs · Radio · T.V. · _____

Problem: *"We forget 98% of what we hear after 72 hours."*

2. Work to improve your hearing.

- Be ready to hear · Make a decision to be a good listener
- Make sure your "body" is ready to hear

3. Deal with attitudes that prevent you from hearing from God.

*"**Consider carefully** how you listen . . ."*

- Luke 8:18 (LB)

- A Closed Mind: Fear, pride, bitterness, anger, indifference
- A Superficial mind: "Are you serious about hearing a Word from God?"
- A Preoccupied Mind: Are you too busy. . . too stressed . . . too concerned about other (less important) things . . . too burdened.

4. Confess any sin in your life.

*" . . . Get rid of the **moral filth** and humbly accept the Word . . ."*

- James 1:21 (LB)

5. Take notes on what you hear.

6. Act on what you hear.

*"Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves, **Do what it says!**"*

- James 1:22 (LB)

*"Whoever . . . does not simply listen and then forget it, but **puts it into practice** . . . that person will be blessed in what he does."*

- James 1:25 (GN)

Reading God's Word

"Happy is the one who **reads** this book . . . and obeys what is written in it!"
- Revelation 1:3 (GN)

"How often should I read the Bible?" Answer: Every single day

"(The scriptures) shall be his constant companion. He must read from it **everyday of his life** so that he will learn to respect the Lord as God by obeying all of His commands."

- Deuteronomy 17:19 (LB)

1. Read it systematically.

Try to read it at the same time, at the same place, for the same length of time every day.

2. Read it in your own Bible.

3. Read it in different translations.

Suggestions: *New American Standard Bible, New International Version, Good News, Phillips, *Living Bible, New Living Translation, The Message, and the HCSB. *A must for reading.

4. Read it aloud and quietly to yourself.

5. Mark your Bible.

6. Choose a reading plan and stick with it.

Read just fifteen minutes a day to read the Bible once a year.

How to Study the Bible

". . . they accepted the message eagerly and **studied the Scriptures** everyday. . ."
- Acts 17:11 (PH)

"Be a good workman . . . **know what His Word says and means.**"
- 2 Timothy 2:15 (GN)

"The secret to effective Bible study is knowing how to ask and answer the right questions!"

Six Basic Questions

Who?				
What?				
When?				
Where?				
Why?				
How?				

- **Who?** [Who are the main characters, players, events, items, objects, issues, miracles, things, etc.]
- **What?** [What did they do, become, what happened, what was their experience, etc.]
- **When?** [When did things happen, what was first, time in the Bible, before/after the passage, etc.]
- **Where?** [Where are they, is geography important, "paint a picture of this," etc.]
- **Why?** [Why did the Bible mention them, why did they do what they did, why to w/w/w/w/w, etc.]
- **How?** [How did it happen, how did "who" do _____, check the physical/spiritual, procedures, etc.]

Check List for Bible Study

1. After quietness and prayer, read the passage five times slowly.
2. Mark words you don't know and list questions that you have?
3. Begin by asking the "Six Questions" listed above.
4. Read study and background materials. (See next page)
5. (Meditation) Paint a "Word Picture" of this passage in your mind.
6. Seek application truths.

• Are there . . .

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| · Sins to confess? | · Commands to obey | · Errors to avoid |
| · Promises to claim? | · Examples to follow | · Truths to believe |
| · Attitudes to have? | · Prayers to pray | · Something to do? |

Preparation for Bible Study

1. Schedule your Bible Study.

Bible Study is different from having a daily "quiet time." Schedule one or two times a week for quality Bible study. (Schedule a time everyday for reading and devotionals.)

2. Keep a notebook and/or organize your study notes.

3. Get the right tools for study.

- Study Bible
- Several recent translations
- Exhaustive concordance
- Bible dictionary
- Bible encyclopedia
- Topical Bible and/or topical tool
- Bible Handbook
- Word studies
- Bible Commentary
- Individual books over the "Bible Book" or subject(s).

4. Spend a short time in prayer before each study.

TYPES OF BIBLE STUDY

1. *The Devotional Method*

Select a short portion of your Bible and prayerfully meditate on it till the Holy Spirit shows you a way to apply the truth to your life. Write out a personal application.

2. *The Chapter Summary Method*

Read a chapter of the Bible book through at least five times; then write down a summary of the central thoughts and truths you find in it.

3. *The Character Quality Method*

Choose a character quality you would like to work on in your life and study what the Bible says about it.

4. *The Thematic Method*

Select a Bible theme to study. Then think of three to five questions you would like to have answered about that theme. Next Study all the references you can find on your theme and record the answers to your questions.

5. *The Biographical Method*

Select a Bible character and research all the verses about that person in order to study his/her life and characteristics. Make notes on their attitudes, strengths, and weaknesses, etc.

6. *The Topical Method*

Collect and compare all the verses you can find on a particular topic. Organize your conclusions into an outline that you can share with another person.

7. *The Word Study Method*

Study the important words of the Bible. Find out how many times a word occurs in Scripture and how it is used. Find out the original meaning of the word.

8. *The Book Background Method*

Study how history, geography, culture, science, and politics affected what happened in Bible times. Use Bible reference books to increase your understanding of the word.

9. *The Book Survey Method*

Survey an entire book of the Bible by reading it through several times to get a general overview of its contents. Study the background of the book and make notes on its contents.

10. *The Chapter Analysis Method*

Master the contents of a chapter or a book of the Bible by taking an in-depth look at each verse in that chapter. Tear each verse apart word by word, observe every detail.

11. *The Book Synthesis Method*

Summarize the contents and main themes of a book of the Bible after you have read it through several times. Make an outline of the book. This method is done after you have used a Book Survey Method and the Chapter Analysis Method on every chapter in that book.

12. *The Verse-by-verse Analysis Method*

Select one passage of Scripture and examine it in detail by asking questions, finding cross references, and paraphrasing each verse. Record a possible application of each verse you study.

Benefits of Memorizing Scripture

1. It helps you resist temptation.

"I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

- Psalm 119:11 (GN)

2. It helps you make right decisions.

"Your Word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path."

- Psalm 119:105 (GN)

3. It strengthens you when you are under stress.

" . . . Your promises to me are my hope. They give me strength in all my troubles; how they refresh and revive me!"

- Psalm 119:49-50 (LB)

4. It comforts you when you are down or distressed.

"Your words are what sustain me . . . They bring joy to my sorrowing heart and delight me."

- Jeremiah 15:16 (LB)

5. It helps you witness to unbelievers.

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."

- 1 Peter 3:15 (GN)

The secret to Bible memory: repeat, repeat, repeat!

How to Meditate on God's Word

SIX WAYS

1. Picture it!

Once you have read the verse a number of times, visualize the scene in your mind. Stand in one place and then stand in another place as you picture the events unfolding. Consider what every actor is seeing and experiencing during the event.

2. Pronounce it!

Read the verse and emphasize a different word each time you read it. Consider the significance of every word in the passage.

3. Paraphrase it!

Rewrite (or at least think through) the verse and put it in your own words. While being true to the text, write it in as many different ways as you can.

4. Personalize it!

Replace the pronouns or people in the verse with your own name.

5. Pray it!

If possible, turn the verse and/or passage into a prayer and pray it to God.

6. Probe it!

Ask the following nine questions: Are there . . .

- Sins to confess?
- Promises to claim?
- Attitudes to have?
- Commands to obey?
- Errors to avoid?
- Prayers to pray?
- Examples to follow?
- Truths to believe?
- Some things to do?

How to Apply God's Word in Your Life

*"Do not fool yourself by just listening to the Word. Instead, **put it into practice.**"*

- James 1:22 (LB)

*". . . Whoever **practices** and teaches these commands will be called **great in the kingdom.**"*

- Matthew 5:19 (GN)

"M.A.P.S. Rule"

The key to making good application in every area of life (especially the scripture) is making sure it meets the "M.A.P.S. Rule" The M.A.P.S. Rule is a four step requirement based on an acrostic of the word "maps." Each application statement must meet all of the following requirements or you will never reach your goals.

Measurable

Every *application statement* must be able to be measured.
Keep your item worded in such a way that anyone could "test" and see if the item was kept.

Attainable

Set *application statements/goals* that are realistic.
Don't set up your application in a way that you will fail. Try to be both realistic and challenging at the same time.

Personal

Set goals only for yourself.
Make personal application of God's Word. If God reveals His will for your family, let them be involved in the decision to "apply" God Word in their lives.

Specific

Don't use general wording—BE SPECIFIC!
Use Specific descriptions, processes, and/or goals. You can do something specific, you won't do something general.

- Examples of poor *application statements*:
 - I will spend more time in God's Word.
 - I will spend more time with my mate.
 - My family will start reading the Bible together.
- Examples of good *application statements*:
 - I will get up fifteen minutes earlier each day and read the Bible for fifteen minutes, on the porch, starting with the Book of John.
 - I will spend every Thursday night with my mate and will guard it as "sacred family time."
 - [After talking to the family about this] My family will read one chapter from the Bible every Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday after the dinner dishes are cleared from the table.



Prayer

Talking Intimately with God.

Facts Every Disciple Should Know About Prayer

1. Prayer is simply talking to God.

Though God is far more than a mere person, He is more like a person than anything else our minds can conceive of. For this reason, He asks us to converse with Him just as we would with another person.

Abraham talked to God	Genesis 18:22-23
David talked to God	Psalms 139:23-24
Jesus talked to God	Matthew 6:9-13
Jesus talked to God	Matthew 11:25-26

2. You can pray about anything you want to, any time, any place.

Many people think God doesn't want to be bothered with "insignificant" matters. They think He is too busy with "bigger" matters. Nothing could be farther from the truth, He loves to hear from us, no matter what is on our minds. **Remember, He loves us!**

Any Thing	Psalms 143:8 (for direction); Psalms 143:9 (for protection); Psalms 143:10 (for instruction); Psalms 145:1-2 (for praise and worship); Proverbs 3:5-6 (for guidance); Matthew 5:44 (for your enemies); Matthew 6:11 (for daily needs); Mark 11:22-23 (for the impossible); Mark 11:24 (for your desires); Romans 10:1 (for another's salvation); Luke 18:13 (for God's mercy); John 15:16 (for your ministry); James 1:5 (for wisdom); 1 John 1:9 (for forgiveness); 1 John 5:14 (for any thing .)
Any Time	Exodus 15:11,12 (when you're <i>up</i>); 2 Samuel 12:15 (when you're <i>down</i>); 1 Kings 18:36 (for spiritual battles); Psalms 5:3 (morning); Psalms 51:3-4 (When you've sinned); Psalms 55:17 (evening, morning, noon); Luke 10:21 (spontaneously); 2 Timothy 1:3 (day or night . . . any time .)
Any Place	1 Samuel 1:9-10 (in the Lord's house); Matthew 6:6 (in your own room); Matthew 14:23 (out side); Matthew 18:19-20 (with others); Mark 1:35 (when you are alone . . . any place .)

3. God does hear our prayers.

Praying is not merely some psychological exercise of discipline. It's not like a form of meditation where we engage in it strictly for our own benefit and/or edification. *It is genuine conversation with God!* (cf. Psalm 10:17, 40:1, 1 Peter 3:12, John 5:14-15.)

4. God answers our prayers in one of three ways:

1. Yes.

2. No.

3. Wait.

God answers "Yes" ➡ Hannah's prayer for a son (Samuel)

God answers "No" ➡ David's prayer that his son, the result of his sin with Bathsheba, would live, but the baby died.

God answers "Wait" ➡ God's promise to Joseph that He would take him and his family from Egypt back to Canaan. He did, _____ years later.

5. There are four types of prayer:

Adoration (cf. Exodus 15:1-21, Psalm 63:1-8, 1 Timothy 1:17)

Confession (cf. Psalm 51, Luke 18:9-14, 1 John 1:8-10)

Thanksgiving (cf. Romans 1:21, Psalm 105:1, Philippians 4:6)

Supplication (cf. Psalm 143:8-10, Luke 11:5-13, 1 John 5:14-15)

6. God will hear your prayers regardless of your physical posture.

It doesn't matter to God what's going on with your physical body as you pray. God is much more interested in what's going on in your heart.

- Abraham stood (Genesis 18:22-23)
- Moses bowed (Exodus 34:8)
- Joshua was prostrate (Joshua 7:6)
- Solomon kneeled (1 Kings 8:54-54)
- Hezekiah on his bed (2 Kings 20:1-2)
- Daniel kneeled (Daniel 6:10)
- Jesus was prostrate (Matthew 26:39)

7. Faith is vital in prayer.

Faith is one of the primary character qualities God wants to develop in you, and He'll do everything He can to help you grow in trusting Him.

"Without faith, it is impossible to please Him."

- Hebrews 11:6 (NASB)

8. Obedience is vital in prayer. We can't expect God to grant our requests if we are unwilling to grant His

Our willingness to obey God will greatly influence the effectiveness of our prayer life. In fact, you will never know God's will and activity in your life until you are willing to do it. (cf. Psalm 37:4, Proverbs 28:9, 1 John 3:22, Proverbs 15:8, Matthew 6:14-15, John 15.)

9. We must deal with any known sin in our lives before we can expect God to hear and act upon our prayer.

We will blow it from time to time. Our goal is that, as we grow more mature in the Lord, we'll blow it less and less. In the meantime, when we become conscious of disobeying God, we need to get things right with Him as soon as possible. (cf. Psalm 32:3-5, Psalm 139:23-24, Isaiah 59:2, Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9.)

10. Prayer is very difficult work. A very important factor is patient perseverance.

We must practice to be good at anything. Prayer is no exception. We need the "stick-to-it-iveness" that an aspiring athlete and/or a good marriage has. The Bible says that this attitude will not go unrewarded. (cf. Psalm 40:1, Luke 18:1-8, Luke 11:5-9, 1 Corinthians 15:58.)

11. We must approach God in reverence, remembering who we are talking to.

God is not just the "big-man-upstairs." He is the all-powerful, sovereign, ruler of the universe, and He is eminently worthy of our uttermost respect and reverence. (cf. 2 Kings 22:19, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 10:17, Luke 18:9-14, James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:5-6.)

12. We can feel bold and confident about approaching Him in prayer, because He fully accepts us as His children.

[NOTE: It is sometimes hard to balance *humility* and *boldness* before God.]

*"Let us therefore draw near **with confidence** to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in our time of need."*

- Hebrews 4:16 (NASB)

13. When you pray, don't try to impress anyone with repeated (and meaningless) phrases. Be honest and be yourself.

Remember that the "primary audience" of our prayers is not people—it is God! (cf. Matthew 6:6, Luke 20:46-47.)

14. Pray expectantly, being honest in your requests.

God is our benevolent, loving Father, and He loves to give us good gifts (James 1:17). The Bible says that God gets satisfaction out of "making your joy complete." (John 16:24) Remember, God does love you!. (cf. Genesis 18:23-32, 2 Kings 6:15-18, John 16:24, Philippians 4:6-7.)

15. Wait expectantly; take time to listen and watch.

Communication is a two-way street. You talk to God and He talks to you. You can expect God to speak to you in many ways (e.g. Bible, wise and inspired words of others, nature, different circumstances, and direct impressions to your own mind).

WHY WE SHOULD PRAY

"So let us come boldly to the very throne of God and stay there to receive His mercy and to find grace to help us in our times of need."

- Hebrews 4:16 (LB)

1. Prayer reflects our total dependency on God.

2. Prayer is an opportunity to bring our will in line with God's will.

God may delay/withhold His answer:

1. To deepen our insight into what we really need.
2. To broaden our appreciation for His answer.
3. To allow maturity in our/other lives.
4. To show us that what we think is best is not really the best.

3. Prayer is an awesome, empowering privilege.



No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying. The pulpit can be a shop-window to display one's talent; the prayer closet allows no showing off. Poverty-stricken as the Church is today in many things, she is most stricken here, in the place of prayer. We have many organizers, but few agonizes; many players and payers, few pray-ers; many singers, few clingers; lots of pastors, few wrestlers; many fears, few tears; much fashion, little passion; many interferers, few intercessors; many writers, but few fighters. **Failing here—in the place of prayer—we fail everywhere!** The ministry of prayer—the highest ministry of all human offices—is open to all.

- Leonard Ravenhill, *Why Revival Tarries*, p. 23.



Ready to Share

Evangelism—Sharing the “Good News” of Jesus Christ.

Definition:

Witnessing: *It is sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results up to God. Witnessing, in its broadest sense, is simply telling what you know and what you have experienced in Christ.*

"We cannot stop speaking of what we have seen and heard."

- Acts 4:20

Word Study: Our word, “Evangelism” comes from the Greek word *ευαγγελιον*.

Eu- means “good”, *-αγγελ-* means “to tell” (we get our word *angel* or *messenger* from this word), and ending, *-ιον* places this word in a “mood” that indicates “this is real and personal”.

"Why should we witness?"

1. It is the only way people will come to know Christ.
2. We want to see the benefits of a life with Christ passed on to others.
3. By sharing our faith, we grow and mature.
4. God commanded it.

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

- Matthew 28:19-20 (NASB)

Jesus, in His last command, said that we are to be witnesses unto Him. He died to purchase eternal life for all who would trust in Him, and we must share the Light of Life. Oh, if we could but see a friend, a loved one, an acquaintance, a business partner, five minutes after their death, we would surely lament if we had not told them of the [Jesus].

- Dr. D. James Kennedy ⁴

⁴Morgan, Robert J. quoting Dr. D. James Kennedy: *Nelson's Annual Preacher's Sourcebook: 2003 Edition*. Electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002, S. 160.

"What makes for an effective witness?"

Witnessing involves two components. If you try to witness without both, your witness will be hollow. Words form the content of the message, but our lives (i.e., walk) serve to validate the message in the mind of the unbeliever:

1. Your walk.

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

- Matthew 5:16 (NASB)

2. Your words...

Sharing the Good News—*Made Very Simple!*

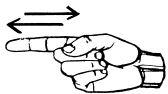


1. God Cares—God really loves you and has a great plan for your life.

Alternate phrases: God loves you ... God sees and cares... God knows... God is still on His throne

John 10:10 (PME) - "(Jesus said) I came that you might have a full life, and that you might have it more abundantly."

John 3:16 (NASB95) -¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (Greek - Lit. "The life of the ages")



2. All have sinned—All people (including you and me) have sinned and missed God's Plan for their lives.

Alternate phrases: We have all mess up... We all have a past... Everyone fails... Only God was perfect...

Romans 3:23 (TLB) -²³ Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious [plan]...

1 John 1:8 (TLB) -⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth.



3. Jesus died for us!—Jesus paid the price for our sins by giving His life on the cross.

Alternate phrases: God did something only He could do... God proved his love...

Romans 5:8 (NASB95) -⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Corinthians 15:5 (NASB95) -³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures ...



4. We must make a commitment to Christ—We can discover God's great plan for our lives by committing our lives to Christ.

Alternate phrases: We must surrender our lives to Christ... We must make Jesus *Lord of all* or *He's not Lord at all*.

Romans 10:9 (PME) – If you openly admit with your own lips that Jesus is the Lord, and if you believe in your own heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Acts 4:12 (NASB95) -¹² “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name [but Jesus] under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”



5. We are weak—We cannot save ourselves by “doing good things”—it’s not possible to get to heaven except through Jesus Christ.

Alternate phrases: There is nothing we can do to save ourselves... Our goodness makes this earth a better place but does *not* secure a perfect Heaven and in imperfect person named _____, only God's grace and kindness does that... It you sinned just once an hour, you'd have 600,000 sins to your account...

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NCV) - ⁸... you have been saved by grace through believing. You did not save yourselves; it was a gift from God. ⁹It was not the result of your own efforts ...

John 14:6 (NASB95) -⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Romans 10:9, NIV - ⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.



6. If a persons makes Jesus their Lord, they win—but, if they reject Christ, they lose.

Alternate phrases: If today finds you “finding Christ”, today is your best day... I want this for you... Do this...

Romans 10:13 (NASB95) -¹³ for “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

1 Timothy 2:5 (TLB) -⁵ ... God is on one side and all the people on the other side, and Christ Jesus, himself man, is between them to bring them together ...

Theological Foundation and Definition:

Gospel: **All** men are guilty of sin before God. The penalty for sin is death—eternal separation from God. But because of His great love for us, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to take the penalty of our sin on Himself when He died on the cross. Three days later He was resurrected from the dead and is alive today and forever. If any person will repent of his or her sinful way of life, and have faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and able to save him from eternal death, he or she **will be saved**.

Acts 5:17-33, NASB95 - ¹⁷ But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy. ¹⁸ They laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public jail. ¹⁹ But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said, ²⁰ **"Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life."**

²¹ Upon hearing this, they entered into the temple about daybreak and began to teach. Now when the high priest and his associates came, they called the Council together, even all the Senate of the sons of Israel, and sent orders to the prison house for them to be brought. ²² But the officers who came did not find them in the prison; and they returned and reported back, ²³ saying, "We found the prison house locked quite securely and the guards standing at the doors; but when we had opened up, we found no one inside." ²⁴ Now when the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them as to what would come of this. ²⁵ But someone came and reported to them, "The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!" ²⁶ Then the captain went along with the officers and proceeded to bring them back without violence (for they were afraid of the people, that they might be stoned). ²⁷ When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, ²⁸ saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." ²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰ "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. ³¹ "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. ³² "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him." ³³ But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick and intended to kill them.

✠ Charles Wesley said about his own salvation experience: ***"My chains fell off! My heart was free! I rose, went forth, and followed Thee!"*** What, then, are we to do after we've been delivered? What are our instructions? The angel's words are short and sweet: **"Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."** ⁵

1. Go...

- These are the first letters of the "GOspel."
- Jesus told the missionaries in Matthew 10 to GO to the lost sheep of Israel.
- Jesus told John's disciples to GO and tell John what they had heard and seen.
- Jesus told the demon possessed man to GO home and tell his friends what He had done.
- Jesus told the seventy in Luke 10 to GO as lambs among wolves.
- He told the wedding servants to GO into the highways and byways, inviting others to the banquet.
- Jesus told those at the tomb to GO with the news.
- Jesus tells the church to GO into all the world.

Matthew 28:19-20, NASB95 - ¹⁹ *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

- Where does Christ want you to GO with the gospel?

2. Stand...

We're to **stand** firm in the faith, to **stand** against the schemes of the devil, to **stand** fast in the liberty with which Christ has set us free, to **stand** girded with truth, to **stand** fast in one spirit—and having done all, to **stand**. The angel meant: "Plant your feet, your shoulders back, your head high, your jaw set. Don't be intimidated, but take a **stand**."

3. Speak...

We live amid unprecedented communications technology, but the most effective way of spreading the gospel is still one teenager sharing with another, one homemaker with another, one golfing partner telling another about Christ. ***One friend with one friend—sharing the good news of Christ!*** ⁶

Have you shared your message of "good news" with anyone recently?

⁵ Morgan, Robert J.: *Nelson's Annual Preacher's Sourcebook: 2003 Edition*. Electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002, S. 273.

⁶ Ibid. S. 274.

"How do you witness?" (Introductory)

1. Test the waters with "neutral" statements and/or words.

Example: *"Oh really, I know a lady at our church that does that."*

2. Ask for permission (casually) to share about your life (via a testimony.)

Example: *"Jane, may I share with you something very important to me about my life?"*, or, *"Can I shoot straight with you about something?"* Or, *Jane, I want you to know something, okay?"*

- A *brief* testimony consists of three components:

① Your life before Christ (and how you realized your need for Christ.)

② How you met Christ.

"A made the most important decision a person makes..."

③ Your life *now* with Christ.

3. Ask for a response to your testimony by asking two questions:

Example: *"Jane, have you ever had an experience like that?"*

Other suggestions:

"Jane, would you say you have made Christ Lord of your life or are you still on that journey?" ...

"Jane, if you were to die today, do you know for certain that God would let you into heaven?"...

"Jane, if you were to stand before God and He were to ask, 'why should I let you into my Haven?' What would you say?"

4. Ask for permission to share what you have learned about God.

Example: *"Can I share with you some things we are learning at our church?"*

5. Share the "plan of salvation" and seek a response.

Seeking the response (a.k.a. “drawing the net”)

Things to say

1. We must individually receive Christ into our hearts to be the Lord of our lives. We do this through prayer. Prayer is simply talking to God. **Have you ever prayed and made Jesus the Lord of Your Life?**
2. If you have never prayed and asked Christ into your heart, we hope that right now will be the time you accept God's wonderful plan for your life. **Would you like to know what it is that God wants you to do?**

Things to Know: “What does all this mean?”

Answer: We must pray and individually receive Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord; it is the only way we can make peace with Him and enter into a personal relationship with Christ.

The Two Most Important Questions:

1. Is there anything keeping you from receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord?

• What if a person rejects what I say?

Realize two things:

1. They are not rejecting you as a person. In their minds they are merely disagreeing with an opinion you hold. They are actually rejecting Christ.
2. Evangelism is a process, not an event, or more accurately, a process that leads to an event.

2. Would you like to receive Christ right now as Lord of your life?

You can receive Christ into your heart as Lord through prayer. (Prayer is talking to God.) God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I need you. I know that you have a wonderful plan for my life. I also know that my sin has kept me from your great plan. Please forgive the sin in my life. I know you died on the cross for me. I now commit my life to you by asking you to come into my heart. I receive you as my Lord. Take control of my life and make me the kind of person you want me to be. Thank you for coming into my life as Lord, and forgiving all my sin, and giving me eternal life."

- Amen!

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart?

If it does, pray this prayer right now and Christ will come into your life as Lord, just as He promised!

Important things to remember about witnessing:

- Remember, it's your job to witness. It is God's job to convert people.
- Depend on the Holy Spirit to work supernaturally. Before you talk to a person about God, talk to God about that person.
- Don't look at people as "projects." Look at people through the eyes of Christ.
- As you witness, be pleasant, casual, friendly, and positive and never be negative.
- Avoid getting into arguments.
- Avoid "chasing rabbits."
- Be sensitive and convey that you really care.
- Use the scripture and/or something written they can have when you are finished.
- If you are asked a question that stumps you, say this: *"I don't know the answer to that, but I'll try to find out for you."*
- Don't preach.
- Be yourself.
- Practice "long-term" witnessing habits: (e.g. pray daily for opportunities to witness, maintain a lifestyle that is above reproach, don't isolate yourself from non-Christians, practice and practice.)
- Remember that "friend to friend" witnessing is the most effective form of witnessing in the world—and, it is biblical! Pray, wait, share!

"Getting Started" Sharing the Good News

Many set their "sights" too high. E.g., "I must reach a city" or, "I must reach my whole neighborhood." We must not forget that God is ultimately responsible for drawing people to Him. We are only the "witnesses" that take to good news to them. I believe it would be better to think in terms of reaching one...just one... at least one.

"Each One, Reach One" have become a theme here at SRBC. It basically asked each member (or each family) to commit to reaching one person (or one family) for the cause of Christ (either through salvation of church membership. You friends represent the greatest opportunity for you to share Christ with others. Remember, "Friendship evangelism" is the most effective means or reaching others for Christ.



Once you have your short testimony and the Gospel presentation ready to go, get started.

Here are some suggestions for getting started with the most important task any person have before them, the privilege or sharing the living-giving news of Jesus Christ.

A. Make a list of five people you know who evidence a need for Christ.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

B. Start to pray for them everyday that you will have the opportunity to share with them.

C. Prayerfully plan some specific "friendship activities" with each of these persons.

D. Take opportunities to use "neutral words" and see if you can get a conversation started.

E. Send them Christ-honoring Christmas, Easter, or Friendship cards.

F. Invite them to a special church event or service.

G. Give them a good example of what Christianity is about. (e.g., meet some need in their life, pray for their children, remember their "important days", ask about their life story, be their friend, tell them you "value their friendship and pray for them daily," etc.

H. Be ready when God opens the door. ***"Their eternal lives are at stake!"***

Sharing the Good News in Specific Situations

A. Children

It is estimated that most people have their greatest openness to the Gospel when they are young. The latest “stats” also indicate that when a person reaches 18 years of age, their chances of being reached for Christ drops considerably. Therefore, children represent the richest and most important aspect of the mission field around us. Here are some things to remember when sharing with children.

- Get on their level by sitting near them.
- Keep your words on their level.
- Be as short and concise as possible.
- Be excited and be real—it is “good news”.
- Draw pictures and write down simple words for them to keep.
- Document dates, places, and decisions—it will help them “fight doubt” later.
- If at all possible, have the parents involved in this important process.
- Use a simplified “Hand memory hook” presentation.
- If you have time (it is important), review the “Once You Give Your Life to Christ” material.

I use the following document when I talk with children about Christ. You can download these documents from www.SouthReno.com by going to “Pastor’s Corner”, then to “Pastor’s Guide Sheets” and select the document titled, “Good News for All Kids” (It may be in the archives section). If you don’t have the document immediately available, take a plane sheet of paper and have the child draw their hand by tracing it with a pen. Use it to write simplified points of the Gospel Story. When it comes time to “drawing the net”, make sure your “sinners prayer” is very, very simple.

A blank copy of the “Good News for All Kids” and “Once You Give Your Life to Christ” is located on the next two pages.

1. Begin by tracing the hand of the child and placing very simple points of the Gospel on each finger. Be sure and point out this “Good News” is for them! ↓
2. Circle “your” and underline “forever” for emphasis. Be sure and document when a child receives Christ. Then call Grandma and tell her the good news! →

Good News for All Kids!

Good News for JOE

- 1. God loves you!**
John 3:16, NIV - "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son ..."
- 2. You/all have sinned!** ("done things wrong")
Romans 3:23, NIV - "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
- 3. Christ died for you!**
Romans 5:8, NIV - "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for the one."
- 4. You need God—and U can have Him!**
Romans 10:9, NIV - "If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved."
- 5. You cannot "save" yourself.**
Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV - "For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it."

Good News: You can have Him!
So, What Do You Do Now?

If you want to, you can pray right now and give your life to Jesus Christ. You do this by talking to God and giving Him your life:

Lord Jesus, thank you for loving me. I admit I have sinned against You, Lord. Thank you for giving Your life for me. I want to make You the Lord of my life right now. Please come into my heart and be my Lord and Savior forever! - Amen!

What Should You Do Now?

- 1. Tell somebody.** "We called Grandma @ 9:00 AM to tell her!"
- 2. Be baptized!**
Now that Jesus lives in your heart, let Him give you the courage to obey God by being baptized. Baptism is that thing we do when we let everybody know we believe in Jesus. It will encourage you, it will encourage the Church, and it will please God.
- 3. Get involved in your church (if you're not already!)**
- 4. Pray everyday to God.**
- 5. Read your Bible.**

Important Dates To Remember

Place I accepted Christ as Lord	My Home in Reno
Date I accepted Christ as Lord	July 17, 2007
Place I was baptized	SKBC
Date I was baptized	August 12, 2007

Once You Give Your Life to Christ...

- 1. Christ will live in your heart ... forever!**
Revelation 3:20, NASB95 - "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him ... [Notice these words are in red ink, it's because Jesus said them!]"
- 2. All your sins are forgiven ... forever!**
Colossians 1:13-14, GN - "He [that's Jesus] rescued us ... 14 in Him we have ... the forgiveness of sins."
- 3. You are part of the family of God ... forever!**
John 1:12, GNT - "To those who ... did receive him and believed in him; so He gave them the right to become God's children."
- 4. This gift is just for you ... forever!**
Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV - "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."
John 5:24, NASB95 - "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."
John 10:27-28, NIV - "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand."
Ephesians 1:13-14, NIV - "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory."

What Should You Do Now?

- 1. Tell somebody.** "We called Grandma @ 9:00 AM to tell her!"
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Good News for All Kids!



This "PASTOR'S GUIDE SHEET" was developed by Dr. Joe K. Taylor, Senior Pastor, South Reno Baptist Church, Reno, NV • jtaylor@southreno.com
Scriptures are printed verbatim with references noted but highlights and underlines are added.

Good News for _____!

1. God loves you!

John 3:16, NIV - ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son ...

2. Only God is perfect, we are not.

Romans 3:23, NIV - ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

3. Christ died for you!

Romans 5:6, NIV - ⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for you.

4. You need God—and U can have Him!

Romans 10:9, GNT - ⁹ If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved.

5. You cannot "save" yourself.

Ephesians 2:8-9, GNT - ⁹ For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it.

Good News: *You can have Him!*

So...What Do You Do Now?

If you want to, you can pray right now and give your life to Jesus Christ. You do this by talking to God and giving Him your life:

You can pray a prayer just like this one here below—if you mean it!

Lord Jesus, thank you for loving me, I admit I have sinned against You, Lord. Thank you for giving Your life for me. I want to make You the Lord of my life right now. Please come into my heart and be my Lord and Savior forever! - Amen!

Once You Give Your Life to Christ...

1. Christ will live in your heart ... forever!

Revelation 3:20, NASB95 - ²⁰ *'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him ...* [Notice these word are in red ink, it's because Jesus said them!!!!]

2. All your sins are forgiven ... forever!

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3. You are part of the family of God ... forever!

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What Should You Do Now?

1. Tell somebody.

Tell your family ... your church ... and your friends—*they will be so happy for you!*

2. Be baptized!

Now that Jesus lives in your heart, let Him give you the courage to obey God by being baptized. Baptism is that thing we do when we let everybody know we believe in Jesus. It will encourage you, it will encourage the Church, and it will please God.

3. Get involved in your church (if you're not already)!

4. Pray everyday to God.

5. Read your Bible.

Important Dates
To Remember

- Place I accepted Christ as Lord _____
- Date I accepted Christ as Lord _____
- Place I was baptized _____
- Date I was baptized _____

B. Hospice and “pre-death” situations.

Following a genuine show of concern, I ask, *“What do you think the Lord is saying to you in this situation.”* No matter what they say, I respond by saying, *“If you felt the Lord was calling you to leave this old Earth, would you be ready?”* No matter what they say, I give a short testimony, a brief gospel presentation and then ask them, *“Have you ever had a moment like that when you asked Christ to come into your life?”* I will sometime interrupt any casual dialog by saying, *“John, nothing is more important than being right with God—nothing else matters!”*

C. Those in a crisis.

Listen sensitively to their words, thoughts, and fears will often “open the door” for us to ministry to someone. Jesus always met physical needs when sharing the Gospel with those around Him. Physical needs include food, transportation, acknowledging a loss/emergency, childcare, money, holding a persons hand, etc. We know that the real need is a person’s need for Jesus. God will allow us to meet real physical needs to help open the door to help us meet real eternal needs. Once physical needs are met (or as they are being met), we can begin sharing the Gospel in someway.

Christian Cards

Spiritual letter of concern

Flowers

Financial gifts to them / organization

Practical helps (food, child care, house cleaning, “Home prep”, etc.)

Placing them on your church’s prayer ministry

Reminding them that you are praying for them

Praying with them

At an appointed moment, say, *“John, I have watched you live them this storm over the past few weeks and though I can’t carry every one of your burdens, I have truly tried to do what I can to help you in this terrible ordeal/loss by doing what can meet. Is there anything else I can do to help you? I mean that, what can I do for you right now to help you more?”* Listen to what they say. At some point say something like this. There are two directions you can take.

① *“John, the storms of life help up realize what is and is not important. Sometime, I want to talk briefly about something very important. There is something very important to know about me and I want you to know it. I feel I have grown closer to you in this crisis and I want you to know something about me? Can we talk soon?”*

② *“John, times like these help up realize what is and is not important. I want you to know something. When I was a young man... (share you brief testimony).”* Then say, *“God cares for you, John. He truly cares. ... (share the Gospel with John)”*. Following the presentation, give John an opportunity to receive Christ by saying this. *“John, we all need Christ to go to Heaven once this life ends but I feel you will need Christ to make it through this ordeal. John, nothing else really matters than being right with God. I want you to receive Christ right now. I made peace with God by...”*

D. The Waiter or Waitress at Your Table

Just wanting to “spread a little seed”, think about this. Be friendly, learn their name, and thank them for their hospitality. At some point prior to your meal being served, say this:

“Heidi, thank you, again for being so awesome. Heidi, we are Christians and in just a few minutes, we are going to thank God for our blessings—including you and our food. Is there any other matter we can pray about—just for you?”

Don’t make a big deal of it. Just a kind and gracious offer. Write the name down and remember to pray for them by name a situation. As you have opportunity, visit the same restaurant and ask to be seated in there section.

Oh, and tip graciously. Unfortunately, Christians have a reputation for being poor tippers.

E. Those in a major “life event” (i.e., retirement, a wedding, a new birth, etc.)

Remember that the most fertile soil is for those whom you know “as friends”—i.e., friendship evangelism. Please remember this truth:

“A friend who knows Christ becomes a lifeline of hope to a friend who does not know Christ.”

Witnessing for Christ means that you become part of another person’s story. Your friend is “away” from God just like a sheep was from the fold, the coin was from the purse, and the son was from the father’s home. Major life event help us become part of His story in their lives.

- Acknowledge the event with great joy and fanfare.
- Send flowers, Christian cards, or letters of congratulations—document the event!
- Buy a book for “gift” that commemorates the event with a personal note attached.
- Set a time to verbally acknowledge your happiness for them.

Call them and say you would like to drop by for just few minutes. Being “face-to-face” in this is important. When you get there, present them with some sort of gift acknowledging the “life event”. Say this:

John, the Bible says that we are to “rejoice with those who rejoice”. I am so excited about _____ (the life event.) I want you to know that I value our friendship and count it a privilege to see this take place in your life. John, I pray for you every day—I have for some time now. I have yet another reason to value our friendship. Thank you for letting me play a small part in this—at least I get to see you go through this great time. God bless you, John. Hey, I have a small gift to commemorate this event. Here you go! (Give them the gift.) Again, congratulations. John, what can I do you? Seriously, what can I do for you—I want to do something for you? I would love to help you.

At some point, you seek to share the gospel, find that “divine moment” and say this:

John, we have been through some good times and some tough times—together, as friends. As I have said before, I deeply value our friendship. I feel our friendship has come to that place where I want you to know something about me. [share your testimony, then, share the gospel presentation].

F. Church visitation

This material will deal with “you” (representing the church) paying a home visit to someone who visited our church—most likely in the past few days. Here are some important beginning statements.

- You will be visiting those who visited us—we already have “common ground”.
- They filled out a “Friendship Card” and gave us some information. They may have asked for specific information (e.g., to know more information about our church, etc.)
- Consider going with someone who has “OTJT”—learn from them.
- I always call before making my visit.

Example of the phone visit

Hello, this is Joe Taylor from South Reno Baptist Church. I was looking for Jack or Jill. ... Oh, hello Jack, I believe you paid us a visit this past Sunday. We were so honored to have you as a guest, thank you being with us. It is a big deal to us that you were there. I hope you had a good experience...

Jack, I have some information and a small gift that we would like to get in your hands. It will help you get to know us a little better and it give us an opportunity to say “thank you for coming”. It will also communicate that we do care. I just need a moment to drop it by but I wanted to do that personally. Would tonight work? I don’t intend to stay long at all. How about 7:00ish. If I am more that a few minutes late, I’ll call you, okay? Can I make sure that I have your address correct? I also want to leave you my number in case something comes up and you need to contact me for any reason.

I will look forward to it. Have a good day.

Here are some things not to do, when making a home visit.

- Don’t be late
- Don’t stay long
- Don’t pray in front of the house
- Don’t make the visit about “you”
- Don’t park in the drive way
- Don’t walk in the grass
- Don’t get their mail or paper without permission
- Don’t be “unaware” about SRBC, its histories, its beliefs, or its ministries.

Here are some things to do when making a home visit.

- Do stand back from the door once you have knocked on it (so they can see you).
- Do take somebody with you. (It is better for everyone).
- Do notice what the yard and house tell you about the people.
- Do remember their names (without looking at the friendship card).
- Do be careful with the animals.
- Enjoy yourself!

Opening Statement at the Door

Jack, I am Joe Taylor. I talked to you on the phone. Thank you for letting me come over; may I come in for a moment? [Go in and complement the home, if possible]. Thank you for welcoming me into you home. I am so honored to be here. As I said, I am not staying all night, okay?

[Begin to notice what the home tells you about Jack (i.e., toys, pictures, certificates, memorabilia, etc.).]

Jack, tell me about you and your family... [Listen intently and enjoyably.]

Jack, how did you hear about South Reno Baptist Church?

Is there any specific ministry you would like to hear about?

Are there any questions you have that I need to know about?

Jack, I want you to know why I am a part of South Reno Baptist Church.

Father—they help me know the Lord in a life changing way. (Preaching, worship, SS, etc.)

Family—my family life is better because of SRBC.

Friends—they truly are a “friendly church that cares”—about my family and me.

For Joe—during my best times, they are there; during the worst of times, they are there for me. But, as I said, most importantly, they help me know the Lord.

Jack, seeing that we are talking about the church, would you say you know Jesus personally—as Lord? Or, would you say you are still on a journey to know God?

[If given, take the opportunity to share your testimony and share the gospel.]

Some other questions to consider:

Jack, in your personal opinion, what do you think it takes for a person to go to Heaven when they die?

Jack, what brought you to SRBC? Are you looking for something specifically?

Jack, here is that material I talked to you about over the phone. It is some information about South Reno Baptist Church. Jack, what are you looking for in a church home?

May I pray for you before I leave? How can I pray for you?

Following the visit:

- Write a brief thank you note to thank them for allowing you to be in their home.
- Make a follow up call and mention something specific about your visit.
- Follow up on any questions that came up during your visit.
- Pray for them—if you said you would pray about something, do it and let them know you did!
- Find them at church and welcome them—calling them by name.

Not to decide is to decide. Delay carried to its ultimate end is the same as rejection. With deep compassion and concern we must let our friends know that God's word is TODAY and the devils' word is TOMORROW.

– Leighton Ford⁷

“Now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.” - 2 Corinthians 6.2

⁷ Leighton Ford, *Good News is for Sharing*, Elgin, Illinois: David C. Cook Publishing Co., pp. 165-166.

C. Answering the Tough Questions—*if it is not just “grief statements”*

“Why is there evil and suffering in the world?”

Answer: Man—not God—is responsible for the suffering in the world. God created our world perfect—as in *The Perfect Garden of Eden*. Man chose to leave the perfect garden when he sinned. Because of man’s sin, we live in a fallen world where life will not be fair; it will not always make sense, or be fully understandable. The “fallen world” is a witness to you and me that we need a perfect Savior.

“Why did God make us if He knew we would sin?”

Answer: God thought you and I were worth the risk. I love my wife dearly but if she did not have *free will* and all I had to do was push a button to get her to kiss me and say “I love you”, what kind of love would that be? To be meaningful, love has to be given freely. God won’t break the door of your heart down and force you to be right with Him. He did die on the cross to remedy all of your sins.

“I am a good person. How good of a person do you have to be to get into Heaven?”

Answer: As good as Jesus was—perfect. You’re being good does make a difference in this world—thank you for that. Nevertheless, being good—even real good—does not get you into the next world—Heaven—unless you are perfect even as Jesus was perfect. We sometimes believe that because we are better than some we are *good enough*, in reality we are *good for nothing* apart from Christ living in us as Lord. He is the only way to Heaven.

“What about the other religions? Don’t we all believe in the same god?”

Answer: You have asked a profound question. You have to decide how you are going to decide that “big question.” I want them to be right with God. I do not want anybody to miss heaven. However, to answer that question, I have decided to see what God’s word says. I have to let Holy Scripture tell me—not I tell it—the correct answer. The Bible says, “Jesus is the only way to God.” Jesus himself said, “*No man comes to the Father but through me*” (John 14:6). Few religions believe “we are all right”. Almost all religions are “work based”—if you live a good life, you go to heaven. Only Christianity is “faith based”, if you believe in God and place your faith in Him you can go to Heaven.

“What about the hypocrites in church?”

Answer: I have been around the church all my life. Let me tell you what I know. The church is made up of imperfect people that for the most part, know it. For every one hypocrite—that person that tries to convince everyone he is something he is not—there are 100+ awesome followers of Christ. Are these *followers* perfect? No. Are the sincere? Yes! They sincerely know when they mess up and sincerely try to live their lives as best they can in the power of God. Don’t hide behind those very few, rare hypocrites. Don’t let a fool make you a fool. Don’t let a fool keep you from Christ.

Alternate answer: If you are going to hide from something—in this case, God—you have to be smaller than what you are hiding behind. Don’t demean yourself smaller than a hypocrite. Unless you are worse than a hypocrite, don’t hide behind one. Are there hypocrites in the church? Yes, most churches have a few. Every organization has hypocrites...hospitals, dentist, plumbers, mechanics, grocery stores, etc. But you wouldn’t avoid a business just because a few people there are hypocrites, would you? The biggest lie on the planet is that all the people in church are hypocrites. That’s not true. The church is filled with dear, wonderful people. If the church was filled with perfect people, I wouldn’t be able to invite you there. I would even be able to attend myself.



The Reliability of Holy Scripture?

Here is the Insight: All religions live by their “bibles”. All religions preach their “bibles.” All religions believe their “bibles” are the only true “bibles.” The big questions before us is this:

Whose “bible” is the true bible?

In this session we will discover why our Bible is really the true Bible by which we can base our beliefs!

Most people who have problems accepting the Bible as fully inspired and reliable have never read the Bible and/or have prejudices against it based on what they have heard from critics. The Bible says this about itself:

"All scripture is God-breathed. . ."

- 2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)

"But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

- 2 Peter 1:20-21 (NASB)

Why Can We Trust the Bible?

There are many reasons you can know that the Bible is reliable and worthy of your obeying it. Here are only a few reasons why you can completely trust the Word of God:

1. Fulfillment of Prophecy: Did you know that some three hundred Old Testament predictions found their fulfillment in Jesus Christ alone. For example: The Birth at Bethlehem; prophesied: Micah 5:2, fulfilled: Matthew 2:1. Riding a Donkey; prophesied: Zechariah 9:9, fulfilled: Mark 11:1-10. Cleansing of the Temple; prophesied: Psalm 69:9, fulfilled: John 2:13ff. Pierced hands and feet; prophesied: Psalm 22:16, fulfilled: John 19:33)

2. Archeological Evidence: Archeology confirms that the Bible is true. Old Testament - Existing O.T. texts from a millennium ago have been cross examined with the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint, the Targum and Talmud and the relatively recently discovered Dead Sea Scrolls. The results? More confidence than ever that the Old Testament we have today is virtually identical with the original. New Testament - The quantity of manuscripts is one of the most overwhelming evidence of accuracy. We have more than 5,000 ancient Greek manuscripts, more than 8,000 ancient Latin manuscripts, plus about 1,000 additional ancient manuscripts in other languages. No other writings from antiquity have anywhere near as much textual support pointing us accurately toward the original writing. Physical Evidence - Scientists in Turkey have discovered a large boat 1,600 feet above the tree line. Examination, though the land is very treacherous, found it made of gopher wood—not native to Turkey—with which the Bible indicates the Ark was built by Noah. It is the same dimensions as God told Noah to build the Ark—just a coincidence? No way, the Word of God is true!

3. Remarkable Unity and Coherence: The Bible was written by some 40 different authors over a period of 1,500 years. The Bible is a compilation of sixty-six separate books, yet its message from cover to cover is unified. There are no contradictions, and its theme—redemption—is singular and constant. NOTE: No other bible, including the Book of Mormon, the Bible of the Jehovah Witnesses, or the Koran, can stand up to the rigorous standards of reliability that the Bible can. Praise the Lord!

4. The Test of Time: The Bible has stood the test of time (against atheism, paganism, indifference, and false prophets, etc.) History: According to the 20th Century Encyclopedia of Religions and Knowledge, there have been over 2,000 different bibles, representing over 2,000 religions that simply stopped existing since the mid 1800s.

5. Universal Demand: The Bible has sold more copies than ANY other book in the history of the world. It is estimated that there are 6½ Bibles for every person in the United States alone.

6. Denunciation of Sin: Evil in all its forms is neither hidden nor tolerated in the Holy Scriptures. Other "bibles" talk about man being good, and getting better and better. But the real Bible tells us about our true condition without God. ALL other religions convey man as becoming better—like gods of their own world. The Bible says that man without God becomes worse and worse. What does our world teach us? [This is really an important "test" of the reliability of scripture, particularly at it relates to other bibles.]

7. Its Ability to Transform Lives: From the first generation, Christians were accused of turning the world upside down (Acts 17:6). The power of the Gospel revealed in Scripture has changed tens of millions of people's lives for several thousand years. Our factual experience demonstrates that God's Word has the power to transform lost people utterly marred by sin.

The Bible is the only book that gives solid answers to life's ultimate questions. It fully answers the questions:

- Who am I?
- Where did I come from?
- Why am I here?
- What is the purpose of my existence?

Someone has put it this way:

"This book, the Bible, contains the mind of God, the state of man, and the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy. Its precepts are binding. Its histories are true and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to direct you, practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, ruffle the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It's given to you in life, will be open at judgment, and remembered forever."

"It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest labor, and condemns all who trifle with its Holy contents."

- Author Unknown

⌘ How did the early church determine what books would be included in Scriptures? ⌘

In trying to determine if a book of letter was inspired by God, the early church used a number of criteria:

1. It had to be written by an apostle.
2. Its contents had to be consistent with other recognized Scripture.
3. It had to have been recognized and accepted by the early church.
4. It had to conform to the same high standards set by other Scripture.
5. People's lives had to have been changed by it.

Other Considerations...

2 Peter 1:16-21, NASB95 - ¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"— ¹⁸and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. ²⁰But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, ²¹for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Why do I believe the Holy Bible is True?

Because, (based on 2 Peter 1:16-21) it is a reliable collection of historical documents written down by eyewitnesses during the lifetime of other eyewitnesses that report to us supernatural events that took place in fulfillment of specific prophecies; they claimed that that their writings were divine rather than human in origin!

- Dr. Voddie Baucham

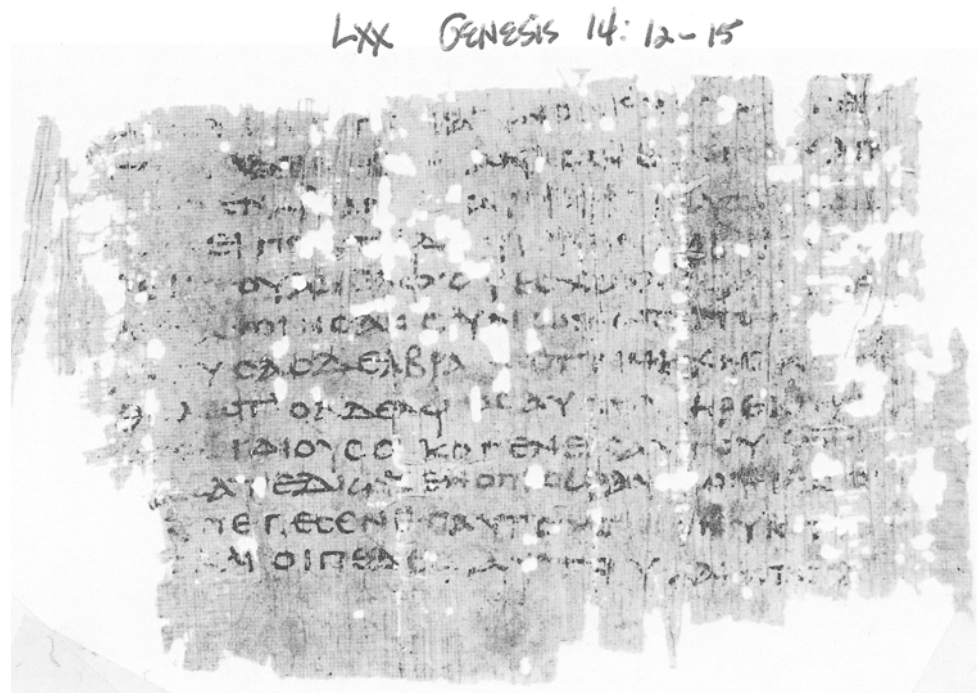
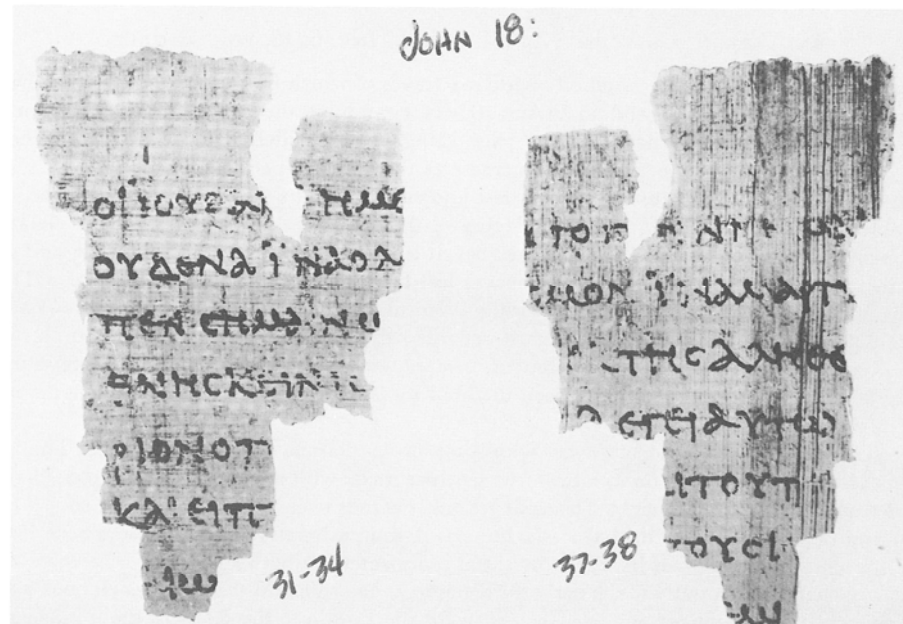


Notes from Dr. Baucham's Video:

Palaeography: Below is a copy of a very old manuscript of the Bible:

Palaeography is the science that studies ancient writing, preserved on papyrus, parchment, or paper, occasionally on potsherds, wood, or waxed tablets.

Palaeography has three aims: First, developing the practical ability of reading and dating the manuscripts; Second, tracing the history of handwriting (forms, style of letters, punctuation, abbreviations, etc.) and third, analyzing the layout of the written page and the make-up of ancient book forms. Each of these three aims, when fully understood, then gives one the ability to authenticate the reliability of a record.



A Look at the Greek and Hebrew Bibles:

309	ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΝ	18,23-34
	κεν ράπισμα τῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰπών· οὕτως ἀποκρίνη τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ; 23 ἠπεκρίθη αὐτῷ Ἰησοῦς· εἰ κακῶς ἐλάλησα, μαρτύρησον περὶ τοῦ κακοῦ· εἰ δὲ καλῶς, τί με δέρεις;	19,3 Ex 22,27 8,46
173 X	24 ἀπέστειλεν Γοῦν αὐτὸν ὁ Ἀννας δεδεμένον πρὸς Καϊάφαν τὸν ἀρχιερέα. ²	13 Mt 26,31
174 I	25 Ἦν δὲ Σίμων Πέτρος ἐστῶς καὶ θερμαινόμενος. εἰπον οὖν αὐτῷ· μὴ καὶ σὺ ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ εἶ; ἡρνήσατο ἐκεῖνος καὶ εἶπεν· οὐκ εἰμί. 26 λέγει εἰς ἐκ τῶν δούλων τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, συγγενῆς ὧν οὐκ ἀπέκογεν Πέτρος τὸ ὅτιον· οὐκ ἐγὼ σε εἶδον ἐν τῷ κήπῳ μετ' αὐτοῦ; 27 πάλιν οὖν ἡρνήσατο ὁ Πέτρος, καὶ εὐθέως ἀλέκτωρ ἐφώνησεν.	25-27: Mt 26, 69-75 Mc 14,66-72 L 22,56-62 18 I
176 I	28 Ἀγούσιν οὖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ Καϊάφα εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον· ἦν δὲ πρωΐ· * καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐκ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον, ἵνα μὴ μιανθῶσιν ὁ ἀλλὰ φάγωσιν τὸ πᾶσχα.	13,38 28: Mt 27,2 Mc 15,1 L 23,1
177 X	29 ἐξῆλθεν οὖν ὁ Πιλᾶτος ἔξω πρὸς αὐτοὺς· καὶ φησὶν· τίνα κατηγορίαν φέρετε ὁ [κατὰ] τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τούτου; 30 ἀπεκρίθησαν καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· εἰ μὴ ἦν οὗτος ὁ κακὸν ποιῶν, οὐκ ἂν ἴσοι παρεδώκαμεν αὐτόν. 31 εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Πιλᾶτος· λάβετε τὸν αὐτὸν ὑμεῖς καὶ κατὰ τὸν νόμον ὁ μὴ κρίνατε αὐτόν. εἶπον αὐτῷ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι· ἡμῖν οὐκ ἐξεστὶν ἀποκτεῖναι οὐδένα· 32 ἵνα ὁ λόγος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ πληρωθῇ ὃν εἶπεν σημαίνων ποίῳ θανάτῳ ἥμελλον ἀποθνήσκειν.	19,14 29-38: Mt 27, 11-14 Mc 15,2-5 L 23,2-5
178 I	33 Εἰσῆλθεν οὖν πάλιν εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον ὁ Πιλᾶτος καὶ ἐφώνησεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν· καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· σὺ εἰ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; 34 ἠπεκρίθη τῷ Ἰησοῦς·	19,6s Act 18,15 3,14! • 21,19!
179 X		12,13!

23 ἁπ. αὐ. ο Ἰησ. A C³ D^s Ψ 0250 f¹ 33 M^h sy^h | ο δε Ἰησ. ειπεν αυτω N W f¹³ 579 pc (r¹) | txt B C* L Θ 1241 pc • 24 δε N f¹³ pc r¹ sy^{s-p} sa | - A C³ D^s M^h q ac² | txt B C* L N W Δ Θ Ψ 0250 f¹ 33. 565. 579. 700 al it sy^h pbo | [ad² v. 13] • 27 ο Π. P⁶⁰vid N C² N Θ (f¹³) 33. 209. 892s. 1241 al | - 565 a b e ac² | txt A B C* D^s L W Ψ I M^h • 28 ἁλλ ινα C² L Ψ f^{1,13} 33 M^h it vg^{cl} sy^h pbo | txt P⁶⁰vid N A B C* D^s N W Δ Θ 0250. 565. 579. l 844 pc lat • 29 I 2 4 5 A C³ D^s Ψ 0250 M^h q sy^s | I 2 4 5 3 N f¹³ 579. l 844 | 4 5 l-3 N W ff² | I 2 Θ | txt B C* L f¹ 33. 565. 700 pc vg^{ms} sy^h | ειπεν A D^s Θ 0250 f¹³ M^h | txt P⁶⁶ N B C L W Ψ f¹ 33. 565. 579. l 844 pc | ο† N* B 087vid. 579 pc e | txt P⁶⁶ N² A C D^s L W Θ Ψ f^{1,13} 33 M^h lat • 30 ἁκακον ποιησας N* | κακοποιων C* Ψ 33 pc a | κακοποιος A C³ D^s Θ f^{1,13} M^h lat | txt N² B L W | P⁶⁶ e • 31 ο B C* | τουν P⁶⁶ 892s. l 844 a r¹ vg^{ms} | ημων P⁶⁰ | ο† N* W 087vid f¹ 565. 579. 892s al c | τουν P⁶⁰ N L W Ψ 0109. 0250 f¹³ 33 M^h lat sa^{ms} ac² | δε A D^s K N Θ 087 f¹ 565. 700. 1241 al sy^h sa^{ms} | txt B C e q vg^{ms} sy^{s-p} sa^{ms} pbo bo • 33 2-4 I P⁶⁰vid N A C² Θ (N Ψ) 087 f¹ M^h | 2-4 33. 1424 | txt P⁵²vid.66vid B C* D^s L W Δ 0109 f¹³ 579. l 844 pc latt | □ P⁶⁰ • 34 τ-νατο P⁶⁶ A D^s N W Θ Ψ 087 f¹ 33. 565. 700. 1241 al lat | txt P⁶⁰ N B C L 0109 f¹³ M^h | τ αυτω ο N C³ f¹³ M^h c sy^p sa^{ms} boms | ο A C* D^s N W Θ Ψ 087. 33. 565. 579. 700. 1241. l 844 al | txt B L 0109. l pc sy^h

The Greek Text: Above is a copy of the “printed” Greek Bible with “the Greek apparatus” below that shows the location of the Greeks manuscripts used to produce the translation into English. The “circled” information is the address for scholars on where to look for the oldest manuscripts.

בראשית GENESIS

1 בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: 2 וְהָאָרֶץ
 הָיְתָה תֵהוֹ וְיָבֵהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי
 הַמָּיִם: 3 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי אֹר וַיְהי־אֹר: 4 וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־
 הָאָרֶץ כִּי־טוֹב וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחָשֶׁךְ: 5 וַיִּקְרָא
 אֱלֹהִים לְאֹר יוֹם וּלְחָשֶׁךְ לַיְלָה וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַיְלָה וַיְהי־עֶרֶב וַיְהי־בֹקֶר יוֹם
 אֶחָד: 6 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמָּיִם וַיְהי מְבִדִּיל
 בֵּין מַיִם לַמָּיִם: 7 וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַרְקִיעַ וַיְבָרֶךְ בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֶשֶׁר
 מִתַּחַת לַרְקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לַרְקִיעַ וַיְהי־כֵן: 8 וַיִּקְרָא
 אֱלֹהִים לַרְקִיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהי־עֶרֶב וַיְהי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי: 9
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְוּ הַמָּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־מְקוֹם אֶחָד וַתֵּרָא
 תִּבְשָׁה וַיְהי־כֵן: 10 וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לַיְבָשָׁה אֶרֶץ וּלְמִקְנֶה הַמָּיִם
 קָרָא יָמִים וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב: 11 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תִּרְשָׁא הָאָרֶץ
 יִשָּׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזֵּרַע זָרַע עֵץ פֶּרִי לַמִּינִי אֲשֶׁר זָרַעוּ־בּוֹ
 עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיְהי־כֵן: 12 וַתֵּצֵא הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׁא עֵשֶׂב מִזֵּרַע זָרַע לַמִּינֵהוּ
 וַעֵץ עֵשָׂה פְרִי אֲשֶׁר זָרַעוּ־בּוֹ לַמִּינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב: 13 וַיְהי־
 עֶרֶב וַיְהי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי: 14 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי מְאֹרֶת
 הַיָּמִים וְהַלָּיְלָה וַיְהי וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַמְּאֹרֹת
 וְהַיָּמִים וְשֵׁנִים: 15 וַיְהי לַמְּאֹרֶת הַיָּמִים וְהַלָּיְלָה וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָרֶץ
 וַיְהי־כֵן: 16 וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת־הַמָּאֹר

Cp 1. ¹Mm 1. ²Mm 2. ³Mm 3. ⁴Mm 3139. ⁵Mp sub loco. ⁶Mm 4. ⁷Jer 4,23, cf Mp sub loco. ⁸Hi 38,19. ⁹2 Ch 24,20. ¹⁰Mm 5. ¹¹Mm 6. ¹²Mm 3105. ¹³Hi 28,3. ¹⁴Mm 200. ¹⁵Mm 7. ¹⁶Mm 1431. ¹⁷Mm 2773. ¹⁸Mm 3700. ¹⁹Mm 736. ²⁰Ps 66,6. ²¹Mm 722. ²²Mm 2645. ²³Qoh 6,1.

Cp 1,1 Orig Bpησι(vel Bapησιθ (-σεθ), Samar bārāšit | 6^a huc tr 7^{a-8} cf 9 et 9, 11, 15, 20, 24, 30 || 7^{a-8} cf 6^a; ins כִּי־טוֹב כִּי־טוֹב cf 4,10,12,18,21,31 et 8 (8) || 9^a 9 συναγωγῆς cf מקנה cf 10 מקנה המים || 10^a 10 και συνήχθη τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ὑποκάτω τοῦ οὐρανοῦ εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς αὐτῶν και ὥφθη ἡ ξηρά = הִיבָשָׁה וַתֵּרָא מִקְנֵי־הַמַּיִם וַתֵּרָא הַיְבָשָׁה ! וַיִּקְוּ הַמָּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־מְקוֹמָם וַיֵּרָא אֶחָד וַתֵּרָא תִּבְשָׁה || 11^a 11 עֵשֶׂב c דָּשָׁא || 1 c pc Mss μῶσσε׳ cf 12 || 6^a prb dl cf 12.

The Hebrew Text: Above is a copy of the “printed” Hebrew Bible (called the “*Biblia Hebraica—Stuttgartensia*”) with “the Hebrew apparatus” below that shows the location of the Hebrew manuscripts used to produce the translation into English.

Note: Hebrew is read right to left.

BIBLICAL VIEW OF INSPIRATION: VERBAL PLENARY

Christ's view of the Bible.¹⁸ In determining the nature of biblical inspiration, nothing could be more significant than determining the view Christ held regarding the Scriptures. Certainly no one ought to hold a lower view of Scripture than He held; His view of the Scriptures ought to be the determinant and the norm for other persons' views. That is the foundational argument of R. Laird Harris. In defending the inspiration of the Scriptures he does not use 2 Timothy 3:16 or 2 Peter 1:21 as the primary argument (although he recognizes their validity); he instead argues from the standpoint of Christ's view of the Scriptures.¹⁹

(1) Inspiration of the whole. In His use of the Old Testament Christ gave credence to the inspiration of the entire Old Testament. In Matthew 5:17–18 Christ affirmed that not the smallest letter or stroke would pass from the law until it would be fulfilled. In v. 17 He referred to the law or the prophets, a common phrase designating the entire Old Testament. In this rather strong statement, Jesus affirmed the inviolability of the entire Old Testament and thereby affirmed the inspiration of the entire Old Testament.

In Luke 24:44 Jesus reminded the disciples that all the things written about Him in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms *must* be fulfilled. The disciples had failed to understand the teachings concerning the death and resurrection of Christ in the Old Testament, but because of the inspiration of the Old Testament, those prophesied events *had* to take place. By His threefold designation of the Old Testament, Christ was affirming the inspiration and authority of the entire Old Testament.

When Jesus debated with the unbelieving Jews concerning His right to be called the Son of God He referred them to Psalm 82:6 and reminded them "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). "It means that Scripture cannot be emptied of its force by being shown to be erroneous."²⁰ It is noteworthy that Jesus referred to a rather insignificant passage from the Old Testament and indicated that the Scripture could not be set aside or annulled.²¹

(2) Inspiration of the parts. Christ quoted from the Old Testament profusely and frequently. His arguments hinged on the integrity of the Old Testament passage He was quoting. By this method of argumentation, Christ was affirming the inspiration of the individual texts or books of the Old Testament. A few examples will suffice. In Jesus' encounter with Satan at the time of His temptation, He refuted the arguments of Satan by a reference to Deuteronomy. In Matthew 4:4, 7, 10 Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3; 6:13, 16, indicating Satan was wrong and emphasizing that these words written in Deuteronomy had to be fulfilled. In Matthew 21:42 Jesus quoted from Psalm 118:22, which teaches that the Messiah would be rejected. In Matthew 12:18–21 Jesus quoted from Isaiah 42:1–4, showing that His peaceable, gentle disposition and His inclusion of the Gentiles had all been foretold in the prophetic writings.

These are only selected examples, revealing that Christ quoted from various parts of the Old Testament, affirming their inspiration and authority.

(3) Inspiration of the words. In defending the doctrine of the resurrection to the Sadducees, Jesus quoted from Exodus 3:6 (significant because the Sadducees held only to the Pentateuch), "*I am* the God of Abraham." In this response Jesus' entire argument hinged on the words "*I am*." Jesus was apparently supplying the verb which the Hebrew text only implies. Thus He supported the Septuagint (Greek) version which includes the verb. That version was so highly regarded by many of the Lord's contemporaries that it was practically equated with the original Scriptures.

In affirming the resurrection Jesus reminded the Sadducees that Exodus 3:6 said "*I am*." He elaborated: "God is not the God of the dead but of the living." If the words of the Old Testament were not inspired, His argument was useless; but if the very words of the Old Testament were actually inspired, then His argument carried enormous weight. In fact, Jesus' argument hinges on the *present tense* of the statement. Because it was written in Exodus 3:6, "*I am....*", the doctrine of the resurrection could be affirmed; God is the God of the living patriarchs.

A similar example is found in Matthew 22:44 where Jesus, in debating the Pharisees, explained that their concept of Messiah was wrong. The Pharisees thought of Messiah as a political redeemer but Jesus shows them in His quotation from Psalm 110:1 that David, Israel's greatest king, saw Messiah as greater than himself, calling Him Lord. The entire argument of Christ rests on the phrase "my Lord." In quoting Psalm 110:1, Jesus rested His argument on the inspiration of the precise words "my Lord." If Psalm 110:1 did not read exactly "my Lord" then Christ's argument was in vain. An additional example is Christ's use of Psalm 82:6 in John 10:34 where His entire argument rests on the word "gods."

(4) Inspiration of the letters. In a number of His statements Christ reveals that He believed the letters of Scripture were inspired. In Matthew 5:18 Jesus declared, "not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished." The term "smallest letter" refers to the Hebrew letter *yodh*, which looks like an

¹⁸ 18. See the excellent work of Jesus' view of the Bible by Robert P. Lightner, *The Saviour and the Scriptures* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1966), pp. 60–73.

¹⁹ 19. R. Laird Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969), p. 45ff.

²⁰ 20. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), p. 527.

²¹ 21. See the excellent discussion on John 10:35 in B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1948), p. 138ff.

apostrophe ('). The "stroke" refers to the minute distinction between two Hebrew letters. An equivalent would be the distinction between an O and a Q. Only the little "tail" distinguishes the Q from the O. Jesus emphasized that all the details of the Old Testament writings would be fulfilled down to the very letter.

(5) Inspiration of the New Testament. In the Upper Room discourse Christ made a significant statement that seems to point to the ultimate, accurate recording of the New Testament writings. In John 14:26 Jesus indicated that the Holy Spirit would provide accurate recall for the apostles as they penned the words of Scripture, thus guaranteeing their accuracy (cf. John 16:12–15). This may explain how an old man such as John, when penning the life of Christ, could accurately describe the details of the events that occurred years earlier. The Holy Spirit gave John and the other writers accurate recall of the events. Hence, Jesus affirmed not only the inspiration of the Old Testament but also the New Testament.²²

An obvious conclusion is that Jesus Christ held a very high view of Scripture, affirming its inspiration in the entire Old Testament—the various books of the Old Testament, the precise words, the actual letters—and He pointed to the inspiration of the New Testament. Surely those who hold to only conceptual inspiration or other variants need to reconsider the attitude of Jesus to the Scriptures. Ought His view of the Bible not to be the standard? Is it legitimate to hold a *lower* view of Scripture than He held?

Paul's view of the Bible. **(1) Inspiration of the Old and New Testaments.** In 1 Timothy 5:18, Paul prefaced his remarks with "the Scripture says." Then he quoted from Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7, thereby ascribing the status of Scripture to both the Old and New Testaments. Paul was saying that the New Testament is as much the inspired Word of God as the Old Testament.

(2) Inspiration of the words. In Paul's classic statement found in 2 Timothy 3:16, the apostle reminds the reader that all Scripture is "inspired by God." As indicated earlier, "inspired by God" is the Greek word *theopneustos*, meaning "God-breathed." This indeed is an important verse to consider in the entire subject of inspiration and inerrancy and, properly understood, resolves the problem.

Several things should be noted. First, since Scripture is God-breathed, it emphasizes that the origin of Scripture is God. This is consistent with the Old Testament prophets who received their messages from the mouth of God and so indicated by their frequent statements, "Thus says the Lord." Thus, the message spoken by the prophets was the message given to them by the Lord (cf. Ex. 4:15; 7:1–2; Jer. 1:9, etc.). Therefore, just as the word given to the prophets was trustworthy and reliable, so the Scriptures, which are God-breathed, are trustworthy and accurate because both communications come from the mouth of God. Paul's emphasis, then, is on the *origin* of the Scriptures: that which is God-breathed is "produced by the creative breath of the Almighty."²³ The fact that *theopneustos* occurs in the passive voice, and not the active, further emphasizes that God is the origin of the Scriptures, not man.²⁴

(3) The entire Scriptures are God-breathed. Young clarifies: "If Paul means 'every Scripture,' he is looking at the various parts of the Bible, that is, he is considering Scripture distributively. He is then saying that whatever Scripture we consider, it is inspired of God. On the other hand, if he means 'all scripture,' it is clear that his reference is to the Scripture in its entirety. In either case he is saying that whatever may be called 'scripture' is inspired of God."²⁵

In addition, all that is God-breathed is also designated Scripture. While the designation "Scripture" in v. 16 is sometimes understood to refer only to the Old Testament, it can be argued that Paul was using the designation "Scripture" not only for the Old Testament but also for the portions of the New Testament that had been written by that time (e.g., Paul must have considered the gospel of Luke canonical [1 Tim. 5:18]), and perhaps even the entire New Testament, some of which would be written in the future.²⁶

Paul concludes that the Old and New Testaments are God-breathed, having their origin with God, not man. Paul thus affirms his belief in verbal inspiration.

Peter's view of the Bible. Peter's teaching concerning the Scriptures coincides with Paul's teaching. In 2 Peter 1:21 Peter emphasizes that no Scripture is produced as a result of human will; rather, it is the product of the superintending power of the Holy Spirit. Peter identifies the Scriptures as "the prophetic word" (v. 19), "prophecy of Scripture" (v. 20) and "prophecy" (v. 21); he declares that the Scripture is "something altogether reliable."²⁷ In verse 21 Peter explains why the Scripture is reliable. Like Paul, Peter affirms that Scripture has its origin with God. Although men penned the words of Scripture, they did so as they were carried along [Gk. *pheromenoi*] by the Holy Spirit.²⁸ Peter therefore acknowledges his belief in verbal inspiration inasmuch as it was the Holy Spirit who guided the writers of Scripture in their selection of words. This truth could be illustrated by a man who goes to the department store in a shopping center. Because he is in a hurry to get to the second floor he walks up the escalator. Although he is walking, the escalator is carrying him along, bringing him to the second floor. Similarly, although the writers of Scripture penned

²² 22. For additional discussions see Robert P. Lightner, *The Saviour and the Scriptures*, pp. 60–73; and Charles C. Ryrie, *What You Should Know About Inerrancy* (Chicago: Moody, 1981), pp. 57–78.

²³ 23. B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1948), p. 296.

²⁴ 24. See E. J. Young, *Thy Word Is Truth*, pp. 20–21 as well as B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, p. 272.

²⁵ 25. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²⁶ 26. H. Wayne House, "Biblical Inspiration in 2 Timothy 3:16," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 137 (January–March, 1980):56–57.

²⁷ 27. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* 2nd ed., revised by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: U. of Chicago, 1979), p. 138.

²⁸ 28. Young states: "The men who spoke from God are said to have been borne by the Holy Spirit. That is, the Spirit actually lifted them up and carried them along, and thus they spoke. They were borne or carried along under the power of the Spirit and not by their own power. If a person picks up something and bears it, he does it by his own power. That which is picked up and borne, however, is absolutely passive. It was the Spirit of God who bore them. It was He who was active, and they who were passive. Thus He bore them to the goal of His own desiring." (E. J. Young, *Thy Word Is Truth*, p. 25).

the words according to their educational abilities and their own distinctive styles, the Holy Spirit was carrying them along, ensuring the accuracy of all they were writing.

In 2 Peter 3:16 Peter refers to Paul's writings and indicates that the false teachers distort Paul's writings as they do *the rest of the Scriptures*. In this rather unique statement Peter places Paul's writings on a par with the Old Testament Scriptures.

Conclusion. The strongest defense for the verbal plenary inspiration of the Scriptures is the testimony of Jesus Christ. He testified to the inspiration of the entire Scriptures, the various books of the Old Testament and the actual words of Scripture as they had been originally recorded. The fact that He based His arguments on the precise wording of Scripture testifies to His exalted view of Scripture. In addition, Paul acknowledged that all Scripture was God-breathed; man was a passive instrument, being guided by God in the writing of Scripture. Peter's statement was similar in emphasizing that, in their passivity, men were carried along by the Holy Spirit in the writing of Scripture. The testimony of each of these witnesses draws attention to the verbal plenary inspiration of Scripture.

INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE

DEFINITION OF INERRANCY

In the past it was sufficient to state that the Bible was inspired; however, it has now become necessary to define the evangelical position more precisely. The result, as Charles Ryrie has shown, has necessitated the inclusion of additional verbiage. To state the orthodox view it is now necessary to include the terms "verbal, plenary, infallible, inerrant, unlimited inspiration!"²⁹ All this has been necessitated because of those who have retained words like *inspiration*, *infallible*, and even *inerrant* while denying that the Bible is free from error.

E. J. Young provides a suitable definition of inerrancy: "By this word we mean that the Scriptures possess the quality of freedom from error. They are exempt from the liability to mistake, incapable of error. In all their teachings they are in perfect accord with the truth"³⁰ Ryrie provides a syllogism for logically concluding the biblical teaching of inerrancy: "God is true (Rom. 3:4); the Scriptures were breathed out by God (2 Tim. 3:16); therefore, the Scriptures are true (since they came from the breath of God who is true)."³¹

In defining inerrancy it is also important to state what it does not mean. It does not demand rigidity of style and verbatim quotations from the Old Testament. "The inerrancy of the Bible means simply that the Bible tells the truth. Truth can and does include approximations, free quotations, language of appearances, and different accounts of the same event as long as those do not contradict."³² At the Chicago meeting in October 1978, the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy issued the following statement on inerrancy: "Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives."³³

In a final definition it is noted that inerrancy extends to the original manuscripts: "Inerrancy means that when all the facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything they teach, whether that teaching has to do with doctrine, history, science, geography, geology, or other disciplines or knowledge."³⁴

To suggest there are errors in the Bible is to impugn the character of God. If the Bible has errors it is the same as suggesting that God can fail, that He can make a mistake. "To assume that God could speak a Word that was contrary to fact is to assume that God Himself cannot operate without error. The very nature of God is at stake."³⁵ cf., for the str. source.⁸

ANSWERING THE CALL DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Most people, in most Christian, bible-believing churches believe in the inerrancy of Holy Scripture. The real issue is this: **Do we live out our lives believing in the sufficiency of scriptures?** His Holy Word is all we need!

²⁹ 29. Charles C. Ryrie, *What You Should Know About Inerrancy*, p. 16.

³⁰ 30. E. J. Young, *Thy Word Is Truth*, p. 113.

³¹ 31. Charles C. Ryrie, "Some Important Aspects of Biblical Inerrancy" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 136 (January-March, 1979):17.

³² 32. Charles C. Ryrie, *What You Should Know About Inerrancy*, p. 30. Note also the helpful illustrations Ryrie employs, pp. 31-32.

³³ 33. James Montgomery Boice, *Does Inerrancy Matter?* (Oakland: International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, 1979), p. 13.

³⁴ 34. *Ibid.*

³⁵ 35. E. J. Young, *Thy Word Is Truth*, p. 165.

⁸ Enns, Paul P.: *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1997, c1989, S. 162.



A Tough Topic Made A Little Easier: Election, Predestination, Calvinism and "Free Will"

And other matters you were predestined not to fully understand this side of Heaven.

The Five Points of Calvinism and Arminianism

Category (TULIP)	Calvinism	Arminianism
Total Depravity of Man	Total Depravity/Inability Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the Gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God. God, and God alone acts in the salvation process. Salvation is God's unmerited gift to the sinner.	Free Will or Human Ability Although human nature was seriously affected by the fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but he does not interfere with man's freedom.
Unconditional Election	Unconditional Election God's choice of individuals to salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in his own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part (such as faith, repentance, etc.)—only whom God has selected.	Conditional Election God's choice of certain individuals to salvation before the foundation of the world was based on his foreseeing that they would respond to His Call. Election therefore was determined by or conditioned on what a person would do. God choose those whom He knew (of their own free will) would cooperate with the Holy Spirit's working.
Limited Atonement	Limited Atonement Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them alone.	General Atonement Christ's redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved but did not actually secure the salvation of anyone.
Irresistible Grace	Irresistible Grace The Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. This call is irresistible.	Resistible Grace The Holy spirit extends to all people a call to be saved. But, inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirits call.
Perseverance of the Saints	Perseverance of the Saints All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Holy Spirit are eternally saved and cannot lose their salvation.	Falling from Grace Those who truly believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith. <small>NOTE: Not all Arminians agree on this point; some hold to the doctrine of "eternal security" for every Believer.</small>

Some Important Observations

1. This issue is very complex.* Ultimately, only in Heaven will we truly know “God’s exact position” on this matter

*Other issues: Supralapsarianistic Calvinism, Infralapsarianistic Calvinism, Sublapsarianistic Calvinism, Antinomianism, & an understanding of languages, much of church history, “Free will” vs. the sovereignty of God, systematic theology, biblical hermeneutics, etc. ***The point is this is a very deep theological subject.*** Respected scholars who love God deeply fall on “both sides of the fence” on this complex issue.

2. Problems with extremes on both sides:

Extreme Calvinism: A. It equals fatalism; B. How can God fault anyone for sin if no one can resist His will and if everything is a predetermined plan of God? C. It makes God the Author of Sin.

Extreme Arminianism: A hyper-view of Arminianism is that our will can overrule the will of God—that’s heresy.

3. Important Scriptures to both arguments:

Calvinism:

Eph. 1:4-5 (NIV) - *For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.*

Acts 13:48 (NIV) – *When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.*

Arminianism:

2 Peter 3:9 (NIV) – *He is patient ... not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NIV) – *This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

Romans 10:13 (NASB) - *...for “Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

4. VERY Important Quotes/Thoughts:

A. Both Doctrines Stand True and Must Stand Together

“Everyone must come to grips with the fact that he is intimately related to the one who reigns as the supreme God. This biblical truth is especially difficult for those who, knowingly or unknowingly, pit man’s freedom against God’s sovereignty. Both doctrines are taught in the Scriptures; both doctrines stand true. The fact that we cannot comprehend everything about the way God has chosen to operate does not erase the truth of these teachings or hinder their operation.

- Dr. Tom Cliff, *A Passion for Prayer*, p. 72.

B. A Discussion of Salvation Must Include a Trinitarian View of God

“Our salvation involves all three Persons in the Godhead (Eph. 1:3–14; 1 Peter 1:2). You cannot be saved apart from the Father’s electing grace, the Son’s loving sacrifice, and the Spirit’s ministry of conviction and regeneration. This Trinitarian aspect of our salvation helps us to understand better some of the mysteries of our salvation. Many people get confused (or frightened) when they hear about election and predestination. As far as the Father is concerned, I was saved when He chose me in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4); but I knew nothing about that the night I was saved! It was a hidden part of God’s wonderful eternal plan. As far as God the Son is concerned, I was saved when He died for me on the cross. He died for the sins

of the whole world, yet the whole world is not saved. This is where the Spirit comes in: as far as the Spirit is concerned, I was saved in May 1945 at a Youth for Christ rally where I heard Billy Graham (then a young evangelist) preach the Gospel. It was then that the Holy Spirit applied the Word to my heart. I believed, and God saved me."

- Dr. Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*,
cf. 1 Cor. 2:10 Commentary. p. 46.

5. One important passage to understand:

Study Verse Section - Romans 8:29-30 (NASB) - ²⁹ *For whom He foreknew* Gk: προγινώσκω, προ meaning "before" and γινώσκω meaning "to know" – From which we get our English word, "prognosis" VERY IMPORTANT (cf. Exegesis): "Foreknew" (Eng. "Prognosis") is used here as a verb in third person, singular gender, aorist tense, active voice, indicative (NOT imperative) mood; only the imperative mood would indicate "it must be" (I *choose* it to be), rather than the indicative, "it will be" (based on foreknowledge, I *know* it will be", **He also** Gk: καὶ meaning (lit.) "then" (a cumulative-force participle) modifying *predestined* those whom He foreknew *to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;*³⁰ *and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

6. Conclusion:

Frank Facts about Our World and the Gospel (Review)

A. In teaching on this subject, we must be true to all scriptures and incorporate a Trinitarian view of God in our doctrine.

1 Peter 1:2, NLT - ² *God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God give you more and more grace and peace.*

B. Everyone will make a personal decision for or against Christ.

Joshua 24:15, NIV - ¹⁵ *But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."*

C. Not all will be saved! (Matthew 13:24-30)

Matthew 13:24-30, NIV - ²⁴ *Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. ²⁷ "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' ²⁸ " 'An enemy did this,' he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' ²⁹ " 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'* "

D. Many will perish!

Matthew 7:13-14, NASB95 - ¹³ *"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴ "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

Noah's Ark—only a few were saved and many were lost.

Sodom and Gomorrah—only a few were saved and many were lost.

E. Some who think they are saved will be lost!

Matthew 7:21-23, HCSB - ²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?' ²³ Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you! Depart from Me ...'

F. There is no salvation after death!

Luke 16:19-31, HCSB - ¹⁹ "There was a rich man who would dress in purple and fine linen, feasting lavishly every day. ²⁰ But a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, was left at his gate. ²¹ He longed to be filled with what fell from the rich man's table, but instead the dogs would come and lick his sores. ²² One day the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ And being in torment in Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side. ²⁴ 'Father Abraham!' he called out, 'Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this flame!' ²⁵ " 'Son,' Abraham said, 'remember that during your life you received your good things, just as Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, while you are in agony. ²⁶ Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that those who want to pass over from here to you cannot; neither can those from there cross over to us.' ²⁷ "'Father,' he said, 'then I beg you to send him to my father's house— ²⁸ because I have five brothers—to warn them, so they won't also come to this place of torment.' ²⁹ "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' ³⁰ "'No, father Abraham,' he said. 'But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' ³¹ "But he told him, 'If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.' "

G. Today may be someone's last chance to come to Christ!

Proverbs 27:1, NLT - ¹ Don't brag about tomorrow, since you don't know what the day will bring.

H. We, as a church, (and you, as an individual) must do everything within our means to spread the Gospel of Christ.

Matthew 28:19-20, HCSB – [Jesus said to the church] ¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."



The doctrine of God's election and Man's freewill are like two rails for the train. Both exist ... both are true ... both are needed but never shall the two meet this side of Heaven. Only at the throne of Christ shall the two rails meet. Shall we understand it fully this side of glory—not in our small minds ... never-the-less, truth stands. Shall we preach God sovereign? Yes, I say. Shall we preach man must be saved? Yes, I say, again. Shall all men, we included, say "yes" to Christ. Yes, I pray!

- C.H. Spurgeon (Summarized)

Understanding a Trinitarian view of God, our testimony is that as God knew, Jesus saved, and the Holy Spirit wooed unto Himself. Somehow in the mysteries of God, a sovereign, all-powerful, all-knowing God delighted enough to give us—who breath our next breath only by His grace—both the privilege and responsibility to say, "Here am I, save me." I believe that only in Heaven will we realize the dynamics and complexities of His simple processes of saving men.

— Joe K. Taylor

An Overview the Major Religions of the World

Source: Adapted from a document by Rose Publishing Company

	Biblical Christianity	Mormonism Latter-day Saints	Jehovah's Witnesses	Judaism	Islam
Key Person or Founder, Date, Location	Jesus Christ. Founded about AD 30-33, in the Judean province of Palestine (Israel today), under the Roman Empire. Followers of Jesus Christ became known as Christians in the Book of Acts.	Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805-1844), founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) in 1830 in New York. Headquarters are in Salt Lake City, UT	Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916), later Joseph F. Rutherford (1869-1942. Began in 1879 in Pennsylvania. Headquarters in Brooklyn, NY. (Watchtower Bible & Tract Society)	Abraham of the Bible, about 2000 BC and Moses in the Middle East. There are three main branches of Judaism—Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform—each with its own beliefs.	Muhammad (570-632) is the final "seal" of many prophets send by Allah (God). The Islamic calendar began in AD 622, when Muhammad fled Mecca. Main sects: Sunni, Shi'ite.
Key Writings	The Holy Bible , written originally in Hebrew and Aramaic (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament).	The Book of Mormon; Doctrine and Covenants; Pearl of Great Price; the Bible (King James Version only or Smith's "Inspired Version"); authoritative teachings of Mormon prophets and other LDS "general authorities."	All current Watchtower publications , including the Bible (New World Translation only), Reasoning from the Scriptures, You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth. Watchtower and Awake magazines.	The Tanakh (Old Testament) and especially the Torah (first five books of the Bible). The Talmud (explanation of the Tanakh). Teachings of each branch. Writings of sages, such as Maimonides.	Qur'an (Koran) was revealed to Muhammad by the angle Gabriel. The biblical Law of Moses, Psalms of David, and Gospel of Jesus (the Injil) are accepted in the Qur'an, but Muslim scholars teach that Jews and Christians have corrected these original revelations.
Who is God	The one God is Triune (one God in three Persons, not three gods): God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Often the title "God" designates the first Person, God the Father—the creating God. God is a spiritual being without a physical body. He is personal and involved with people. He created the universe out of nothing. He is eternal, changeless, holy, loving and perfect	God the Father was once a man, but "progressed" to godhood. He has a physical body, as does his wife (Heavenly Mother), No Trinity. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three separate gods. Worthy men may one day become gods themselves through a process called "celestial progression".	One-person God, called Jehovah . No Trinity. Jesus is the first thing Jehovah created.	God is spirit. To Orthodox Jews, God is personal, all-powerful, eternal and compassionate. To other Jews, God is impersonal, unknowable, and defined in a number of ways. No Trinity.	God (Allah) is One. The greatest sin in Islam is <i>shirk</i> , or changing or associating anything with the Muslim's concept of "god". Many Muslims think that Christians believe in three gods and are therefore guilty of <i>shirk</i> . Human attributes such as fatherhood cannot be associated with God—that is a <i>shirk</i> . To proclaim that "Jesus is God" is the most severe form of <i>shirk</i> and worthy of "eternal damnation".

	Biblical Christianity	Mormonism <small>Latter-day Saints</small>	Jehovah's Witnesses	Judaism	Islam
Who is Jesus	<p>Jesus is God, the second person of the Trinity—God the Son. As God the Son, He has always existed and was never created. He is fully God and fully man (the two natures joined, not mixed). As the second Person of the Trinity, He is coequal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. In becoming man, He was “begotten” through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus is the only way to the Father, salvation, and eternal life. He died on a cross according to God’s plan, as full sacrifice and payment for our sins. He rose from the dead on the third day, spiritually and physically immortal. For the next 40 days He was seen by more than 500 eyewitnesses. His wounds were touched and He ate meals. He physically ascended to Heaven. Jesus will come again visibly and physically at the end of the world to establish God’s eternal kingdom and judge the world.</p>	<p>Jesus is a separate god from the Father (Elohim). He was created as a spirit child by the Father and Mother in Heaven, and is the “elder brother” of all men and spirit beings. His body was created through sexual union between Elohim and Mary. Jesus was married. His death on the cross does not provide full atonement for all sin, but does provide everyone with resurrection. Jesus was had brothers, Satan being one of them.</p>	<p>Jesus is not God. Before he lived on earth, he was Michael, the archangel. Jehovah made the universe through him. On earth he was a man who lived a perfect life. After dying on a stake (not a cross), he was resurrected as a spirit; his body was destroyed. Jesus is not coming again; he “returned” invisibly in 1914 in spirit. Very soon, he and the angels will destroy all non-Jehovah’s Witnesses.</p>	<p>Jesus is seen either as an extremist false messiah or a good but martyred Jewish rabbi (teacher). Many Jews do not consider Jesus at all. Jews, (except Messianic Jews and Hebrew Christians) do not believe he was the Messiah, Son of God, or that he rose from the dead. Orthodox Jews believe that the Messiah will restore the Jewish kingdom and eventually rule the earth.</p>	<p>Jesus (Isa in Arabic) is one of the most respected of over 124,000 prophets sent by Allah. Jesus was sinless, born of a virgin, and a great miracle worker, but not the Son of God. His virgin birth is like Adam’s creation. Jesus is not God, and God is not Jesus. He was not crucified. Jesus, not Muhammad, will return for a special role before the future judgment day, perhaps turning Christians to Islam.</p>
Who is the Holy Spirit	<p>The Holy Spirit is God, the third Person of the Trinity—God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a person, not a force or energy field. He comforts, grieves, reproves, convicts, guides, teaches, and “indwells” Christians.</p>	<p>The ‘holy spirit’ is different from the “Holy ghost.” The “holy spirit” is not God, but is an influence or electricity-like emanation from God (or “light of Christ”).</p>	<p>Impersonal “holy spirit” is not God, but rather an invisible, active force from Jehovah.</p>	<p>Some believe the Holy Spirit is another name for God’s activity on earth. Others say it is God’s love or power.</p>	<p>Allah has or is a spirit. Muslims reject the biblical concept of the Trinity.</p>

	Biblical Christianity	Mormonism Latter-day Saints	Jehovah's Witnesses	Judaism	Islam
How to be Saved	Salvation is by God's grace, not by an individual's good works. Salvation must be received by faith. People must believe in their hearts that Jesus dies for their sins and physically rose again, which is the assurance of forgiveness and resurrection of the body. This is God's loving plan to forgive sinful people.	Resurrected by grace, but saved (exalted to godhood) by works , including faithfulness to church leaders, Mormon baptism, tithing, ordination, marriage, and secret temple rituals. No eternal life with Mormon membership.	Be baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses. Most followers must earn everlasting life on earth by "door-to-door work." Salvation in heaven is limited to 144,000 "anointed ones." This number is already reached.	Some Jews believe that prayer, repentance, and obeying the Law are necessary for salvation. Others believe that salvation is the improvement of society.	Humans are basically good, but fallible and need guidance. The balance between good and bad deeds determines eternal destiny in paradise or hell. Allah's mercy may tip the balances to heaven, as his will is supreme.
What happens after Death	Believers go to be with Jesus. After death, all people await the final Judgement. Both saved and lost people will be resurrected. Those who are saved will live with Jesus in Heaven. Those who are lost will suffer the torment of eternal separation from God (Hell). Jesus' bodily resurrection guarantees believers that they too will be resurrected and receive new immortal bodies.	Eventually nearly everyone goes to one of three separate heavenly "kingdoms," with some achieving godhood. Apostates and murderers go to "outer darkness."	The 144,000 live as spirits in heaven. The rest of the righteous, "the great crowds" live on earth and must obey God perfectly for 1,000 years or be annihilated.	There will be a physical resurrection to a New Heaven on Earth. The obedient will live forever with God, and the unrighteous will suffer. Some Jews do not believe in a conscious life after death.	Resurrection of bodies in "a" Heaven. Fear of eternal torment is a prevalent theme of the Qur'an. Paradise includes a garden populated with houris, maidens designed by Allah to provide sexual pleasures to righteous men.
Other facts, beliefs, or practices	Group worship, usually in churches. No secret rites. Baptism and Lord's Supper (Communion). Active voluntary missionary efforts. Aid to those in need; the poor, widows, orphans, and downtrodden. Christians believe that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah promised to Israel in the Old Testament (Tanakh). Jesus said His followers would be known by their love for one another.	No alcohol, tobacco, coffee or tea. Baptism on behalf of the dead. Two-year missionary commitment encourage. Door-to-door proselytizing. Secret temple rituals available only to members in good standing. Extensive social network. People of African ancestry were not granted full access to Mormon priesthood and privileges until 1978.	Meet in "Kingdom Halls" instead of churches. Active members encouraged to distribute literature door-to-door. Once a year, Lord's Evening Meal (communion); only "anointed" ones may partake. Do not observe holidays or birthdays. Forbidden to vote, salute the flag, work in the military, or accept blood transfusions. Believe Armageddon will occur soon.	Meeting in synagogues on the Sabbath (Sabbath is Friday evening to Saturday evening). Circumcision of males. Many holy days and festivals, including Passover, Sukkoth, Hanukkah, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Purim. Jerusalem is considered the holy city.	Followers are called Muslims. Go to mosque for prayers, sermons, counsel. Holy efforts to spread Islam (jihad). Five pillars of Islam: Confess that Allah is the one true God and that Muhammad is his prophet. Pray five times daily facing Mecca. Gives alms (money). Fast during the month of Ramadan. Make pilgrimage to Mecca (once in a lifetime).

Cults—The Truth Twister

BASIC OVERVIEW ON THE SUBJECT OF CULTS

I. Definition

A Cult (Latin: *cultus* meaning “adoration”) is a religion regarded as unorthodox and does not conform to established Christian doctrines.

Galatians 1:6-7 (NIV) - ⁶ *I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷ which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.*

II. Characteristics of Cults

A. The Mathematical Test

1. Does it **ADD** to God’s Word?

Revelation 22:18 (NIV) - ¹⁸ *I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.*

Proverbs 30:5-6 (NIV) - ⁵ *“Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. ⁶ Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.*

2. Does it **SUBTRACT** from the Person of Christ?

Colossians 1:15-17 (NIV) - ¹⁵ *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

3. Does it **MULTIPLY** the salvation requirements?

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV) - ⁸ *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.*

4. Does it **DIVIDE** the follower’s loyalty?

Exodus 20:3 (NIV) - ³ *“You shall have no other gods before me.”*

B. The Doctrinal Test

If it *varies* on one or more points from the accepted beliefs of orthodox Christianity?

Virgin birth of Christ

Matthew 1:23 (NIV) ⁻²³ “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, “God with us.”

Atonement for sin only through Christ’s shed blood

Romans 5:8-9 (NIV) ⁻⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!

Resurrection of Christ from the dead

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 (NIV) ⁻³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

Incarnation of God becoming man (Jesus IS God!)

John 10:30 (NIV) ⁻³⁰ I and the Father are one.”

Eschatology of second coming of Christ

Acts 1:10-11 (NIV) ⁻¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Scripture—inspired only by God; its sole authority

2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV) ⁻¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

When you meet the friendliest people you have ever known, who introduce you to the most loving group of people you’ve ever encountered, and you find the leader to be the most inspired, caring, compassionate and understanding person you’ve ever met, and then you learn that the cause of the group is something you never dared hope could be accomplished, and all of this sounds too good to be true—it probably is too good to be true!

- June Hunt (former follower of cult leader Jim Jones)

Witnessing to Cults

I. Some Observations

Witnessing “at the door” is very difficult because of a few factors:

- They have “built in” accountability (They do not travel alone)
- They are trained in *debate*, not *theology*
- They take the advantage because they “knocked first”
- Statistically, few “cult members” are converted “at the door.”

To be effective in *debating* cults, you must become very efficient in the following:

- Their theology (which is beyond the scope of this course)
- Your theology (which is somewhat beyond the scope of this course)
- Their processes and theories
- The art of debate and reading body language

II. Some Suggestions

A. If you are not going to master “taking on the cults” (which is okay), consider this suggestion:

1. Make this statement when they come to your door:

Good morning! Friend, listen to me and please don't interrupt! It is with great joy that I say to you. Have made the greatest discovery in the world. I have found a personal relationship with Jesus Christ—God only begotten son. I will not take time to talk to you but I give you my word, I will take time to pray for you that you will discover these truths: (1) God loves you, (2) You have sinned, (3) Christ alone—not works—can pay for your sins and (4) that you, too, will discover a personal relationship with Christ. Good day!

2. Remember, there is a better opportunity in witnessing to your cult *neighbor* or friend than to your cult *missionary*.

B. If you are going to master “taking on the cults”, consider this suggestion:

1. Read, study, learn as much as your can—become proficient in the topic.
2. Develop a deep and clear understanding of faith and the Bible.
3. Gain a deep and clear understanding of their faith and their documents.
4. Make a list of Scriptures that refute their claims and keep them in your Bible.
5. Keep the initiative in the encounter.
6. Ask for the give clear definitions of all vocabulary terms.
7. Check that every biblical text is correctly cited; always consider the text.
8. Remember, just because a person “testifies” about something—it doesn't make it right.
9. Give a strong, positive testimony of your salvation experience; however, realize that a *testimony*, without facts, is not as effective as it once was.)
10. Set an initial goal to create “doubt” in their minds about their beliefs.
11. Be a good neighbor/friend to them.
12. Pray, pray, pray

A Hill On Which to Die

Biblical Inerrancy

A. From the Baptist Faith and Message:

The Scriptures (Section One)

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

B. Definition of “Inerrancy”

True, in every way, and without error to any truth and/or subject.

C. Understanding Inerrancy and the Holy Scriptures (original scriptures)



The verbal, plenary, inerrant, inspiration of the Holy Scriptures!

... which means ...

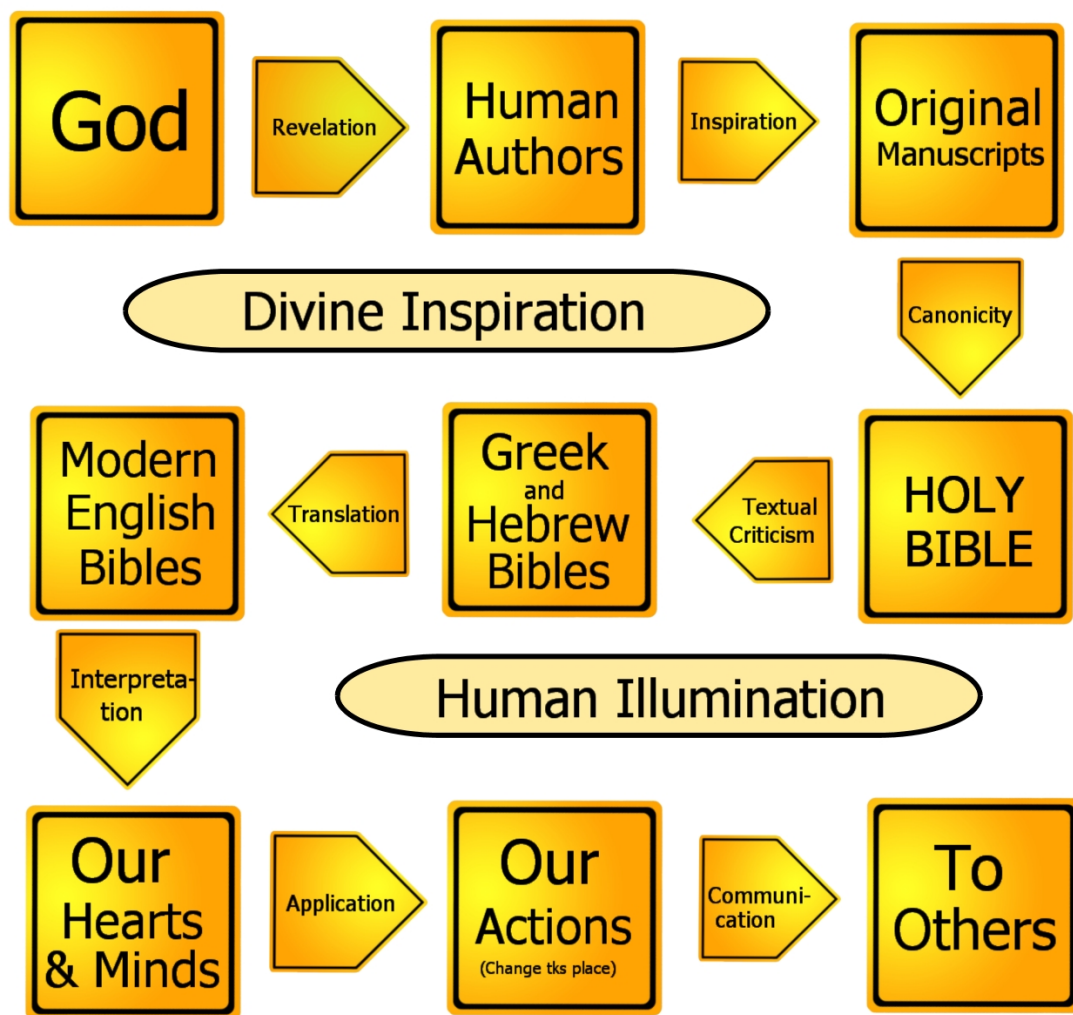
The verbal (*i.e.*, Holy God verbally dictated and selected every word) **plenary** (*i.e.*, “full”—meaning each book, paragraph and verse—even the very spelling of the words) **inerrant** (*i.e.*, no errors in the original manuscripts), **inspiration** (*i.e.*, who provided the information—in this case, “holy” God) **of the Holy Scriptures.**

D. Understanding *infallibility* and the Holy Scriptures (subsequent copies of scriptures)

“Infallibility” indicates that the very Scriptures *we hold in our hands* are not able to fail in achieving its purpose and that no word is without God’s power to fulfill His purpose; and furthermore, no word of truth or promise within God’s Holy Word can be “broken”, violated, or disregarded by Him.

G *od did not write a book and send it by messenger to be read at a distance by unaided minds. He spoke a Book and lives in His spoken words, constantly speaking His words and causing the power of them to persist across the years.* – A. W. Tozer

E. How the Bible Came to Each of Us



Source: Adapted from Charles C. Ryrie's "Basic Theology, A Popular Systematic Guide to Understand Biblical Truth, p. 117.

D. What is the issue?

When the inerrancy of Holy Scripture is denied, not only is the power of God placed in question, overwhelming archeological evidence negated, and centuries of extrabiblical material ignored, but also, a critical theological uncertainty arises: ***If any part of the Bible is not true, how are we to know what is true and what is not? How could we have confidence in the Scriptures apart from an inerrant process on God's part?*** This could cause the attributes of God or the doctrines of the Trinity, Soteriology, Christology, or Biblical Morality, etc., to be in peril.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17, NIV

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. - 2 Peter 1:20-21, NIV

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

- Isaiah 55:10-11, NIV

*[From] whom the word of God came—... **the Scripture cannot be broken**—... - John 10:35, NIV*



"... How can a man understand the incomprehensible jargon of the Trinitarian arithmetic that three are one and one is three ... ?"

- Thomas Jefferson ¹

"To understand fully the doctrine of the Trinity is impossible; to miss it is to miss salvation."

- A. W. Tozer ²

"3 N One"

- Nevada License Plate (Reno, NV)

A. Summary—"The Baptist Faith and Message"³

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

1. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:1ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

2. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

3. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

B. Definition of “The Trinity”

We believe in one God with three eternal and distinct persons: God the Father (who is the creator) and God the Son (who is Jesus Christ) and God the Holy Spirit (who is the Holy Ghost). He is one God in three persons.

We do not believe:

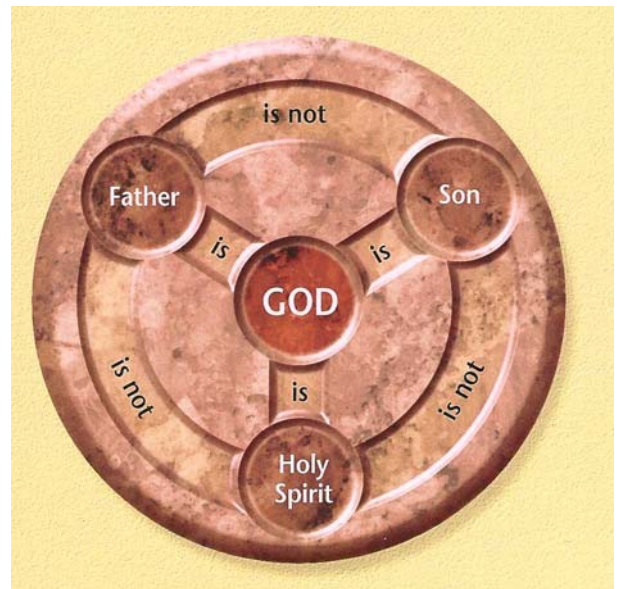
- 1 god in 3 gods
- 3 persons in 1 person
- 3 persons in 3 gods
- 1 person in 3 gods

We do believe:

1 God in 3 persons!



There is one God and only one God and this one God exists eternally, in one essence, as three persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit!



Early Christians used this diagram to explain the Trinity. One God in three distinct persons.

C. Scriptural Examples regarding The Holy Trinity

God the Father:

Deuteronomy 6:4, NASB95 - ⁴ *“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!”*

Isaiah 44:6, NASB95 - ⁶ *“Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.’”*

God the Son:

Colossians 2:9-10, NIV - ⁹ *“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,”* ¹⁰ *and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.*

John 12:44-45, NIV - ⁴⁴ *Then Jesus cried out, “When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me.”* ⁴⁵ *“When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me.”*

Romans 9:5, NIV - *...Christ who is God ... forever praised!*

John 10:30, NIV - *I and the Father are one.*

God the Spirit

Acts 5:3-5, TLB - ³ But Peter said, "Ananias, Satan has filled your heart. When you claimed this was the full price, you were lying to the Holy Spirit." ⁴ The property was yours to sell or not, as you wished. And after selling it, it was yours to decide how much to give. How could you do a thing like this? You weren't lying to us, but to God." ⁵ As soon as Ananias heard these words, he fell to the floor, dead! Everyone was terrified, ...

Matthew 28:19, NIV - ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ...

D. Important Statements About the Trinity

1. "God is three in one, yet one in three"—tough to understand but true—very true.

2. The one Trinity is made up of three "persons"

A. God the Father—"God" (Creator, Prompter, Ruler, Judge, Culminator, etc.)

B. God the Son—"Jesus" ("God-Man", Sacrifice, Groom, etc.)

C. God the Spirit—"Holy Spirit" ("Helper", Drawer, Wooer, Convictor, Dweller, Gifter, etc.)

3. A "Trinitarian" view of God helps explain some difficult issues

- Salvation (Calvinism vs. "Free Will")
- The "Us" statements on the Old Testament
- "Who do we pray to?"

We cannot explain the Trinity. We cannot demonstrate the reality of the triune God through the use of mathematics. We know there is one God, but this one God is found in Three Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They are separate, and yet they are equal. Reginald Heber wrote the song "Holy, Holy, Holy" to commemorate Trinity Sunday on the church calendar. That's why he wrote:

***Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty!
God in three persons, Blessed Trinity.***

All three Persons of the Trinity are involved in our salvation. We have been chosen by God the Father, purchased by God the Son, and sealed by God the Holy Spirit. We belong to the triune God.

— Dr. Warren W. Wiersbe ⁴

E. Trinitarian Application: "Breaking the Curse of Words" (NOTE: *You may have had them all your life!*)

James 3:9-10, NIV - ⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.

1. Is this *curse* in keeping with what God the Father purposed when He created You?
2. Is this *curse* in keeping with what God the Son purposed with He died for You?
3. Is this *curse* in keeping with what God the Holy Spirit purposes in you now?



¹ As quoted by Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 1994, p. 249.

² A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*, Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, © 1948, page 203.

³ 2000 "The Baptist Faith and Message"—The Doctorial Statement of the Southern Baptist Convention.

⁴ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Key Words of the Christian Life*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, © 2002, p. 78.

A Hill On Which to Die

The Deity of Jesus

Ἰησοῦς Χριστός

"yay-soos"

"khris-toós"

Jesus—(His Name) "He shall save!"

Christ—(His Title) "The Anointed Messiah!"



"For every man it must be the Christ of Holy Scripture or eternal tragedy."

- A.W. Tozer

In a dream, I was the savior. My back was bare and there was a soldier lifting up his hand and bringing down that awful whip. In that dream, I rose and grasped his arm to hold it back. When I did, the soldier turned and in astonishment, I looked at me! And when I looked at [the soldier], I recognized myself." ... Jesus was the God-man! Not God dwelling a man, of such there have been many. Not a man deified—of those there has been none (only attempted in mythology; pagan systems; false gods, for sure). He—the Christ of Holy Scripture—was 100% God and 100% man!

- W.A. Criswell



A. Summary—THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.⁹

Based on the Following: Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

⁹ 2000 "The Baptist Faith and Message"—The Doctorial Statement of the Southern Baptist Convention and SRBC.

B. Definition of “The Deity of Jesus”

Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, was, is, and always will be perfect and is God Himself. He is “the God-man” (e.g., hypostatic union) being at once both God and man—being born of a virgin. As man, He alone is the Redeemer for humanity; as a sinless man, He alone was fit to die for others; As a risen Christ, He alone gives hope beyond the grave; As Holy God, He alone could satisfy in His life, ministry, and death the demands of God the Father as to deliver man from death and bring them into peace with God Himself.



Jesus Christ is one-hundred percent God and one-hundred percent man. True God, the only begotten of God, He was, is, and always is God. True man, born of a virgin, is the risen redeemer of all men (a.k.a. *The deity of Jesus*).

C. The Essential “Big Twelve” Biblical Facts about Jesus

1. All Powerful!

Matthew 28:18, NIV - ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

2. All Knowing!

Colossians 2:3, NIV - ³ Christ ... in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

3. Always Everywhere!

Psalms 139:7, MSG - ⁷ Is there anyplace I can go to avoid your Spirit? ... to be out of your sight?

4. Always Eternal!

Colossians 1:17, NCV - ¹⁷ He was there before anything was made, and all things continue because of him.

5. Always God!

Romans 9:5, NIV - ⁵ ... Christ, who is God ... , forever praised!

John 10:30, NIV - ³⁰ I and the Father are one.

6. Always Holy!

Revelation 4:8, NIV - ⁸ ... Day and night they never stop saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”

7. Always Unchanging!

Hebrews 13:8, NIV - ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

8. Always Active!

Luke 19:10, NASB95 - ¹⁰ *"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

9. Always Right!

Zephaniah 3:5, NIV - ⁵ *The Lord ... does no wrong ... He does not fail.*

10. He the only Son of God—God Made Flesh!

180,000 words in the NT, they all boil down to this: John 3:16, NASB95 - ¹⁶ *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*

11. He alone is the only way to God—there is not other way!

Acts 4:12, NIV - ¹² *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."*

John 14:6, NIV - ⁶ *No one comes to the Father except through me.*

12. He is coming again!

Mark 13:32, NIV - ³² *"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven ... but only the Father.*

D. The Biblical Names for Jesus¹⁰

Adam, the second 1 Cor. 15:45–47	God, our Savior 1 Tim. 2:3	Mighty God Is. 9:6
Advocate 1 John 2:1	God with us Matt. 1:23	Mighty One Ps. 45:3
Alpha and Omega Rev. 9:11	Good Master Mark 10:17	Mighty One of Jacob Is. 60:16
Amen Rev. 3:14	Great God Titus 2:13	Minister of the circumcision Rom. 15:8
Ancient of Days Dan. 7:9	Great High Priest Heb. 4:14	Minister of the sanctuary Heb. 8:1, 2
Angel of his presence Is. 63:9	Great Shepherd Heb. 13:20	Morning star 2 Pet. 1:19
Anointed above His fellows Ps. 45:7	Head, even Christ Eph. 4:15	Morning star Rev. 22:16
Anointed of the Lord Ps. 2:2	Head of all Col. 2:10	Nazarene Matt. 2:23
Apostle of our confession Heb. 3:1	Head of every man 1 Cor. 11:3	Only begotten of the Father John 1:14
Arm of the Lord Is. 51:9, 10	Head of the body, the church Col. 1:18	Only begotten Son John 1:18
Author and finisher of our faith Heb. 12:2	Head over all things Eph. 1:22	Only wise God 1 Tim. 1:17
Author of eternal salvation Heb. 5:9	Heir of all things Heb. 1:2	Our Passover 1 Cor. 5:7
Author of salvation Heb. 2:10	High Priest Heb. 4:14	Our peace Eph. 2:14
Babe Luke 2:16	His beloved Son Col. 1:13	Physician Luke 4:23
Banner to the People Is. 11:10	Holy One 1 John 2:20	Power of God 1 Cor. 1:24
Beginning and end Rev. 21:6	Holy and Just One Acts 3:14	Precious cornerstone Is. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:6
Beloved Eph. 1:6	Holy One of God Luke 4:34	Priest Heb. 5:6
Beloved of God Matt. 12:18	Holy One of Israel Is. 37:23	Prince Acts 5:31
Beloved Son Mark 1:11	Holy Servant Acts 4:27	Prince of life Acts 3:15
Branch Zech. 3:8	Hope of glory Col. 1:27	Prince of peace Is. 9:6
Branch of righteousness Jer. 23:5; Jer. 33:15	Horn of salvation Luke 1:69	Prince of the kings of the earth Rev. 1:5
Bread John 6:41	Husband 2 Cor. 11:2	Prophet Deut. 18:15, 18
Bread of Life John 6:35	I Am John 8:58	Propitiation Rom. 3:25
Bridegroom John 3:29	Image of God 2 Cor. 4:4	Purifier and refiner Mal. 3:3
Bright morning star Rev. 22:16	Image of the Invisible God Col. 1:15	Rabbi John 6:25
Carpenter Mark 6:3	Immanuel Is. 7:14	Rabboni John 20:16
Carpenter's son Matt. 13:55	Jesus Luke 1:31	Ransom 1 Tim. 2:6
Chief corner stone Ps. 118:22; Mark	Jesus Christ Rom. 1:4	Redeemer Is. 59:20
Chief Shepherd 1 Pet. 5:4	Jesus Christ our Lord Rom. 6:23	Resurrection and the life John 11:25
Child Is. 9:6	Jesus Christ our Savior Titus 3:6	Righteous Judge 2 Tim. 4:8
Child Jesus Luke 2:27	Jesus of Nazareth Luke 24:19	Righteous Servant Is. 53:11
Chosen of God 1 Pet. 2:4	Jesus, the Son of God Heb. 4:14	
Christ, the John 1:41; Acts 9:22	Jesus, the (supposed) son of Joseph Luke 3:23	
	Judge of Israel Mic. 5:1	

¹⁰ Thomas Nelson Publishers. 1995. **Nelson's Quick Reference Topical Bible Index**. Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville, Tenn.

<p>Christ a King Luke 23:2 Christ, Jesus Rom. 8:2 Christ Jesus our Lord Rom. 8:39 Christ of God, the Luke 9:20 Christ of God, His Chosen One Luke 23:35 Christ the Lord Luke 2:11 Christ, the power of God 1 Cor. 1:24 Christ, the Son of the Blessed Mark 14:61 Commander Is. 55:4 Consolation of Israel Luke 2:25 Counselor Is. 9:6 Covenant of the people Is. 42:6 Dayspring Luke 1:78 Morning star 2 Pet. 1:19 Deity Col. 2:9 Deliverer Rom. 11:26 Desire of all nations Hag. 2:7 Diadem Is. 28:5 Door John 10:2 Door of the sheepfold John 10:1 Eternal life 1 John 5:20 Everlasting Father Is. 9:6 Faithful and True Rev. 19:11 Faithful witness Rev. 1:5 Firmly placed foundation Is. 28:16 Firstborn Heb. 1:6 Firstborn from the dead Col. 1:18 Firstborn of the dead Rev. 1:5 Firstborn of creation Col. 1:15 Firstborn among many brethren Rom 8:29 First fruits 1 Cor. 15:23 First and last Rev. 22:13 Forerunner Heb. 6:20 Foundation laid in Zion Is. 28:16 Friend of tax collectors and sinners Luke 7:34 God John 20:28 God blessed forever Rom. 9:5 God of Israel Is. 45:15</p>	<p>Judge of the living and the dead Acts 10:42 Just man Matt. 27:19 King John 12:13 King eternal 1 Tim. 1:17 King of glory Ps. 24:7 King of Israel John 12:13 King of kings 1 Tim. 6:15 King of the Jews Matt. 27:37 King of Zion Zech. 9:9 Lamb Rev. 13:8 Lamb of God John 1:36 Leader Is. 55:4 Life John 14:6 Light John 1:9 Light of the Gentiles Acts 13:47 Light of the World John 9:5 Lily of the valleys Song 2:1 Lion of the tribe of Judah Rev. 5:5 Living bread John 6:51 Living stone 1 Pet. 2:4 Lord John 21:7 Lord Christ Col. 3:24 Lord God Almighty Rev. 4:8 Lord Jesus Acts 19:17 Lord Jesus Christ 2 Thess. 2:1 Lord and Savior Jesus Christ 2 Pet. 2:20 Lord both of dead and living Rom. 14:9 Lord of all Acts 10:36; Rom. 10:12 Lord of glory 1 Cor. 2:8 Lord of hosts Is. 54:5 Lord of lords 1 Tim. 6:15 Lord of Sabbath Luke 6:5 Lord our righteousness Jer. 23:6 Lord, your redeemer Is. 43:14 Majestic Lord Is. 33:21 Man of sorrows Is. 53:3 Mediator Heb. 12:24 Messenger of the covenant Mal. 3:1 Messiah John 4:25, 26</p>	<p>Rock 1 Cor. 10:4 Rock of offense Rom. 9:33 Rod of the stem of Jesse Is. 11:1 Root of David Rev. 22:16 Root of Jesse Is. 11:10 Rose of Sharon Song 2:1 Ruler in Israel Matt. 2:6; Mic. 5:2 Ruler over the kings of the earth Rev. 1:5 Salvation Luke 2:30 Savior 1 Tim. 4:10 Savior Jesus Christ 2 Pet. 2:20 Savior, God our Titus 1:3 Savior of the world 1 John 4:14 Scepter out of Israel Num. 24:17 Second man 1 Cor. 15:47 Seed of David John 7:42 Seed of the woman Gen. 3:15 Shepherd John 10:11 Shepherd and overseer of souls 1 Pet. 2:25 Shoot of the stem of Jesse Is. 11:1 Son of the Blessed Mark 14:61 Son of David Matt. 9:27 Son of God Rom. 1:4 Son of Man Acts 7:56 Son of Mary Mark 6:3 Son of the Father 2 John 3 Son of the Highest Luke 1:32 Sower Matt. 13:3, 37 Star out of Jacob Num. 24:17 Stone Dan. 2:45 Stone rejected Luke 20:17 Stone of stumbling Rom. 9:32, 33 Sun of righteousness Mal. 4:2 Teacher from God John 3:2 Tried stone Is. 28:16 True vine John 15:1 Truth John 14:6 Unspeakable gift 2 Cor. 9:15 Way John 14:6 Wonderful Is. 9:6 Word 1 John 1:1 Word of God Rev. 19:13 Word of Life 1 John 1:1</p>
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It is also taught among us that God the Son become man, born of the Virgin Mary, and that the two natures, divine and human, are so inseparably united in one person that there is one Christ, true God and true man!

- Article III, The Augsburg Confession, 1530.

A Hill On Which to Die

The Virgin Birth of Jesus

From the beginning, as attested in Matthew and Luke as well as the early patristic writers, the virgin birth has been a central doctrine of the church. As such, it is a living symbol of the twofold nature of Jesus: born of the Holy Spirit and of woman, he is the incarnate God-man.¹¹

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. - Isaiah 7:14, NIV

"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us." - Matthew 1:23, NIV

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.³¹ You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month.³⁷ For nothing is impossible with God."³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her. - Luke 1:26-38, NIV

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. - 1 John 4:9, NIV



As prophesied in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament, Jesus Christ became a human being through the supernatural conception of young, precious Mary.

¹¹Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). *Tyndale Bible dictionary*. Tyndale reference library (1287). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

A. Summary Material—The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. This is in keeping with the Old Testament (cf., Is. 7:14) and the New Testament (cf., Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:23). At issue is God's supernatural intervention to remedy the sin among men. It is the understanding of the church that man is totally depraved—sin is not just something he or she does—it is something we all are. God, through the virgin birth of the beloved son, interrupted the natural birth. Therefore, Jesus was not born with a sinful nature. Though capable of sin, Jesus did not sin. He lived a perfect life and died the perfect sacrifice in order to redeem mankind from its sin. This was God's plan to redeem believers to Himself.

Hypostatic Union: *Hypostatic Union* is the theological label of an important attribute of Jesus Christ. Because of the virgin birth, Jesus is 100 percent man and at the very same time, 100 percent God. Jesus is the God-man—the Son of God made flesh. Or, in more precise theological terms, *God becoming flesh and dwelling among us*. **Thought:** To make a “god” or “deity” out of Mary removes the *human* aspect of Jesus Christ—the *son* of God. The theological consequences of Mariolatry (Mary worship) is disconcerting.

B. Why is the doctrine of the virgin birth so important?

God could only break the cycle of sin through a supernatural conception in Mary's womb. Had Jesus been just another man (and not supernatural man), his sinfulness and subsequent death would have meant nothing. Only a perfect sacrifice meets the requirements of redeeming mankind as set forth in the Old Testament.

C. Observations

- The Roman Catholics do believe *strongly* in the virgin birth of Christ. They do not, however, believe in the vaginal delivery of Christ during the birth process. The Catholic church teaches the perpetual virginity of Mary. In their belief, for Mary to have had delivered the Baby naturally, the evidence of virginity would have been compromised. They believe Jesus was supernaturally conceived *and supernaturally delivered* during the birth process via “divine transportation”—Jesus simply appeared miraculously outside of Mary's womb at His birth. Protestants do believe in the virgin birth but not in a *divine transportation* birth or the in the perpetual virginity of Mary.
- Jehovah's Witnesses admit that Jesus was born of a virgin, but maintain He is not God. Jesus was born by God's holy power yet, they believe Jesus is not God.
- Mormon's believe that Jesus was not born of a virgin. Christ was the product of a physical sexual union between the Mormon God, Elohim (a resurrected man), and Mary. “[Jesus Christ] was not begotten by the Holy Ghost (cf., *Journal of Discourses*, by B. Young, sec. 1:50.)”
- Scientology, Christian Science, and many other “mind science” based religions flatly deny the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

The Bible says that the Son of God entered and left this world by acts of supernatural power. His exit was by resurrection-plus-ascension, and his entry by virgin birth: both fulfilling Old Testament anticipations (see Isaiah 7:14 for the virgin birth, and 53:10–12 for resurrection-ascension). The entry and exit miracles carry the same message. First, they confirm that Jesus, though not less than man, was more than man. His earthly life, though fully human, was also fully divine. He, the co-creator, was in this world—his own world—as a visitor; he came from God, and went to God. ... Second, these two miracles indicate Jesus' freedom from sin. ... Virgin-born, he did not inherit the guilty twist called original sin: his manhood was untainted, and his acts, attitudes, motives, and desires were consequently faultless. The New Testament emphasizes his sinlessness (see John 8:29, 46; Romans 5:18ff.; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22–24; etc.). Being sinless, he could not be held by death once his sacrifice was done.¹²

¹² Packer, J. I. (1996, c1994). *Growing in Christ*. Originally published: I want to be a Christian. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, c1977.; Includes index. (47). Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books.

A Hill On Which to Die

The Second Coming of Christ

A. Summary—THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.¹³

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.



Jesus Christ first came to Earth in the form of a servant. He will return—a second time—as the savior of His people. He will be the judge to those who rejected Him and the rewarded of those who surrendered their life to him. His “second coming” will be a literal, visible, and glorious event.

B. Five Facts About Our Future (on Earth)

1. It will be a time of *apostasy*. i.e., “A falling away from *truth*”

Matthew 24:4-5, 11 NLT - ⁴ Jesus told them, “Don’t let anyone mislead you, ⁵ for many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah.’ They will deceive many. ... ¹¹ And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people.

- The rise of false prophets
- The rise of false teachings

“Sometimes I feel like a backwoods fundamentalist or somebody carrying a sign around Times Square that says REPENT. But I’ve been a pastor for thirty-five years, and I don’t trust people one inch in defining what they need. We don’t know ourselves apart from God’s Holy Word ... for me, being a pastor means being attentive to people. But the minute I start taking my cues from them, I quit being a pastor.”

— Dr. Eugene H. Peterson

¹³ 2000 “The Baptist Faith and Message”—The Doctorial Statement of the Southern Baptist Convention and SRBC. (cf., Section X, “Last Things”)

“Unfortunately, the market-driven ministry philosophy appeals to the very worst mood of our age. It caters to people whose first love is themselves and who care not for God—unless they can have Him without disrupting their selfish lifestyles. Promise such people a religion that will allow them to be comfortable in their materialism and self-love, and they will respond in droves.”

— Dr. John MacArthur

2 Timothy 4:3, NIV - ³ For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

2. It will be a time of *anarchy*.

Matthew 24:6-8, NLT - ⁶ And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately. ⁷ Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world. ⁸ But all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.

3. It will be a time of *apathy*.

Matthew 24:12-13, NLT - ¹² Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

4. It will be a time of *affliction*.

Matthew 24:9-10, NLT - ⁹ “Then you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers. ¹⁰ And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other.

5. It will be a time of *accomplishment*.

Matthew 24:14, NLT - ¹⁴ And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come.

C. The story of the “Eastern Gate”



A view of Jerusalem as seen from the Mount of Olives

D. What does the future hold?

Primary Sources: "What does the Future Hold?" (Art.) by Dr. Edward Hindson, Dean, Institute of Biblical Studies, Liberty University, NLJ, Feb. 2001.
"What does the Bible say about our Future?" (Art.) by Dr. Lorin Cranford, NT Professor of NT, SWBTS, SWBT-Journal of Theology, Nov. 1976

1. The Growth of the Church

Jesus established the church and promised to continue to build it until He returns:

Matthew 16:18 - *"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it."*

Matthew 24:14 - *"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come."*

2. An Increase of Evil

The Bible also predicts that the "increase of evil" will continue until the end of the age.

Matthew 24:12 - *"And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold."*

2 Timothy 3:1-5 - ¹ But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; ⁵ holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these.

3. The Rise of False Prophets

Jesus himself warned about the coming of "false christs" and "false prophets."

Matthew 24:4,24 - ⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. ²⁴ "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."

2 Peter 2:1 - *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.*

2 Corinthians 11:13 - *For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.*

Jude 17-18 - ¹⁷ But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁸ that they were saying to you, "In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts." (i.e., "It gets worst in the end.")

4. The Promise Land

In 1948, the ancient Bible prophecies were fulfilled when Israel became a nation again after nearly 1,900 years in exile. Ezekiel predicted a two-staged return: (1) physical regathering; and (2) Spiritual rebirth (cf. Ezekiel 37:1-14).

Ezekiel 20:34 - *"And I shall bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; ..."*

Isaiah 43:5-6 - ⁵ "Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, And gather you from the west. ⁶ "I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth, ..."

Ezekiel 37:1-14 - ¹ The hand of the Lord was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones. ² And He caused me to pass among them round about, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley; and lo, they were very dry. ³ And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord God, Thou knowest." ⁴ Again He said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.'" ⁵ "Thus says the Lord God to these bones, 'Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life."

⁶ 'And I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin, and put breath in you that you may come alive; and you will know that I am the Lord.'" ⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸ And I looked, and behold, sinews were on them, and flesh grew, and skin covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they come to life.'" ¹⁰ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life, and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. ¹¹ Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.' ¹² "Therefore prophesy, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ "Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. ¹⁴ "And I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken and done it," declares the Lord."

5. Middle East Conflict

The general picture of the future is one of turmoil between the Jews and Arabs in the Middle East. Collectively, the prophets foresee Israel back in the Land, but under constant threat of attack.

Matthew 24:6-7 - ⁶ "And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. ⁷ "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.

Joel 3:2-14 - ² I will gather all the nations, And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land. ³ "They have also cast lots for My people, Traded a boy for a harlot, And sold a girl for wine that they may drink. ⁴ "Moreover, what are you to Me, O Tyre, Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia? Are you rendering Me a recompense? But if you do recompense Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your recompense on your head. ⁵ "Since you have taken My silver and My gold, brought My precious treasures to your temples, ⁶ and sold the sons of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their territory, ⁷ behold, I am going to arouse them from the place where you have sold them, and return your recompense on your head. ⁸ "Also I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the sons of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a distant nation," for the Lord has spoken. ⁹ Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare a war; rouse the mighty men! Let all the soldiers draw near, let them come up! ¹⁰ Beat your plowshares into swords, And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, "I am a mighty man." ¹¹ Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, And gather yourselves there. Bring down, O Lord, Thy mighty ones. ¹² Let the nations be aroused And come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, For there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations. ¹³ Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. ¹⁴ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

Ezekiel 38:1-6 - [Describing a massive invasion of Israel in the "latter days" by a coalition of nations] ¹ And the word of the Lord came to me saying, ² "Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, ³ and say, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. ⁴ "And I will turn you about, and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them splendidly attired, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them wielding swords; ⁵ Persia, Ethiopia, and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet; ⁶ Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops—many peoples with you.

6. Rapture of the Church

At some undated time in the future, Jesus will return to rapture the church (i.e., Believers) to heaven. The rapture precedes the tribulation period and fulfills the Lord's promise to keep us from the "hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world" (cf., Rev. 3:10).

John 14:3 - "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 - ¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:50-58 - ⁵⁰ Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

7. The Marriage of Christ

After the rapture and prior to the return of Christ to the earth, the "wedding of the Lamb" will take place in heaven (cf., Rev. 19:7-9). This *description* follows the pattern of traditional Jewish weddings in biblical times.

Revelation 19:7-9 - ⁷ "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." ⁸ And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹ And he *said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he *said to me, "These are true words of God."

Ephesians 5:25-27 - ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; ²⁶ that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

2 Corinthians 11:2 - For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

Matthew 25:1-6 - ¹ "Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² "And five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. ³ "For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴ but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. ⁵ "Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. ⁶ "But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'"

8. The Rise of the Antichrist

John calls him "the beast" (cf., Rev. 13:1-10) and "the antichrist" (cf., 1 Jn. 2:22). John also pictures this last great political leader being assisted by the "false prophet" (cf., Rev. 13:11-18). Together, they deceive the whole world during the tribulation period.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-8 - ³ Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. ⁵ Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? ⁶ And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; ...

Revelation 13:1-10 - ¹ And he stood on the sand of the seashore. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. ² And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. ³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; ⁴ and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" ⁵ And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. ⁶ And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. ⁸ And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. ⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

1 John 2:22 - Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.

Revelation 13:11-18 - ¹¹ And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. ¹² And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. ¹³ And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. ¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. ¹⁵ And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. ¹⁶ And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead, ¹⁷ and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. ¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

NOTES / QUESTIONS

9. The Global System

The book of Revelation clearly predicts the world of the future will combine a global economy (cf., Rev. 13:16-18) with a world government (cf., Rev. 13:8; 17:1-18) and a world religion (cf., 13:8-12).

Revelation 13:16-18 - ¹⁶ And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead, ¹⁷ and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. ¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

Revelation 13:8 - ⁸ And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

Revelation 17:1-18 - ¹ And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality." ³ And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, ⁵ and upon her forehead a name was written, a mystery, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." ⁶ And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered greatly. ⁷ And the angel said to me, "Why do you wonder? I shall tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. ⁸ "The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come. ⁹ "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, ¹⁰ and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. ¹¹ "And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. ¹² "And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. ¹³ "These have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴ "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful." ¹⁵ And he *said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. ¹⁶ "And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. ¹⁷ "For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled. ¹⁸ "And the woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth."

Revelation 13:8-12 - ⁸ And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. ⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints. ¹¹ And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. ¹² And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

10. The Tribulation Period

Despite efforts at world peace, the rule of the antichrist will be marked by wars of mass destruction, environmental disasters and divine judgments (cf., Rev. 6:1-16; 9:16-18).

Revelation 6:1-16 - ¹ And I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come." ² And I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him; and he went out conquering, and to conquer. ³ And when He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come." ⁴ And another, a red horse, went

out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men should slay one another; and a great sword was given to him. ⁵ And when He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come." And I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ And I heard as it were a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine." ⁷ And when He broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come." ⁸ And I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. And authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth. ⁹ And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; ¹⁰ and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹ And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, should be completed also. ¹² And I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; ¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. ¹⁴ And the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶ and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; ...

Revelation 9:16-18 - ¹⁶ And the number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. ¹⁷ And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. ¹⁸ A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths.

Also cf., Daniel 12:1ff; Zephaniah 1:14; Jeremiah 30:7; and Daniel 9:24-27.

11. The Battle of Armageddon

The prophetic picture indicates a series of wars of mass destruction are coming in the future (cf. Rev. 6-18). These will result in nearly half the population of the world being destroyed (cf., Rev. 8:7; 9:16-18). Eventually, these wars will culminate in a final battle at "the place call Armageddon (cf., Rev. 16:16). In the end, Christ Himself will return and conquer the beast and the false prophet, casting them into the lake of fire (cf., Rev. 19:11-20). Satan will be bound in the abyss for a thousand years (cf., Rev. 20:1-2).

Revelation 16:16 (NASB) - *And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called HarMagedon.*

Revelation 16:16 (NIV) - *Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.*

Isaiah 34:3 - *So their slain will be thrown out, And their corpses will give off their stench, And the mountains will be drenched with their blood.*

Zechariah 14:12-13 - ¹² Now this will be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth. ¹³ *And it will come about in that day that a great panic from the Lord will fall on them; and they will seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another.*

Revelation 19:11-20 - ¹¹ *And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war.* ¹² *And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself.* ¹³ *And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God.* ¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. ¹⁵ *And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them*

with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." ¹⁷ And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God; ¹⁸ in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." ¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army. ²⁰ And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.

Revelation 19:15 - ¹⁵ And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

12. The Return of Christ

There is one common theological area of agreement in Christianity: **He is coming again!**

Matthew 24:30 - ... and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

Zechariah 14:3-4 - ³ Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. ⁴ And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

Isaiah 63:1-4 - ¹ Who is this who comes from Edom, With garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, This One who is majestic in His apparel, Marching in the greatness of His strength? "It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." ² Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? ³ "I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger, And trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My raiment." ⁴ "For the day of vengeance was in My heart, And My year of redemption has come.

Revelation 19:11-16 - ¹¹ And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. ¹² And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. ¹³ And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. ¹⁵ And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

13. The Millennial Kingdom

The NT describes this time when Christ rules on earth with His bride, the church, for 1,000 years.

Revelation 20:1-6 - ¹ And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ² And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. ⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Revelation 5:10 - ¹⁰ "And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

14. The Great White Throne Judgment

The millennial kingdom will be transferred into the eternal kingdom of God (cf., 1 Cor. 15:24) and the “Great White Throne Judgment” settles the eternal condemnation of all the lost of all time whose names are “not found written in the book of Life” (cf., Rev. 20:11-15).

1 Corinthians 15:24 - ... then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

Revelation 20:11-15 - ¹¹ And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. ¹⁴ And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

15. Eternal Life

The Bible clearly predicts the eternal state as one of perpetual bliss where paradise is regained. The “tree of life” is restored (cf., Rev. 22.2) and the redeemed of all time live together in the “new heavens” and the “new earth” with “new Jerusalem” as their central dwelling place (cf., Rev. 21:41).

Revelation 22:2 - ... in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Revelation 21:27 - ... and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination ... shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Isaiah 65:19 - “I will also rejoice in Jerusalem, and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying.

John 3:16 - “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

E. Four Important Statements about the Second coming of Christ.

1. The certainty of His coming.

John 14:3 (NASB) - “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

Acts 1:10-11 (NASB) - ¹⁰ “And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; ¹¹ and they also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.’”

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 (NASB) - ¹⁵ “For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

2. The manner of His coming.

A. It will be a personal, visible coming.

Acts 1:11 (NASB) - “. . . and they also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.’”

B. It will be a sudden return.

2 Peter 3:10 (NASB) - “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.”

C. It will be a triumphant return.

Titus 2:13 (NASB) - “. . . looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus. . . .”

D. It will be a sovereign return.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 (NASB) - ⁷ “. . . and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power . . .”

3. The time of His coming.

Matthew 24:36 (NASB) - “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.”

Acts 1:6-7 (KJV) - ⁶ “When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? ⁷ And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”

“We are to be mean-time Christians, not end-time Christians. Our concern is to be about witnessing, evangelism and bringing glory to God until He comes—whenever that may be.”

- P. Powell, *The Life Beyond*, p. 35.

4. Our attitude toward His coming.

2 Peter 3:11 (NASB) - [Following a long discourse about the “Coming of Christ,” Peter said,] “Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness . . .”

i. Ready

Matthew 24:44 (NASB) - “For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.”

ii. Busy

Luke 19:13 (NASB) - “And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them [\$2,000] and said to them, ‘Do business with this until I come back.’”

Luke 19:13 (KJV) - “And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy [literally, “be busy”] till I come.”

iii. Holy

2 Peter 3:11(NASB) - *"Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness."*

Titus 2:11-13 (NASB) - ¹¹ *"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus."*

iv. At peace with God

2 Peter 3:14 (NASB) - *"Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless . . . "*

v. Sharing the Good News

2 Peter 3:9 (NASB) - *"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."*

vi. Growing

2 Peter 3:18 (NASB) - *" . . . but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen!"*

But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." - Luke 21:28

Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live." - John 5:25

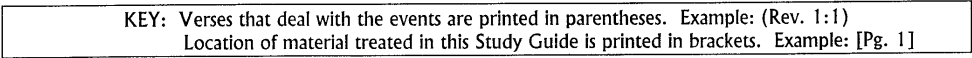
NOTES / QUESTIONS

F. The four “views” of the end times (chart)

NOTE: Pastor Joe is a “pre-tribulational, dispensational, premillennialists.”

	Dispensational Premillennialism	Historic Premillennialism	Amillennialism	Postmillennialism
Will Jesus return physically?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
When will Jesus return?	After a 7 year tribulation: before the millennium.	After a 7-year tribulation; before the millennium.	Anytime; a detailed time frame is not important	After the millennium.
Do the rapture and second coming of Christ occur at the same time?	No, they are events separated by either 7 years (pre-tribulation rapture) or 3 ½ year (mid-tribulation rapture).	Yes	Yes	Yes
Will there be a Great Tribulation?	Yes	Yes	The tribulation occurs any time Christians are persecuted or wars and disasters occur.	The tribulation is the conflict between good and evil since Jesus’ death and resurrection.
Will Christians suffer during the tribulation?	Christians are either raptures before the tribulation (pre-tribulation rapture) or 3 ½ years into the tribulation (mid-tribulation rapture).	Yes, Christians will go through the tribulation and endure suffering and persecution for the cause of Christ.	Yes, Christians will suffer and endure persecution until Jesus returns; persecution will increase in the end.	Yes, Christians are called to share the Gospel, and tribulation will occur when that Gospel is opposed.
Will there be a literal 1000-year millennium?	Yes, after the 7-year tribulation, Christ will return and reign for 1000 years.	Yes, after the tribulation, Christ will return and reign for 1000 years.	No, the millennium refers to the reign of Christ in the hearts of His believers.	No, the millennium refers to a period of peace when the Gospel reaches all people.
Who is saved?	Christians only	Christians only	Christians only	Christians only
Is the modern state of Israel relevant to the prophecies in Revelation?	Yes	No	No	NO
When was this view most held?	Became popular about 1860. Has increased in popularity	The earliest view of the end times, emerging at the end of the first century.	Popularized in AD400. Continues to be accepted today.	May have been popular as early as AD300. Less popular today.

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A Hill On Which to Die

Christ's Atoning Death

There are easily over 100 passages in Holy Scriptures that speak directly of Christ's atoning death. Here are but a few:

Romans 5:8-11, LB - ⁸ But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. ⁹ And since by his blood he did all this for us as sinners, how much more will he do for us now that he has declared us not guilty? Now he will save us from all of God's wrath to come. ¹⁰ And since, when we were his enemies, we were brought back to God by the death of his Son, what blessings he must have for us now that we are his friends and he is living within us! ¹¹ Now we rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God—all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done in dying for our sins—making us friends of God.

Galatians 1:3-5, NIV - ³ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

1 John 2:2, NIV - ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 4:10, NIV - ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Romans 3:25, MSG - ²⁵ God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin. Having faith in him sets us in the clear. God decided on this course of action in full view of the public—to set the world in the clear with himself through the sacrifice of Jesus, finally taking care of the sins he had so patiently endured.

Ephesians 2:13-16, NIV - ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

John 1:29, NASB95 - ²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

1 Timothy 2:5-6, NASB95 - ⁵ For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself as a ransom for all ...

1 Peter 2:23-25, NIV - ²³ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.



Only Christ's sinless life, sacrificial death and bodily resurrection can bring us to God. His shed blood is the only acceptable remedy for man's sin. His resurrection is the only basis for our hope of eternal life as believers.

A. "Only" Christ ...

John 14:6, NASB95 - ⁶ Jesus said to him, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."*

Acts 4:10-13, NASB95 - ¹⁰ let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health. ¹¹ "He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief corner stone. ¹² "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." ¹³ Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

John 3:14-17, NLT - ¹⁴ *And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,* ¹⁵ *so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.* ¹⁶ *"For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."* ¹⁷ *God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.*

B. Summary

The "wages" of sin is death—both spiritual and physically. The sin "debt" we own in our lives was *paid-in-full* by Christ through his death on the cross. This acceptable payment had to be perfect, sinless, and without fault in anyway. Only Christ had this testimony. Only Christ met this requirements. Only Christ's atoning death can allow us access to God. Salvation is not achieved by "being good" and not by "doing good"—in reality, we are "good for nothing" without Christ. Only Christ's atoning death and his shed blood can atone for the sin that keep us from God:

Leviticus 17:11, NLT - ¹¹ *for the life of the body is in its blood. I have given you the blood on the altar to purify you, making you right with the Lord. It is the blood, given in exchange for a life, that makes purification possible.*

Romans 11:26, TLB - ²⁶ *And then all Israel will be saved. Do you remember what the prophets said about this? "There shall come out of Zion a Deliverer, and he shall turn the Jews from all ungodliness.*

1 Peter 1:10-11, NIV - ¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ *trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.*

C. Observations

Jehovah Witnesses *redefine* Christ's atonement. They acknowledge that the penalty for sin was paid by Christ's blood but quickly add that salvation is not by "grace alone". In their theology, Jesus is not "God" and therefore cannot be the only *means* to salvation. It must be accompanied by *good works* (e.g., door-to-door witnessing, works in the church, etc.) and complete solidarity to the Watchtower Bible and Track Society (their publishing division). "A person's full salvation is not determined at the moment they begin to put faith in Jesus." ¹⁴ (NOTE: See Scriptures response on top of next page.)

Acts 4:12, NIV - ¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name [but the name of Jesus] under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

¹⁴ Reasoning from the Scriptures, Brooklyn NY: Watchtower Bible and Track Society, 1989, p. 358.

Mormon's *redefine* Christ's atonement. Mormon's emphasize Christ's "agony" in the Garden of Gethsemane and more the agony of cross—especially, in regards to salvation. In Mormonism, the *agony* of Christ is necessary, but not sufficient, for full salvation. Mormon's own "good works" (door-to-door work, missionary work, tithing, sacraments of the church, etc.) must be added to Christ's atonement to obtain full salvation.

Moroni 10:32-33 (The Book of Mormon): ³² *Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.* ³³ *And again, if ye by the grace of God you are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy without spot.* ¹⁵

A Biblical response:

Ephesians 2:8-10, NIV - ⁸ *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—* ⁹ *not by works, so that no one can boast.* ¹⁰ *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

At stake is the unique nature of Jesus Christ' work—*alone*—in the process of salvation.



From "He Still Moves Stones", by Max Lucado

Insights from the Story of Nicodemus, cf., John 3:1-12

Nicodemus is drawn to the carpenter, but he can't be seen with him. Nicodemus is on the high court. He can't approach Jesus in the day. So Nicodemus goes to meet him at night. He goes in the darkness.

Appropriate. For legalism offers no light. Nicodemus begins with courtesies, "Teacher, we know you are a teacher sent from God, because no one can do the miracles you do unless God is with him" (v. 2).

Jesus disregards the compliment. "I tell you the truth, unless one is born again, he cannot be in God's kingdom" (v. 3). No chitchat here. No idle talk. Straight to the point. Straight to the heart. Straight to the problem. Jesus knows the heart of the legalist is hard. You can't crack it with feathery accolades. You need a chisel. So Jesus hammers away:

You can't help the blind by turning up the light, Nicodemus.
You can't help the deaf by turning up the music, Nicodemus.
You can't change the inside by decorating the outside, Nicodemus.
You can't grow fruit without seed, Nicodemus.
You must be born again.
Whack! ... Whack! ... Whack! ...

The meeting between Jesus and Nicodemus was more than an encounter between two religious figures. It was a collision between two philosophies. Two opposing views on salvation. Nicodemus thought the person did the work; Jesus says God does the work. Nicodemus thought it was a tradeoff. Jesus says it is a gift. Nicodemus thought man's job was to earn it. Jesus says man's job is to accept it.

These two views encompass all views. All the world religions can be placed in one of two camps: legalism or grace. Humankind does it or God does it. Salvation as a wage based on deeds done—or salvation as a gift based on Christ's death. ¹⁶

¹⁵ The Book of Mormon—Another Testament of Jesus Christ, Moroni 10:32-33. pp. 531.

¹⁶ Lucado, Max: He Still Moves Stones. Nashville : Word Pub., 1999. Chapter 13.

A Hill On Which to Die

The Security of the Believer

A. A personal definition of “salvation”:

*Salvation is the conviction that, though you were previously lost and separated from God, you are now redeemed by Christ's sacrificial death on the cross and saved for all eternity. You may or may not have had a dramatic experience upon conversion, and you may or may not feel any different, but you have **the settled confidence that Christ has entered your life**, has saved you, and recreated you and will never leave you or forsake you.*

B. A personal definition of “assurance”

*A secure and ‘assured’ salvation experience is based not on feelings but on the facts of God’s Holy Word and Holy Work. Assurance of eternal salvation happens when the believer emphasizes God’s activity, rather than the “believer’s activity, in “the guaranteeing process” in the gift of eternal life and salvation process. Though the true believer may—and will—backslide at times, he/she shall certainly persevere in their walk with God and ultimately spend eternity with God in heaven. A “settled confidence” occurs when one realizes they have indeed **surrendered their lives to Christ who alone guarantees that the gift of salvation, once received, is forever and cannot be lost.***



The eternal security of all true believers is the work of God alone who guarantees that His gift of salvation, once received, is forever and cannot be lost.

C. How can a true believer be confident (ie., assured) he/she has eternal life?

The basis of our assurance for the security of salvation does not rest with man, but with God alone. Only He can give this assurance. The security and assurance¹⁷ of every true believer is based on three important factors:

- A. Direct statements from the Holy Word of God.
- B. The witness of the Holy Spirit in the every heart.
- C. The outward evidence of an inward change.

¹⁷ NOTE: There is a difference between “security” (which is a theological truth) and “assurance” (the realization of that truth) of the believer.

A. Direct statements from the Holy Word of God.

- The securing work of God, the Father

Ephesians 1:4, NASB95 - ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will ...

Romans 8:28-30, NASB95 - ²⁸ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Romans 5:7-10, NASB95 - ⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Titus 1:1-2, HCSB - ¹ Paul, a slave of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness, ² in the hope of eternal life that God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,...

- The securing work of God, the Son—Jesus Christ

Ephesians 1:7, NASB95 - ⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace...

Romans 3:25, NLT - ²⁵ For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past,

Romans 5:1, NLT - ¹ Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

Colossians 2:13, NLT - ¹³ You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins.

1 Corinthians 1:2, NLT - ² I am writing to God's church in Corinth, to you who have been called by God to be his own holy people. He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as he did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

1 John 1:2, NLT - ² This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. And now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us.

Hebrews 7:25, NLT - ²⁵ Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf.

John 5:24, NLT - ²⁴ "I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

John 10:27-28, NASB95 - ²⁷ "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

- The securing work of God, the Spirit

Titus 3:5, NASB95 - ⁵ *He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,*

Ephesians 4:30, NASB95 - ³⁰ *Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

Ephesians 1:13-14, NIV - ¹³ *And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.*

B. The witness of the Holy Spirit in the every heart.

Hebrews 10:15, GNT - ¹⁵ *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.*"

Realize that our *relationship* with God will never change once He is made the Lord of our lives. What does change is our *fellowship* with God. Your earthly father will always be "your father" but your fellowship with him may be more close at times than at other times. Here are some reasons that our *fellowship* with God changes.

- ☐ Some don't realize what God's Word teaches.
- ☐ Some trust only in their senses and/or their own reasoning.
- ☐ Some base their assurance of salvation on "feelings".
- ☐ Some fall back into a sinful way of life.
- ☐ Some don't know yet who they are in Christ.
- ☐ Some think we must do good works to remain saved.
- ☐ Some haven't grown in their Christian life yet.
- ☐ Some people don't spend time with God each day and wonder why they're "out of fellowship" with God.

The Bible says, "*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.*" (Acts 16:31) In that short verse, we have both a command and a promise. The command is clear: "**Believe in the Lord Jesus.**" That means put your full trust and confidence in Him, and Him alone—not your feelings and not what you do or don't do. Christ, and His work on the cross, and your decision to give your life to Christ as Lord must be the source of assurance for your salvation. If you do that, the promise is clear: "**You will be saved.**"

The command: **Believe**

The Promise: **You will be saved**—*this is what God says!*

C. The outward evidence of an inward change.

2 Corinthians 5:17, NASB95 - ¹⁷ *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

God accepts you however you are at the time of salvation. As His Holy Spirit begins to grow you in your walk with Christ, the result of your belief and obedience in God's Word will be a changed life. This "new life" in Christ should result in your having. . .

- A new attitude about sin.
- A new realization about important matters of life.
- The "fruits of the Spirit" will be seen in your life.

"You shall know them by their fruits." - Matthew 7:20 (NASB)

Rest assured that if you have asked Christ to be the Lord of your life that **salvation in Christ is sure!** The Bible says so; The Holy Spirit tells us we are His; and our transformed lives, changed by the power of God also tell us so. Let's believe it and rejoice in it.

What If I am still not sure?

If you are still not sure, it may very well be that you have never personally asked Christ into your heart as Savior and Lord. You may know a lot about Him *but you don't know Him—as Lord!* You may know *about* the President of the United States, *but you don't know the President of the United States.* **Knowing about God is not the same as knowing God.** If these words seem to ring true in your heart, it is the Holy Spirit telling you now is the time for you to seriously make Jesus Lord of your life. It will be the greatest discovery in your life.

THIS STATEMENT IS OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE:

Nothing is more important than settling—*once and for all*—whether a person is genuinely saved. Eternity is certainly at stake. Heaven and Hell are *in the balance*.
If you have serious doubt about your salvation, please see your pastor or a trusted Christian friend immediately to bring needed resolution to this important matter.

ANSWERING THE CALL
DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT 

Dr. Tom Elliff has a sermon in which he talks about "How to know if you are a true believer". He says there will be three evidences of a genuine believer who's life is changed in Christ:

1. **There will be an *upward path*.** (In other words, there will be evident progress in the Christ's walk.)
2. **There will be an *inward peace*.** (God's Holy Spirit will settle the believer's heart regarding this question.)
3. **There will be an *outward witness*.** (True believers have to tell others what God has done for them—they can't keep quiet.)

A Hill On Which to Die

The Priesthood of All Believers

A. Summary

The doctrine of “The Priesthood of Believers” is the biblical understanding that *all* those who have surrendered their lives to Christ as Lord and Savior are united with Him in a personal and intimate manner. The believer today, just as the “priest” of Old Testament times, has direct access to God, can worship God, and proclaim the truth of God to a lost world, and offer their lives in service to God.

The purpose of the “priests” in the Old Testament were to teach the Israelites that atonement for sins required the provision (or death) of an innocent person (without sin) in the victims place through the shedding of blood. The Levitical order (i.e., priests of the OT) could not accomplish that atonement, but it kept alive the expectation of the coming of the *Perfect Priest* and the offering of the *perfect sacrifice* in fulfillment of the gospel promises contained in the OT Scriptures. In Christ, both priesthood (as an office) and sacrifice (as a continual observance) have been brought to fulfillment and to finality.

B. Quote

In his wonderful essay, “The Christian Ministry,” J.B. Lightfoot not only insists that “as individuals, all Christians are priests alike,” he also draws attention to the fact that in the ministerial offices enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12:28ff and Ephesians 4:11ff, that “there is an entire silence about the priestly functions: for the most exalted office in the Church, the highest gift of the Spirit, conveyed no sacerdotal right which was not enjoyed by the humblest member of the Christian community ... above all it has no sacerdotal system. It interposes no sacrificial tribe of class between God and man, by whose intervention alone God is reconciled and man forgiven. Each individual member holds personal communion with the Divine Head ... to Him immediately [the believer] is responsible, and from him directly [the believer] obtains pardon and draws strength.’



All believers in Christ have immediate, personal access to Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit of God that indwells all Christ-followers. No believer has need of any other means—outside *God in them*, be it pastoral, priestly, or ecclesiological (i.e., any church)—to have intimacy with God.

C. Scriptures

Isaiah 61:6, NASB95 - ⁶ But you will be called the priests of the Lord; You will be spoken of as ministers of our God...

1 Peter 2:9, NASB95 - ⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Revelation 1:5-6, NIV - ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 2:18, NLT - ¹⁸ Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

Ephesians 2:18, NASB95 - ¹⁸ for through Him we ... have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

1 Peter 2:4-6, NIV - ⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

D. The Priesthood of All Believers—*what does this mean?*¹⁸

The content or application of *priesthood* may be put in the following way:

1. All believers have direct access to God. By faith all Christians approach God directly and personally (Rom 5:2; Eph 2:18) through Christ.

Romans 5:2, NIV - ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Ephesians 2:18, NIV - ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

2. All believers can offer spiritual sacrifices to God. The whole life of the Christian is to be a service of love—“a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God” (Phil 4:18). All work, activity, prayer, and praise are to be offered to God.

3. All believers can declare the gospel. By word and deed Christians are to reveal the love of God in Christ. They are to “declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pt 2:9), and they are to make sure that even pagans can recognize their behavior as good (1 Pt 2:12).

4. All believers can join together in worshiping as a local church. “Supplications, prayer, intercessions, and thanksgivings” are to be made for all persons (1 Tm 2:1). The ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper are to be administered on behalf of the whole church as the community serves God and extends his kingdom.

In summary, it may be said that *priesthood* is an activity and function which is best viewed in a *collective sense* as belonging to *the whole body of Christians*, though including of necessity the individual Christian life of service. Its full meaning is negated if it is seen only in individualist terms—my access to God, my right to interpret the Bible, and my ability to discern God’s will, etc. **One must remember that we are all priests, together, in the family of God—The priesthood of all believers!**

¹⁸Elwell, Walter A. ; Beitzel, Barry J.: *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Mich. : Baker Book House, 1988, S. 1754.



How to Know The Will of God

It's Important—Your Life Will Depend on it!

For *I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity (but) to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.'*"

- Jeremiah 29:11-13

Introduction to "Knowing God's Will"

It is better to view God's Will more like headlights on a car rather than a road map. Know that you will never know "enough" of the Will of God:

- to make Heaven of Earth
- to make life fully predictable
- to make life fully understandable
- to remove all risk

Realize that "God's Will" is worked out in everyday life. It is a lifestyle; a moment by moment, day by day process of walking with Holy God. When the Bible talks about "the Will of God", it is pretty much talking about God's moral Will. There are two places in the Bible where the Bible says, "this is the Will of God".

Let take a look at them:

A. 1 Thessalonians 4:3, NASB95 - ³ "For this is the Will of God, your sanctification ..."

"Sanctification" is a word that means "making holy" or 'consecrating' a place, thing, or person to God" 'making holy' or 'consecrating' a place, thing, or person to God."¹⁹ Since *holiness* is primarily a primary primary attribute of God, we must understand that we cannot and will not know the Will of God for our life without personal holiness.

B. 1 Thessalonians 5:18, NASB95 - ¹⁸ "In everything give thanks; for this is God's Will for you in Christ Jesus."

It is God's Will that we find something to thank Him for in the midst of all circumstances. In order for this to happen, we need to see circumstances from God's point of view. Circumstances are the "schoolhouses" of our lives. There are lessons in everyone of them—lessons about us and God. Being

Summary: ***Bring a life of holiness and an attitude of thanksgiving on your journey to know God's Will.***

¹⁹ Achtemeier, Paul J. ; Harper & Row, Publishers ; Society of Biblical Literature: *Harper's Bible Dictionary*. 1st ed. San Francisco : Harper & Row, 1985, S. 904

There are two aspects of God's Will:

1. His **General Will** for everyone (e.g. All should seek to be like Him, all should accept Him as Lord, all should seek to be holy, etc.)
2. His **Personal Will** for each individual (e.g. Should you take a job, who should you marry, . . . some activity, etc.)



How To Know God's Personal Will For Your Life

1. Decide to Trust God and Obey Him No Matter What.

*(Jesus Said) ". . . if any man **is willing to do My Will, he shall know** of that Will."*

- John 7:17 (GN)

*"**Commit everything you do to the Lord.** Trust him to help you . . . and He will."*

- Psalm 37:5 (LB)

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways **acknowledge Him, and he will direct** your paths."*

- Proverbs 3:5-6

Someone said, "You will never know God's Will until you are willing to do it." The big question in seeking God's Will is, **"Will you do His Will when He reveals it to you—no matter what it is?"**

2. Check the Word of God (The Bible) and see what It says.

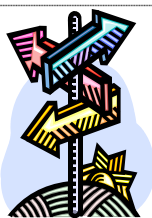
*"For the **Word of God is living and active** and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and **able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**"*

- Hebrews 4:12 (NASB)

*"All Scripture is inspired by God and **profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness**; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."*

- 2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB)

VERY IMPORTANT: God will never "lead you to do something" that is not in keeping with His Holy Word!



What To Do?

See the PAGE 108-109 for related topics and suggested Scriptures for your prayerful consideration.

3. Use your “head” and not your “heart”.

Head: ie., Counting the real cost, checking previous promises and contracts, looking at the facts, etc.

Heart: ie., Emotions, feelings, "What might be easy though it is not God's Will," not realizing the facts, etc.

*"The naive believes everything, but **the prudent man considers his steps.**"*

- Proverbs 14:15 (NASB)

Evaluate your answers to the tough questions: *To the best of my knowledge . . .*

- Will this be beneficial for me, my health, and my family?
- Will this keep me free from any taint of compromise?
- Will this glorify God and bring honor to Him?
- Will this be a wise financial decision?
- Will this enhance my career and other stated goals?
- Will this help me be a good steward of what God has given me?
- Will this enhance my marriage (if married)?
- If made public, this would not lessen my Christian reputation?

If you can answer "yes" to all these questions, fine. If not, reconsider your intended course of action.

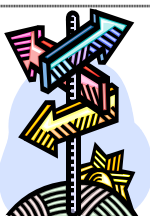
4. Value and get the wise counsel of others.

*"Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but **with many counselors they succeed.**"*

- Proverbs 15:22 (NASB)

You need to seek the godly counsel of people committed to following God's Will in their own lives. We all need—so seek out—the straightforward, prayerful counsel of friends who love us and are seeking first the kingdom of God in their own lives. Never trust your inward convictions, if godly people who know you well advise you to go a different direction. Solomon (a very wise man in the Bible) pressed this truth home when he wrote the scripture stated above in Proverbs 15:22—we need help from others.

Regarding Number Four (previous page)...



What To Do?

Make a list of one, two, three individuals that you know “walk with God”. Contact them and ask for an hour of their time. *Seek out their counsel!*

5. Recognize that God chooses sometimes not to reveal His ways to us. When this happens, we must do only what we know God wants us to do.

*"The **secret things belong to the Lord** our God, but the **things revealed belong to us** . . . forever, that we may follow all the word of (His) law."*

- Deuteronomy 29:29 (NIV)

Someone has said, "God is in the business of sustaining, not explaining." If God has not revealed His Will, commit to do only the things that God would have you do. Ask Him to "sustain" you until His Will is revealed. For some situations, they may never make sense "this side of heaven".

6. Pray and make a decision.

Say, *"In the light that I have at this time, I believe God's Will for my life is (whatever it is)."*

Be willing to change as God gives you more *light*.

***"If you can't decide what is the right thing to do,
choose the thing that would give God the most glory!"***

7. NOTE: If God does not reveal His "Personal Will" for your life, as you are walking with the Lord, filled with His Holy Spirit, proceed with the "desires of your heart."

*"**Delight yourself in the Lord** and He will give you **the desires of your heart.**"*

- Psalm 37:4 (NIV)

The secret here is delighting yourself in the Lord. When we do that, He has no problem giving us the desires of our heart.

8. An important definition/quote for your prayerful consideration:

***The Will of God is an inner conviction,
given by the Spirit of God, confirmed in the Word of God,
and by the People of God.***

A Few "Final Matters" About God's Will

- Prompting

Do small things because of a lifestyle committed to God. (e.g. Should I eat at McDonalds or at a "party bar?") Do Big things out of convictions you have arrived at because God has revealed His "Personal Will." (e.g. "Who should I marry?") **Remember, God deal with us to build trust in Him; WE CAN TRUST HIM!**

- When other people tell you they know "God's Will" for your life.

Examine their track record for knowing the Will of God in their own lives. What is their character? Pray and ask God to confirm the matter in your heart.

"If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives freely to all men." - James 1:5

- If you just don't know what to do, resolve to do what will give God the most glory!

A Few Quotes Regarding God's Will

"Your great desire ought to be to *know* His Will. Your great delight will be to *do* His Will. Your great danger is to *refuse* His Will. Nothing is right for you if it is not God's Will."

- Dr. Adrain Rogers ²⁰

"There are two worlds, set over against each other, dominated by two wills, the will of man and the Will of God, respectively. To do the Will of God is to do more than give unprotesting consent to it; it is rather to choose God's Will with positive determination."

- A. W. Tozer ²¹

"Moses did not draw up blueprints of the tabernacle for God to approve. God handed down His plans. Today, we draw up our program and seek Divine endorsement instead of seeking first the Divine program."

- Vance Havner ²²

²⁰ Adrian Rogers, *What Every Christian Ought to Know*, Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, © 2005, p. 131.

²¹ A. W. Tozer, *The Divine Conquest*, © 1950, p. 105.

²² Vance Havner, *Truth for Each Day*, Fleming H. Revell Company, © 1973, p. 133.

A Few Scriptures Regarding God's Will

Proverbs 3:6, HCSB - ⁶ *... think about Him in all your ways, and He will guide you on the right paths.*

Ephesians 2:10, NIV - ¹⁰ *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Psalms 37:23, HCSB - ²³ *A man's steps are established by the Lord, and He takes pleasure in his way.*

Psalms 32:8, NIV - ⁸ *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.*

Isaiah 58:11, NIV - ¹¹ *The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.*

SCRIPTURE RESOURCE GUIDE

ABORTION: Eph. 1:7; Lk. 1:31; Ps. 139:13-16; Is. 1:18; Ps. 57:10; Ps. 103:8-11; Ps. 103:12; 1 Jn. 1:9; Lk. 1:41; Jer. 1:5. 1 Jn. 1:7-9; Deut. 33:27; Is. 40:31.

ADULTERY: Eph. 5:3; 1 Cor. 6:15-16; Jam. 1:14-15; Lev. 20:10; Prov. 6:32; Jer. 23:14; Prov. 28:13; Matt. 15:19-20; Matt. 5:27; Col. 3:1-2; 1 Jn. 1:9.

ADVERSITY: Hab. 3:17-18; Jam. 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 2 Cor. 4:17; 2 Cor. 1:9; Ps. 33:16-18; Rom 8; Job 8:3; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; Matt. 11:28-29; Ps. 23, 27:1-2, 37, 40:1-8, 46:1, 56:3-4, 62:1-2, 69.

AFFAIR VICTIMS: 1 Pet. 4:8; 1 Cor. 13:5; Eph. 4:26-27; Heb. 12:15; Jam. 5:16; 2 Cor. 2:6-8; Prov. 17:22; Phil. 4:6, 8; 1 Pet. 5:7; Joel 2:25; 1 Jn. 1:8-9, 2:15-17; Jam. 4:4-5. NOTE: *Your responsibility to forgive your spouse always takes precedence over your right to divorce.*

ALCOHOLISM: 2 Pet. 2:19; Prov. 20:1; Prov. 23:29-33; 1 Cor. 15:33; Jam. 5:16a; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Rom. 14:21; Jn. 8:36; Is. 26:3; Gal 5:22-23.

ANGER: Prov. 29:11; Rom. 12:19; Prov. 6:34, 14:17, 12:16, 14:29; Jam. 1:19-20; Prov. 17:14; Matt. 12:36; Col. 3:8; Prov. 10:20, 10:11, 12:18, 15:4, 16:21; Gal. 5:23; Lk. 6:29; Eph. 4:26.

BACKSLIDING: 1 Cor. 15:58; 1 Cor. 8:9; 13; Heb. 12:2; 10:24-25; Matt. 6:21; 1 Jn. 2:15; Jam. 4:4; 1 Cor. 10:13; Acts 24:16; Is. 66:2b; Jer. 29:13; Lk. 19:8b; 1 Jn. 3:10a; Jam. 5:19-20; Col 3:16-17; Prov. 28:13.

BITTERNESS: Eph. 4:32; Heb. 12:15; Matt. 5:23-24; Matt. 6:14-15; 1 Pet. 3:7; 1 Jn. 4:20; Rom 12:19; Jam. 5:16; Matt. 18:21-22; 1 Pet. 4:8.

DEPRESSION: Is. 43:2-3; Prov. 14:18; Job 7:3-5; Ps. 32:3-5; Eccl. 6:3; 1 Pet. 5:7; Ps. 55:4-8; Ps. 55:22; Ps. 137:1,4; Is. 61:3.

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE: Mal. 2:15; Eph. 5:21ff; Matt. 19:8-9; 1 Cor. 7:10-11; Matt. 5:32, 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:15; 1 Cor. 7:12-13.

DOUBTING ONE'S SALVATION: 2 Sam. 22:31; Acts 16:31ff; Rom. 10:13; 1 Jn. 5:13; Ps. 32:3-4; Rom. 5:9-10, 8:38-39; 1 Pet. 1:18,23; Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5; Heb. 9:12; Heb. 7:25; Jn. 6:37-39; Is. 49:15-16; 1 Cor. 1:8-9; Phil. 1:6; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; Matt. 7:16-20; 1 Cor. 3:16.

ENVY: 1 Cor. 13:4; Prov. 14:30; Ps. 37:25; 1 Tim. 6:6-8; Lk. 12:15; Ps. 16:5-6.

FEAR: Ps. 27:1; 2 Tim. 1:7; Gen. 26:24; Is. 43:1-2; 1 Jn. 4:18; Ps. 91:5-6, 9-10; Matt. 10:28.

FINANCIAL BONDAGE: Prov. 22:17; Prov. 22:7; Ps. 24:1, 50:12; Deut. 8:18; 1 Cor. 4:2; Matt. 6:33; 1 Tim. 6:10; Lk. 6:38; Mal. 3:10; Prov. 6:1-3,5.

GAMBLING: Luke 12:15; Prov. 16:33; 1 Tim. 6:6-8, 9-10; Lk. 12:15; Prov. 11:28a, 23:4-5; 1 Tim. 6:17; Prov. 28:22; Matt. 6:33; Prov. 28:13; Rom. 7:14; Ps. 5:1-3; Jam. 5:16; Matt. 5:23-24.

GRIEF: Ps. 30:5; Job 14:5; Ps. 139:16-17; Eph. 4:26-27; Jam. 4:14b; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; 2 Cor. 1:8-9; Jn. 16:20-22; Phil. 4:8; Eccl. 3:4; Phil. 3:13; Rom. 38-39, Ps. 30:5.

HOMOSEXUALITY: Gen. 2:22; Lev. 20:13; Deut. 23:18; Lev. 18:22; Gen 19ff; Rom. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Jn. 1:9.

HURT: 1 Pet. 5:7; Prov. 18:14; Eph. 4:23; Matt. 6:14-15; 1 Pet. 5:7; Gal. 6:2; 2 Cor. 1:9.

INFERIORITY: 1 Pet. 2:10; 1 Cor. 26-29; *Who are you in Christ?-see...* 1 Jn. 3:1; Rom. 8:17; Rom. 8:37; 2 Cor. 5:21; 2 Cor. 5:17.

LUST: Rom. 6:12; Matt. 5:27; Job. 31:1; Mark 7:20-23; Prov. 28:13; 1 Jn. 2:15-16; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; 1 Cor. 6:14-18, 1 Cor. 7.

LYING: Eph. 4:25; Prov. 12:22, 17:7; 12:22, 19:9, 29:12, 26:28; 2 Cor. 7:10; Rev. 21:8; Matt. 5:37; Rom. 9:1; 1 Pet. 1:22.

MARITAL DIFFICULTIES: 1 Thess. 5:15; Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:21ff; 1 Cor. 7:3-4, 5; Prov. 31:10-12, 15:1; Col. 4:6; 1 Pet. 3:7, Eph. 4:32, 26-27; Heb. 10:25; 1 Thess. 5:14; 1 Cor. 7:10-11.

OCCULT: 1 Jn. 3:8; 1 Chron. 10: 13-14; Deut. 17:10-12; Rev. 21:8; Is. 45:5; Lk. 13:3.

SALVATION: John 3:16, Rom. 3:23, 6:23; Ps. 51:5; Jn. 14:6; Rom. 10:9-10, 13; Acts. 3:19, 16:31.

SEEKING GOD'S WILL: Rom. 12:2; Jn 6:40; Eph. 6:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:13-15; Eph. 5:17-18; Ps 25:8; Jam. 1:5-6; Prov. 4:5-6; Deut. 29:29; Prov. 15:22, 11:14.

SUICIDE: Jam. 4:7; Ex. 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 14:7; Ps. 30:5; Ex. 15:26; Job. 14:5. Ps. 139:14; Matt. 11:28-30.

TERMINAL ILLNESS: 2 Cor. 12:9; Heb. 9:27; Ps. 90:10; Eccl. 3:2; Jer. 29:11; 2 Tim. 2:12.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN (ie. Never accepting Jesus as Lord of your life.): Mark 3:28-29; Matt. 12:31-32.

WORRY & ANXIETY: Phil. 4:6; Jn. 10:10; Matt. 6:25-27; Is. 46:11; Ps. 37:1,7; Matt. 6:31; Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:7; Ps. 55:22, 37:4, 27:1; 46:1, 23; Prov. 3:5-6; Jer. 29:11; Phil. 4:13, 19; Rom. 8:28ff.



The Christian Home

A Detailed Look At The Biblical Material

A DETAILED LOOK AT THE BIBLICAL MATERIAL REGARDING WIVES

STUDY VERSE SECTION - Ephesians 5:21-24, NIV - ²¹ **Submit** ὑποτασσῶ (Gk: ὑποτάσσω) *hupo* means “under”, *tasso* means “to arrange”. In the active voice (i.e., military meaning), it would mean to “come under command”. “Submit” here is used in the middle voice (i.e., architectural meaning) and means “to come together for a purpose”—order and unity is the focus. (NOTE: Many scholars believe the active voice would *require* submission while middle voice would *request* submission); **to one another**, both husbands and wives, **out of reverence** Φβος (GK: φόβος) gives us our English word *phobia* and means a “fear” or “dread” **for Christ**. I believe Paul used such strong language because of what the status of the home and women had become in those days; ²² **Wives** Γυνή (Gk: γυνή) means “female”, the word used here (Gk: γυναῖκες) means “one who takes a name”, **submit** this word does appear in the Greek in verse 22, it is literally rendered, “Wives, to your husbands, as to the Lord” **to your husbands as** not meaning “submit exactly as you submit to Christ” but meaning “submit in the same spirit” as **to the Lord**. ²³ **For the husband is the head** lit., “source” [see top of other side] **of the wife as** a word that can be translated “but”—showing a contrast, **Christ is the head** i.e., source **of the church, his body, of which he** alone **is the Savior**. ²⁴ **Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should** in similar fashion, **submit to their husbands in everything**.

This scripture could be rendered this way:

“Because of our understanding of God, husbands and wives will mutually come together for a divine purpose. Because Christ gave Himself for the church—as only He could, the church responded in submission. Likewise, because the husband gives himself to the wife to protect her and provide for her, the wife needs to respond to her husband with supportive submission and respect—as only she can.” –Eph 5:21-24, TCV

A. An important word about “source” (to husbands)

In Ephesians 5, a critical word is translated “head” (“...the husband is *head* of the wife”). “Headness”, in this passage, is akin to being “the source” (biblical/historical understanding) and not about being “the boss” (Western/corporate understanding). Think of the *headwaters* of a river providing *the source* of the water that makes up that river. A wonderful biblical picture of “source” is found in Genesis 2:18-20:

Genesis 2:18-25, NIV - ¹⁸ *The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper* [עֵזֶר (ē-zēr), lit., “one who fills a void”] *suitable for him.” ...* ²⁰ *no suitable helper was found [for Adam].* ²¹ *So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh.* ²² *Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.* ²³ *The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”* ²⁴ *For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.* ²⁵ *The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.*

- Q: Why she’s here? A: You need her! v. 18
- Q: Where she came from? A: God gave her to you! v. 22
- Q: How you are to react? A: This is “bone of my bone!” v. 23-24

B. Practical Application: “A Word to Wives”

1. Before you take his name (i.e., the husband), you need to take His name (i.e., The Savior).
2. As long as you look to your husband to meet your deepest needs, you’ll be frustrated perpetually—God meets the deepest of needs.
3. Great is the day, wife, when you realize that ever since the Garden of Eden, males have been missing something—*you!*
4. The relationship between the husband and wife is one governed by unselfish love, where both—*sacrificially*—meet the needs of each other. Husbands, a wife is not a slave, child, or roommate.
5. Eph. 5 does not suggest that women are inferior to men, or that all women must be in subjection to all men.
6. Submission (i.e., respect) is a response to trust.
7. The practical application for this passage is found in v. 33.

Ephesians 5:33, NIV - ³³ However, [husbands] must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

8. Showing “respect” is a divine calling to a wife that honors God.
9. Let’s Make it Simple: The Role of a Godly Wife—the *Heart* of the Home:
 - Mold and nurture the kids—*in the Lord!*
 - Manage the household
 - Meet the needs of the husband
 - Model Christ’s spirit in the home



A DETAILED LOOK AT THE BIBLICAL MATERIAL REGARDING HUSBANDS

STUDY VERSE SECTION - Ephesians 5:21, 25-33, NIV - ²¹ **Submit** *Hupotassō* (Gk: ὑποτάσσω) *hupo* means “under”, *tasso* means “to arrange”. “Submit” here is used in the middle voice (i.e., architectural meaning) and means “to come together for a purpose”—order and unity is the focus; **to one another**, both husbands and wives, **out of reverence** *Phobos* (GK: φόβω) gives us our English word *phobia* and means a “fear” or “dread” **for Christ**. I believe Paul used such strong language because of what the status of the home and women had become in those days—a radical *change of direction* was taking place theologically/socially ... ²⁵ **Husbands** come together with your wives for a divine purpose this way, **love** (Gk: ἀγαπά) “a self-sacrificing love”—this type love is administered both sacrificially and unconditionally in a continuous way (present imperative); **your wives**, *How?* **just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up** to the point of death **for her** ²⁶ **to make her holy** lit., sanctify—“to make holy, to set apart”, **cleansing her by the washing with water through the word**, ²⁷ **and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless**. ²⁸ **In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself**. ²⁹ **After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it** lit., “warms it, fosters with tender care”, **just as Christ does the church**—³⁰ **for we are members of his body**. ³¹ **“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”** ³² **This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church** *Pont: The home is the church in miniature.* ³³ **However** here is a application of this passage, **each one of you husbands also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband**, the word “husband” means vine-dresser and it most closely associated with our concept of a gardener—one who cares for a plant.

A. An important word about a husbands “love”

It is a Sacrificing Love

Ephesians 5:25, NLT - ²⁵ *For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her ...*

It is a Sanctifying Love

Ephesians 5:26-27, NLT - ²⁶ *to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God’s word.* ²⁷ *He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.*

It is a Satisfying Love

Ephesians 5:28-33, NLT - ²⁸ *In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself.* ²⁹ *No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church.* ³⁰ *And we are members of his body.* ³¹ *As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one."* ³² *This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.* ³³ *So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself...*

B. Practical Application: "A Word to Husbands"

1. The relationship between the husband and wife is one governed by unselfish love, where both—*sacrificially*—meet the needs of each other.
2. The word "husband" means *gardener*. It is you that *waters* and *cares for* the wife—you are her *need meeter*. (Observation: A wife's needs are generally security, intimate communication, and sincere praise.) Whatever they are, YOU MUST KNOW AND MEET YOUR WIFE'S NEEDS! (Your calendars/"To-do list" are the battlegrounds.)
3. "Headship" means that you, as husband, are the protector, provider, and pastor (spiritual leader) in your home.
4. "Trust" is the result of predictability, credibility, and transparency. *Make sure you are all three!*
5. Effective husbands know their wife's *love language*: Is your wife's *love language* ☐ Physical touch; ☐ Words of affirmation; ☐ Quality time; ☐ Gifts; and/or ☐ Acts of Service.
6. The practical application for this passage is found in v. 33. "*husbands ... love your wife...*" as Christ loved the church.
7. You make sure that you "*Dialog daily, date weekly, depart monthly—together*" with your wife.
8. Let's Make it Simple: The Role of a Godly Husband—the *Head* of the Home:
 - Provider for the home
 - Protector of the home
 - Primary "need meeter" for the wife
 - Primary significance of the husband should come from the home—not the job.

"Remember, the husband needs respect and the wife needs love!"



A DETAILED LOOK AT THE BIBLICAL MATERIAL REGARDING CHILDREN

Train up a child in the way he should go,
Even when he is old he will not depart from it.

- Proverbs 22:6, NASB95

STUDY VERSE SECTION - Ephesians 6:1-4, NIV – **Children** lit., (One who found) "life in the womb", **obey** lit., to hear and do, it speaks of recognizing the authority of **your parents** lit., "one who gives life" **in the Lord**—it is right to obey ... **in the Lord, for this is right.** ² **"Honor** lit., "place a high value on something" **your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—** ³ **"that** conditional phrase—Here's the deal, kids: If you will do something for God—Honor and obey your parents, God says he will do something for you: (1) **it may go well with you and** (2) **that you may enjoy long life on the earth."** ⁴ **Fathers** formal language used to address the home—both mother's and fathers, **do not exasperate** lit., to drain life from (we get our word *distress* from this word) **your children; instead, bring them up** lit., "nourish to maturity" **in the training** also translated *discipline*, lit., "train by way of commands", this word focuses on helping the child to **do what is right and instruction** lit., "correct with words", this word focuses of *correcting what is wrong* in the child's life based on the instructions **of the Lord.**

A Brief Word to Parents:

Ephesians 6:4, NIV - ⁴ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

- **Encourage** (don't take "life" from them)
- **Discipline** (so they know what is *right*)
- **Instruct** (so they will know what is *wrong*)

A WORD TO ALL KIDS ABOUT YOUR HOME:

God wants to make a deal with

KIDS, WRITE YOUR FIRST NAME IN THIS BLANK

Ephesians 6:1-3, MSG - ¹ *Children, do what your parents tell you. This is only right.*
² *"Honor your father and mother" is the first commandment that has a promise attached to it, namely,* ³ *"so you will live well and have a long life."*

If you will...

1. Obey your parents
2. Honor your parents

God will let you...

- A. Live a good life.
- B. Live a long life.

Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. ² "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: ³ If you honor your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth."

- Ephesians 6:1-3, NLT

A LOOK AT ADDITIONAL BIBLICAL MATERIAL REGARDING THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

THE FAMILY

Founded on ...	Based on ...
Divine Creation	Genesis 1:27-28, NIV - ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."
Marriage	Matthew 19:6, NIV - ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."
Monogamy	Exodus 20:14, NIV - ¹⁴ "You shall not commit adultery.
Unity of Parents	Exodus 20:12, NIV - ¹² "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.
Headship of Husband	1 Corinthians 11:3-7, NIV - ³ Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.
Subordination of Children	Ephesians 6:1-4, NIV - Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³ "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." ⁴ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.
Common Concern	Luke 16:27-28, NIV - ²⁷ "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, ²⁸ for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

THE HUSBAND

Plan Concerning...	Based on...
One flesh	Matthew 19:5-6, NIV - ⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."
Until Death	Romans 7:2-3, NIV - ² For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. ³ So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.
Rights of	1 Corinthians 7:1-5, NIV - Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. ² But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. ³ The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴ The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. ⁵ Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.
Sanctified by wife	1 Corinthians 7:14-16, NIV - ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. ¹⁵ But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. ¹⁶ How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

Duties of...(toward the wife)	Based on...
Love	Ephesians 5:25-33, NIV - ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.
Live with for life	Matthew 19:3-9, NIV - ³ Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?” ⁴ “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ ⁵ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” ⁷ “Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” ⁸ Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. ⁹ I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.”
Be faithful	Malachi 2:14-15, NIV - ¹⁴ You ask, “Why?” It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. ¹⁵ Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.
Be satisfied with	Proverbs 5:18-19, NIV - ¹⁸ May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. ¹⁹ A loving doe, a graceful deer— may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.
Honor	1 Peter 3:5, NIV - ⁵ For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands,
Provide for	1 Timothy 5:8, NIV - ⁸ If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.
Not Divorce	1 Corinthians 7:11, NIV - ¹¹ But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

THE WIFE

Described as...	Based on...
“A helper”	Genesis 2:18-20, NIV - ¹⁸ The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” ¹⁹ Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found...
“The husband’s crown”	Proverbs 12:4, NIV - ⁴ A wife of noble character is her husband’s crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.
“A good thing”	Proverbs 18:22, NIV - ²² He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord.
“The wife of your youth”	Malachi 2:14-15, NIV - ¹⁴ You ask, “Why?” It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. ¹⁵ Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.
“Your companion”	Malachi 2:14, NIV - ¹⁴ You ask, “Why?” It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

Duties of...(toward the husband)	Based on...
Submit to Husband	1 Peter 3:5-6, NIV - ⁵ For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, ⁶ like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.
Reverence for her husband	Ephesians 5:33, NIV - ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.
Love her husband	Titus 2:4, NIV - ⁴ Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children,
Be trustworthy	Proverbs 31:11-12, NIV - ¹¹ Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. ¹² She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.
Over her children	Titus 2:4, NIV - ⁴ Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children...
Be faithful/chaste	Titus 2:5, NIV - ⁵ to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.
Be a homemaker	Titus 2:5, NIV - ⁵ to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.
Be exclusive	Proverbs 5:15-17, 20, NIV - ¹⁵ Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. ¹⁶ Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? ¹⁷ Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers... ²⁰ Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife?
Be satisfying	Proverbs 5:18-19, NIV - ¹⁸ May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. ¹⁹ A loving doe, a graceful deer— may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.

THE CHILDREN

Should...	Based on...
Obey God	Deuteronomy 30:2, NIV - ² and when you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today,
Fear God	Proverbs 24:21, NIV - ²¹ Fear the Lord and the king, my son, and do not join with the rebellious...
Remember God	Ecclesiastes 12:1, NIV - ¹ Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them"...
Honor parents	Exodus 20:12, NIV - ¹² "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.
Obey parents	Ephesians 6:1, NIV - Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.
Attend to parents teachings	Proverbs 1:8-9, NIV - ⁸ Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. ⁹ They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.
Take care of parents	1 Timothy 5:4, NIV - ⁴ But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.
Honor the aged	1 Peter 5:5, NIV - ⁵ Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

DIVORCE

Is hated by God	Malachi 2:16, NIV - ¹⁶ <i>"I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel.</i>
Reconciliation encouraged	1 Corinthians 7:10-17, NIV - ¹⁰ <i>To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. ¹¹ But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. ¹² To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. ¹³ And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. ¹⁵ But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. ¹⁶ How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife? ¹⁷ Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.</i>
May be allowed for <u>adultery</u>*	Matthew 19:3-9, NIV - ³ <i>Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" ⁴ "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' ⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." ⁷ "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" ⁸ Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. ⁹ I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."</i>
May be allowed for <u>abandonment</u>*	1 Corinthians 7:15, NIV - ¹⁵ <i>But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.</i> *NOTE: Please understand that Jesus is not commanding you to divorce if your spouse meets one of these two instances. As a Christian, you must forgive him/her and you may decide not to divorce. In other words, divorce is not an "automatic." Adultery may be grounds for divorce, but sin is always grounds for forgiveness.
Any exceptions? **	Matthew 18:15-18, NIV - ¹⁵ <i>"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. ¹⁶ But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. ¹⁸ "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.</i> **NOTE: This "exception" is going out on a limb. In extremely, extremely rare cases, it may be that 'hardness of heart' might be a third instance for divorce. It would be important that the biblical prescriptions of confrontation are observed and absolutely observed and that <u>all</u> efforts are made to reconcile the marriage. It is <u>strongly</u> suggested that your pastor and church leadership be consulted prior to selecting this "exception" for divorce.



The Facts about Spiritual Warfare

*Be of sober spirit, **be on the alert**. Your adversary, the devil, **prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour**. But resist him (by being) firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren, who are in the world.*

- 1 Peter 5:8-10 (NASB)

FACT #1 - Becoming a Christian does not mean we will no longer have problems; we are at war and will experience "dark valleys."

GOD'S ANTIDOTE FOR THE DARK VALLEYS

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and staff, they comfort me."

- Psalm 23:4

A. What to remember in the "dark valleys" of life:

1. Valleys are inevitable.

"In this world, you will have trouble."

- John 16:33 (LB)

"Consider it all joy my brethren when you encounter various trials. . ."

- James 1:2 (NASB)

2. Valleys are unpredictable.

*"**Disaster follows** disaster . . . in an instant my tents are destroyed, my shelter falls in a moment."*

- Jeremiah 4:20 (LB)

3. Valleys are impartial.

"(It) rains on the just and the unjust too."

- Matthew 5:45 (LB)

4. Valleys are temporary.

"There is wonderful joy ahead, even though the going is rough for a while, down here."

- 1 Peter 1:6 (LB)

"Our troubles are short-lived and their outcome is an eternal glory which outweighs them all."

- 2 Corinthians 4:17

5. Valleys do serve a purpose.

". . . at the present you may be temporarily harassed by all kind of trials. This is no accident—it happens to prove your faith . . ."

- 1 Peter 1:6b-7 (PME)

B. What to do in "dark valleys":

1. Refuse to be *eternally* discouraged or depressed.

"I will fear no evil . . ."

- Psalm 23:4a

2. Remember that God is with you.

". . . for you are with me. . ."

- Psalm 23:4b

"When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up—the flames will not consume you."

- Isaiah 43:2 (LB)

3. Rely on God's protection and provision.

"Your rod and staff comfort me."

- Psalm 23;4

"The good man does not escape all troubles—he has them too. But the Lord helps him in each and every one."

- Psalm 34:19 (LB)

FACT #2 - The difficulties we experience as Christians will come from one of six sources (see worksheet on page 121):

- The natural consequences of foolish actions and/or decisions.
- The temptations of Satan.
- The discipline of God as a consequence of sin.
- The testing of God designed to cause spiritual growth.
- The consequences of other people's sin our lives
- Just life in general . . . "*We live in a fallen world.*"

FACT #3 - Adversity caused by any one of these six sources is allowed by God through a perfect blending of two biblical principles:

- **Galatians 6:7-8** - *"One reaps what one sows, good or bad."*
- **Romans 8:28** - *"God can turn even the bad into good."*

FACT #4 - Christians are to flee temptation and/or resist the devil.

"Flee temptation" means you leave or get away from the temptation. If you cannot leave the temptation, here is a Biblical formula for resisting the devil based on Matthew 4:

- (1) Address the demon directly.
- (2) Command him to leave you alone and cease his activities in your life.
- (3) Remind him of the authority you have as you have God in your life—*claim the Blood!*
- (4) Reinforce yourself by gathering Christians around you for prayer, accountability, and support.

FACT #5 - When you sin, confession and humble repentance before God will restore you to a right fellowship with Him.

Remember. . .

- (1) God does forgive sin.
- (2) God still loves you.
- (3) God still wants to help you overcome personal problems.
- (4) God will help you overcome Satan's temptations in your life.
- (5) God is greater and more powerful than Satan.

FACT #6 - All believers must use the same weapons in Spiritual warfare. Our battles may be different but our weapons are the same.

- (1) Prayer/fasting
- (2) God's Word (reading/studying/memorizing/quoting, etc.)
- (3) Discernment
- (4) Church Community—*we need each other!*

SPIRITUAL DIFFICULTIES WORKSHEET

What is the source of your difficulties? Take your "difficulty" before the Lord and seek to understand where it came from—then you'll know what to do with it:

Source option	Advice	Scripture/Insight
Is it the natural consequence of foolish actions and/or decisions?	Learn from your mistakes	A fool learns <u>from his own mistakes</u> but the wise learns from other people's mistakes. – Proverbs (many speak to this truth)
Is it the temptations of Satan?	Endure or (if possible) run from sin	1 Corinthians 10:13, NASB95 - ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation <u>will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.</u> 2 Timothy 2:22, TLB - ²² Run from anything that gives you the evil thoughts that young men often have, but stay close to anything that makes you want to do right. Have faith and love, and enjoy the companionship of those who love the Lord and have pure hearts.
Is it the discipline of God as a consequence of sin?	Confession, repentance, and/or restitution* are the biblical prescription for sin. *Seek <i>restitution</i> if possible or if needed	James 1:15, NASB95 - ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, <u>it brings forth death.</u> 1 John 1:9, NLT - ⁹ But if we <u>confess our sins</u> to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.
Is it the testing of God designed to cause spiritual growth?	Pray for wisdom—how does God want you to grow?	James 1:2-5, NLT - ² Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³ For you know that <u>when your faith is tested</u> , your endurance has a chance to grow. ⁴ So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. ⁵ If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.
Is it the consequence of other people's sin in our lives?	Pray, forgive, and process your story, knowing God brings "good out of bad" (cf., Romans 8:28).	Isaiah 59:3, NIV - ³ For your hands are stained with <u>[innocent] blood</u> , your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters wicked things.
Is it just <i>life in general</i> ? You must realize that "we live in a fallen world" that will not be fair or even make sense.	As kindly as it can be put, "get over it."	Psalms 34:19, LB - "The good man does not escape all troubles—he has them too. <u>But the Lord helps him</u> in each and every one."



Processing Your Life Story

What do you do with the “sufferings” or in those major events of life?

Introduction—Quotes about the Suffering we all experience:

“Paul who wrote in Romans 11:33 that ‘*How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out*’...clearly understood the difference between God’s *promises* and His *processes*. He was absolutely content to rest in His *will* even though he knew he could never fathom His *ways*. He knew that *purposes* and *plans* were vastly different truths and that they operated in entirely different spheres ... Genuine faith is never intimidated by sight ... while always welcoming divine explanations, faith never stoops to the silliness of demanding them ... faith is never threatened by the unexplainable. It respects His sovereignty and delights in His mysteries. It gladly acknowledges that God cannot always be understood, but He can always be trusted.”

- Evangelist Junior Hill

“God is in the business of *sustaining* not *explaining*.”

- Pastor Paul Powell

“Remember, Christianity is not a vaccine that immunizes us to problems and difficulties in life. God never promised us there would never be ‘storms,’ He did promise that we would never be alone in the midst of them—our God will be with us!”

- Pastor Joe K. Taylor

¹ Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. ² From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

- Psalm 61:1-2 (NIV)

“Pain insists upon being attended to; God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain; it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

- C.S. Lewis

“The trials and difficulties we face in life should be a reminder to us all that ‘this world is not our home; we’re just a pass’n through.’ If life was too good here on Earth, we might have a thought of wanting to stay here and miss Heaven. Suffering is a witness that we left the Garden (of Eden). Suffering is the impetus for the believer to long for Heaven—not Earth.”

- Unknown

1. Suffering is a part of living in a “fallen” world.

A. Moral Evil (wicked people—NY on 9/11)

Jeremiah 17:9 (NLT) -⁹ *The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?*

Mark 7:21 (NIV) -²¹ *For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²²greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.*

B. Natural Evil (Accidents and disasters—*Asian tsunami*)

Romans 8:22 (NIV) -²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

2. Suffering is unrelated to our own "personal goodness".

Matthew 5:45 (TLB) – [It] rains on the just and the unjust.

Luke 13:1-5 (NCV) - ¹ At that time some people were there who told Jesus that Pilate had killed some people from Galilee while they were worshipping. He mixed their blood with the blood of the animals they were sacrificing to God. ² Jesus answered, "Do you think this happened to them because they were more sinful than all others from Galilee? ³ No, I tell you ... ⁴ What about those eighteen people who died when the tower of Siloam fell on them? Do you think they were more sinful than all the others who live in Jerusalem? ⁵ No, I tell you. But unless you change your hearts and lives, you will all be destroyed too!"

"In effect what Jesus was asking was this: 'You people are asking the wrong question. You should be asking me, 'why didn't the tower fall on MY head?'"
- R.C. Sproul (Christian theologian and writer)

3. Suffering amplifies God's message; we need a Savior—*His name is Jesus!*

Acts 17:29-31 (NIV) -²⁹ "Therefore ... we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man's design and skill. ³⁰ In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹ For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

2 Peter 3:9-10 (MSG) - God isn't late with his promise as some measure lateness. He is restraining himself on account of you, holding back the End because he doesn't want anyone lost. He's giving everyone space and time to change. But when the Day of God's Judgment does come, it will be unannounced, like a thief.

Here is the point: *We all will have difficult parts of our lives that we need to process and understand!*



Processing Your Life Story

A. An Important Verse to Understand

Study Verse Section—Romans 8:28, NASB95 - ²⁸ **And we** as Christians **know** intuitively and can experience personally **that God causes** lit., "harmonizes" **all** ie., every single one--all **things to work** we get our English word "synergy" from this word **together for good** lit., "the good" **to those who** (1) **love God**, and (2) **to those who are called according to His** ie., eternal **purpose**.

1. There is always something **CONFIDENTIAL about the storms in your life.**

"And we know ... "

2. There is always something **COMPREHENSIVE about the storms in your life.**

"... that God causes all things ... "

3. There is always something **CONSTRUCTIVE about the storms in your life.**

"... that God causes all things to work together for good... "

4. There is always something **CONDITIONAL about the storms in your life.**

"... to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose ... "

B. A good “WORD PICTURE”

While growing up in Texas, I enjoyed my mother's buttermilk biscuits made from "scratch" every morning for breakfast. But there was not a single ingredient in those biscuits that I would have enjoyed by itself. And even after they were mixed together, I would not have cared for the raw biscuit dough. Only after they were mixed together in the right proportions by my mother's skillful hands and then subjected to the fire of the oven were they ready to be enjoyed for breakfast.

The “things” of Romans 8:28 are like the ingredients of the biscuit dough. By themselves they are not tasteful to us. We shun them. And we certainly shun the heat of the oven. But when God in His infinite skill has blended them all together and cooked them properly in the oven of adversity, we shall one day say, “It is good.”

- Jerry Bridges, Trusting God Even When Life Hurts, pp. 151-152

C. Let's Take a Look at Your Life Story:

Write down (below) “Your Life Story” so we can process it:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

D. Let's now process your Life Story

Very Important: *The events of your life are processed when you can answer four important questions well:*

Suggestion: Try formalizing the answer to these questions (See Appendix that follows on page)

1. What "good" for me can I learn for my own life?

2. What "good" for me can I learn about my own God?

3. What "good" for me can I learn that I can give away to others?

4. Are there any "curse of words" I need to deal with in my own life?

James 3:9-10, NIV - ⁹ *With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.* ¹⁰ *Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.*

What is the "curse of words" in your life?

Break the "Curse of Words" by asking ...

- Is this "curse" in keeping with what God the Father purposed when He created you?
- Is this "curse" in keeping with what God the Son purposed when He died for you?
- Is this "curse" in keeping with what God the Spirit purposes in you now?

Appendix

Actual LETTER to Jack (pseudonym), age 16

The following MEMO was written to a young man, age 16, about the terrible sexual abuse situation that was perpetrated on him during a school event. The offender in this case was an adult friend (now charged with being a pedophile) he met at a local church. We spent about 6 months “processing his life story” and specifically the specific storm he encountered during his senior year in high school.

I wrote this LETTER to him to help document our sessions together and the lessons we learned. The actual text of that letter is printed below.

NOTE: The facts and story lines in this MEMO are true but names, dates, and places have been changed to keep confidentiality at a maximum.



Dear Jack:

I want to thank you for the opportunity to minister to you in the past few months of your life. In the nearly 14 appointments we have had of late, we discussed an incident that happened in your life weeks ago. One verse that has motivated us throughout the entire storm is this, Romans 8:28 states “and we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God and those who are called according to his purposes.”

If you will remember, we learned four important truths about the storms in our lives. The first truth is confidential and we know “the Bible says only as believers can we truly understand and find good out of all bad.” Second, “it’s comprehensive.” The Scriptures say God causes all things to work together for good. We have been steadfast in our efforts to find good in the midst of this difficult situation. Number three, it’s constructive. I’ve stated to you that the events of your life are a process from which we can answer well four important questions. 1) What good for me can I learn about my life? 2) What good for me can I learn about my God? 3) What good for me can I learn for others? 4) Are there any curse words that I need to deal with? Our time together has been working towards answering those questions. A fourth truth about the storms in our lives is that it is conditional. The Bible says that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purposes. Jack, I sense that deep within your heart you do have a love for God, and I pray you will always keep your fire for God kindled and glowing for Him. Whether you end up moving this summer or staying here, the most important task before you is to keep your passion for God elevated.

I want to reflect on those four questions that we process in our life stories.

First, what good for me can I learn about my life? If you will remember I stated that you have to find some good in all of this. Some of the things we discussed are as follows;

- You now have a new sense of boundaries regarding relationships.
- You can now better identify what is wrong with those around you.
- You can now identify weird relationships and call them earlier rather than later.
- You have also discovered that you are not gay, you are a straight person, and I have applauded you for this.

- You have also discovered that God is going to be there for you in all the storms in your life. Jack, that truth alone can get you through any storm you face. But you will also need those loved ones around you to encourage you. And, that leads us to another point.
- You have learned the value of [Step Mom] in your life. She is a great lady and she prays for you and she loves you. Thank you for valuing her.
- Next, you value your parents' advice more. I say to people that if you flunk home, you'll flunk life. Jack, whatever you do, whether you move or not, make sure you are right with your [Dad] and [Mom].
- I think you have gained a more realistic view about the church. The church is still the bride of Christ and still that avenue that we learn about God. But the churches are made up of sheep and sometimes those sheep bite. You have gained a more realistic view about church. Don't give up on it; just realize it has its shortcomings as well.
- You have also learned about forgiveness, that forgiveness is for your benefit, not others. Sometimes we forgive people who may not be worthy of our forgiveness because of the value it will be in our lives.

What good for you can you learn about your life? Apart from those things listed above, my brother; just know that with every situation you face, you need to process your story by asking the question, "What good can I learn for me, that I can take with me from any situation?" Life is a good thing, learning about life is an awesome thing, and I pray that your ears will always be attuned to what God is doing in any and every situation in your life.

Big number two, what good for me can I learn about my God? You have already stated that you have a more realistic view about his bride – the Church. Other things we have learned and discussed during our time together is that God is there for you. Regardless of what situations you find yourself in Jack, God will always be there for you. And I don't want you to ever forget that. The question you had, "Do incidents like this happen and are they a test?" I don't believe that God causes all things, I believe the verse we have studied, that God causes all things to work together. I don't believe that God is the author of the tragedies in your life. I do believe that he is a God who brings good out of bad, that He has brought good out of this, it has been a growing process for you, and I pray that you will be strengthened in it. We have also learned that God will get you through anything if you allow Him to. Life's testing times allow us to learn this great truth about God.

You have leaned to praise God in the midst of even bad situations. The Bible says that God inhabits the praises of His people, and whatever circumstances you find yourself in please find reason to pray to God, even in the midst of storms. Next, you have learned that God will get you through all things. This has been a tough moment of you life, but God has gotten you through it and I am thankful for that,

Probably the most important thing you have learned is that Christianity requires total commitment, 24/7, 365 days a year, you have learned this about God. Jack, I heard a quote one time that states, "Tolerance is the virtue of a man with no convictions." Jack, I want you to have a sense of conviction of what is right and what is wrong. You have been able to analyze this situation in your life and you realized what's wrong and you realized what is right. I am thankful for this. Please know this, that your God is an awesome God and He is an all powerful God, and if you will commit your life 100% to Him there is no storm in life that God cannot get you through.

Number Three, what good for me can I learn for others? A verse that motivates us is found in Corinthians and says, "The storms that we weather we will be able to learn lessons that we can give away to others." You can tell other people in the midst of storms what you learned through this. First, that God will be there for you, if you will only lean on Him. What a marvelous tool of encouragement you will have if you can get those around you to put their complete trust in God, because he will be there for you. Second, you have learned that you are not alone, that others will be there for you including me. When you encounter people in a crisis you will be able to tell them that God is there for them and that other people will be there for them; they need those others to enable them to weather the storms.

Number four, "Are there any curse words that I need to deal with?" James 3:9-10 says *"With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father and with it we curse men who have been made in God's likeness, out of the same mouth comes praise and cursings. My brothers this should not be."* I have defined the "curse of words" as this, anything that is said to you that you feel has now cursed you and your mind set towards you, others, and God. Some questions that we have kept before us to help break the curse of words are these: a) Is this curse in keeping with what God the Father purposed when He created you; b) Is this curse in keeping with what God the Son purposed when he died for you; c) Is this curse in keeping with what God the Holy Spirit purposes for you now. Though we have not defined any distinctive curse words in your life, we have during our discussion times discovered some truths about the Lord. One of those is this vengeance is Mine I shall repay. One curse of words in our lives in this has been that we have to demand justice in this. The reality is that we are the children of God and regardless of what the legal system does or does not do our God is a sovereign God and He will always come to the rescue of His children. He may not come on the time frame we prefer but He will be there. Let's not believe the curse that says anything to the contrary.

We have also learned that life is not fair. A curse of words can make us a victim in thinking that because our lives are not fair that somehow God does not love us, or that somehow Satan is against us. The reality is that Satan is against you but equally true is that God is always for you. God is trustworthy. But, though we live in a fallen world, and though we live in a world that is not fair, our God never promised us that our Christianity would be a vaccine that would immune us from problems and difficulties in life. His promise to us is not that we would not have problems; His promise is that we would never go through storms without His presence nearby.

Jack, in closing I want to express some concerns I have for you. I have kind of kidded you off and on during our time together about how handsome you are. You are aware that there are some issues that I feel that are probably unresolved at this time. Those issues basically surround how you feel about yourself and specifically your physical appearance. You are a handsome kid indeed. But I want to remind you that there will always be guys that are more handsome than you and there will always be guys less handsome than you. You are a great kid, but what draws women and people of integrity to people like you is not the size of their muscles and not the size of their bodies, but it is the glow in their hearts. I pray that you will focus your attention on the Lord, and become less obsessed with your physical appearance and more concerned with your spiritual health. I think this is good advice for you.

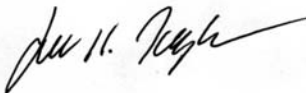
A second concern that I have is regarding your relationship with [Birth Father] and [Step Mom]. Though I feel that it has been worked out to a great degree, I want to make sure you hear me say this clearly; it is my conviction that if you flunk home, you flunk life, and before you move I want to make sure that you are 100% in a good relationship with them; that you will visit with them throughout your life. You may have some legal battles you share with them in this current situation, and you will need them there for you. I want to encourage you to always make sure that the authority figures in your life receive the utmost respect, they are worthy of that. Are they perfect? No. Have they ever sinned? Yes. Have they messed up? Sure they have. But, do they love you? Absolutely. Do they pray for you? I have no doubt. Value them; they are God's gift to you.

My prayer for any young man like you is for protection because I know that in a single moment you could give up your commitment to the Lord to pursue a woman or an activity or any thing that we might call sin. God has got great things for you Jack, I am convinced that if you keep your heart fully devoted to Him, God will use you in great and mighty ways of which you cannot even conceive. I want my relationship with you to be one of me being a voice of encouragement and my encouragement to you is...look to Jesus. What ever you do, in all of your life, look to Christ, find out where God is on mission and join Him in that. Purpose everyday when you get up that you will bring glory to God. Purpose everyday when you go throughout the tasks on that day that you will live your life in such a way that it will bring honor and glory to the Lord.

Jack you are a great guy, I have praised the Lord for the opportunity to know you during these last few months. I will continue to pray for you throughout your life time and want you to know that I will always be here for you. You will always be able to contact me here through SOUTH RENO BAPTIST CHURCH. If you are in a situation and want my prayers, my support or have questions for me, please feel free to contact me at anytime in the future. My number here at SOUTH RENO BAPTIST CHURCH is 775.827.3227. My email is jtaylor@southreno.com. Though these numbers may change you can always reach us at www.southreno.com. Please know that you have my heartfelt support, I wish you God's speed in the future, know that my prayers will be with you always. God bless you Jack.

Remember, I am proud of you! I believe in you, Jack—don't every forget that.

Warmly,



Dr. Joe K. Taylor, Senior Pastor
South Reno Baptist Church

PS: As I have stated, I will be 100% available to you in your prosecution against [the bully]. Please have your attorney communicate with me all court and any further deposition dates. As we discussed, I will need a confidentiality release signed by you and your parents before I take the stand. This is a formality but it will be required by the court system. My secretary will provide this form to you. *"We'll get through all this!"* - JKT

Processing Your Life Story Worksheet—Major Event(s)			
Event:			
Related Scriptures, quotes, or encouragement.	What “Good” for me can I learn for My Own Life?	What “Good” for me can I learn about My Own God?	What “Good” for me can I learn that I can give to Others?
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Instructions:</p> <p>Using this sheet as a basic guide, organize your thoughts this way. (1) In a single phrase or sentence, describe the “event” to be processed and write it in the “event” box. (2) Then search the scripture to locate every scripture that can relate to this topic and/or event. Place this in column one. (3) In the corresponding column, write down the insights and wisdom you can derive for your own life. (4) In the corresponding column, write down the insights and wisdom you can learn about God. (5) In the corresponding column, write down the counsel you might give to others in a similar situation.</p> <p>An unmarked copy of this page follows and can be duplicated for each major event in your life.</p> </div>			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.	8.	8.	8.
9.	9.	9.	9.
10.	10.	10.	10.

Processing Your Life Story Worksheet—"Curse of Words"

"Curse of Words":

Question for Consideration

Scripture / Insight / Discussion

Is this "curse" in keeping with what God the Father purposed when He created me?

Is this "curse" in keeping with what God the Son purposed when He came to earth?

Is this "curse" in keeping with what God the Holy Spirit purposes in me now?

Instructions:

Using this sheet as a basic guide, organize your thoughts this way. (1) In a single phrase or sentence, write down the "curse" that someone has said to you that has caused you to stumble. (2) Using the corresponding questions, search the scriptures and identify what God really has in store for you. The Word of God—which is perfect—will counter any "curse" offered by an imperfect person.

Let's God's Word and His plan for you break
the curse of words in your life.

An unmarked copy of this page follows and can be duplicated for each "Curse of Words" in your life.

Processing Your Life Story Worksheet—Major Life Questions

Major Life Questions	What does Scriptures say?	What do “wise” people say?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Instructions:

Using this sheet as a basic guide, organize your thoughts this way. The “major events” in our lives may leave us with some pretty major questions about life, what happened to us, what happened to others, etc. Having a scriptural affirmation about a topic(s) may help us “process” that event better.

It is okay to ask questions. It is okay to search the scriptures to see what they say about the questions we have. Unanswered questions may lead to doubt that may then lead to some injury to our faith. “Search the scripture” and see what they say.

An unmarked copy of this page follows and can be duplicated for each “Curse of Words” in your life.

Processing Your Life Story Worksheet—Major Event(s)			
Event:			
Related Scriptures, quotes, or encouragement.	What “Good” for me can I learn for My Own Life?	What “Good” for me can I learn about My Own God?	What “Good” for me can I learn that I can give to Others?
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.	6.
7.	7.	7.	7.
8.	8.	8.	8.
9.	9.	9.	9.
10.	10.	10.	10.

Processing Your Life Story Worksheet—"Curse of Words"

"Curse of Words":

Question for Consideration	Scripture / Insight / Discussion
<p>Is this "curse" in keeping with what God the Father purposed when He created me?</p>	
<p>Is this "curse" in keeping with what God the Son purposed when He died me?</p>	
<p>Is this "curse" in keeping with what God the Holy Spirit purposes in me now?</p>	

Processing Your Life Story Worksheet—Major Life Questions

Major Life Questions	What does Scriptures say?	What do “wise” people say?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		



Handling Grief

I WAS SITTING, torn by grief. Someone came and talked to me of God's dealings, of why it happened, of hope beyond the grave. He talked constantly, he said things I know were true. I was unmoved, except to wish he'd go away. He finally did.

Another came and sat beside me. He didn't talk. He didn't ask leading questions. He just sat beside me for an hour and more, listened when I said something, answered briefly, prayed simply, left. I was moved. I was comforted. I hated to see him go.

- Joseph Bayly, *The Last Thing We Talk About*

A. Introductory Statements on Grief Management.

1. ***"Remember, the Bible does not say, 'God will never put on you more than you can bear.' The Bible does say, 'God will never put on you more than He can bear.'"***
2. ***"Remember, Christianity is not a vaccine that immunizes us to problems and difficulties in life."***
3. ***"God never promised us there would never be 'storms,' He did promise us that He would be with us in the midst of them."***
4. ***"Grief is the price we pay for loving—it is a sign we loved someone; it is a sign of health!"***
5. ***"There are no set formulas or stages of grief. We all grieve in different ways. What makes the process of grief complex is that we can experience many feelings, in varying levels of intensity, all at the same time."***
6. ***"As a rule, we don't control our feelings. Remember that 'grief'—that mixture of many feelings all at***
7. ***Once—is as intense a 'feeling' as one can experience."***

The righteous perish, and no one understands it in his heart; devout men are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil. ² Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.

- Isaiah 57:1-2 (NIV)

B. "Society's Approach to Handling Grief"

Source: Grief Management, by Drs. John James and Frank Cherry: Cf., "The Story of Johnny"

1. Bury your feelings.
2. Replace your losses.
3. Grieve alone.
4. Time alone heals.
5. Live with regret.
6. Never trust again.

C. "A Biblical Approach to Grief Management"

Source: Dr. Joe K. Taylor, Senior Pastor, South Reno Baptist Church

Don't bury your feelings ...

1. Express your feelings.

John 11:35 (NASB) - "Jesus wept" [at the grave of a best friend.]

Matthew 5:4 (NASB) - "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Don't just try to replace the loss, but ...

2. Review the loss in light of God's Word.

1 Thessalonians 4:13a (NIV) - Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

"It may be helpless, but it is never hopeless with Christ around." - Anonymous

Don't grieve alone ...

3. Grieve together in Christian Community.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (LB) - What a wonderful God we have—He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of every mercy, and the One who so wonderfully comforts and strengthens us in our hardships and trials. And why does He do this? So that when others are troubled, needing our sympathy and encouragement, we can pass on to them this same help and comfort God has given us.

Helping Others through Grief

By Dolorous Keening

- ❶ Do acknowledge the loss.
- ❷ Do give the person permission to express emotion.
- ❸ Do free the person to talk and then listen. (Be careful not to "top stories" or just talk too much)
- ❹ Do offer practical help. (Food, childcare, house cleaning, etc.)
- ❺ Do recontact the person monthly. (We grieve in 3 month cycles and at holidays/anniversaries)
- ❻ Don't be alarmed by "off the wall" statements.
- ❼ Don't try to answer the "why" question.
- ❽ Don't make careless statements (e.g., "This was just God's will." "They had a full life," "I understand what you are going through," "You will get over this," "It could be worse.").

Realize that time alone does not heal ...

4. Only the Holy Spirit offers true healing.

Isaiah 53:5b (NKJ) – “...by His wounds we are healed.”

Don't live with regret ...

5. You can still resolve your regrets.

Romans 12:18 (NASB) - *If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.*

Don't wall up and never trust again ...

6. Make God your treasure and you will never lose it.

Matthew 28:20 (KJV) - “... and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

F *faith is never threatened by the unexplainable. It respects His sovereignty and delights in His mysteries. It gladly acknowledges that God cannot always be understood, but He can always be trusted. That's why Paul could so confidently write: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unreachable are his judgments, and His ways past finding out" (Rom. 11:33). Paul could make that insightful statement because he clearly understood the differences between God's promises and His processes. He was absolutely content to rest in His will even though he knew he could never fathom His ways. He knew that purposes and plans were vastly different truths and that they operated in entirely different spheres. – Junior Hill*

D. Suggested Scriptures

Scriptures are printed verbatim with sources noted. The words of Jesus are printed in Red.

Psalms 73:25-26, NIV - ²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. ²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. ... ²⁸ But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.

Job 8:20-21, NIV - ²⁰ “Surely God does not reject a blameless man or strengthen the hands of evildoers. ²¹ He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy.

Job 8:20-21, NLT - ²⁰ “But look, God will not reject a person of integrity, nor will he lend a hand to the wicked. ²¹ He will once again fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy.

Psalms 119:49-50, NLT - ⁴⁹ Remember your promise to me; it is my only hope. ⁵⁰ Your promise revives me; it comforts me in all my troubles.

Psalms 9:9, NLT - ⁹ The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

Psalms 23:1-4, NLT - ¹ The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need. ² He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. ³ He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name. ⁴ Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.

Psalms 18:2, NLT - ² The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety.

Psalms 30:5, NLT - ⁵ For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime! Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning.

Psalms 31:7, NLT - ⁷ I will be glad and rejoice in your unfailing love, for you have seen my troubles, and you care about the anguish of my soul.

Psalms 46:1-2, NLT - ¹ For the choir director: A song of the descendants of Korah, to be sung by soprano voices. God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. ² So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea.

Psalm 55:22, NLT - ²² Give your burdens to the Lord, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall.

Psalm 71:20, NLT - ²⁰ You have allowed me to suffer much hardship, but you will restore me to life again and lift me up from the depths of the earth.

Psalm 103:13, TLB - ¹³ He is like a father to us, tender and sympathetic to those who reverence him.

Psalm 126:5-6, NLT - ⁵ Those who plant in tears will harvest with shouts of joy. ⁶ They weep as they go to plant their seed, but they sing as they return with the harvest.

Psalm 147:3, NLT - ³ He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds.

Isaiah 41:10, NLT - ¹⁰ Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

Isaiah 43:2-3, NLT - ² When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. ³ For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

Matthew 5:4, 10-12, NLT - ⁴ God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ... ¹⁰ God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. ¹¹ "God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. ¹² Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

Jeremiah 29:11-13, NLT - ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² In those days when you pray, I will listen. ¹³ If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.

Lamentations 3:31-33, NLT - ³¹ For no one is abandoned by the Lord forever. ³² Though he brings grief, he also shows compassion because of the greatness of his unfailing love. ³³ For he does not enjoy hurting people or causing them sorrow.

Matthew 10:29-31, NLT - ²⁹ What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. ³⁰ And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.

John 14:1-6, NLT - ¹ "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. ² There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going." ⁵ "No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

John 14:27, NLT - ²⁷ "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.

Matthew 11:28-30, NLT - ²⁸ Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

Matthew 11:28-30, MSG - ²⁸ "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. ²⁹ Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. ³⁰ Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

John 16:33, NLT - ³³ I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

Romans 8:28, NLT - ²⁸ And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Romans 8:35, NLT - ³⁵ Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?

1 Corinthians 1:3-7, NLT - ³ May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. ⁴ I always thank my God for you and for the gracious gifts he has given you, now that you belong to Christ Jesus. ⁵ Through him, God has enriched your church in every way—with all of your eloquent words and all of your knowledge. ⁶ This confirms that what I told you about Christ is true. ⁷ Now you have every spiritual gift you need as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:8, NLT - ⁸ We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair.

2 Corinthians 4:16-17, NLT - ¹⁶ That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. ¹⁷ For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!

2 Corinthians 12:7-10, NLT - ⁷ even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. ⁸ Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. ⁹ Each time he said, *"My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness."* So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. ¹⁰ That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Hebrews 2:14, NLT - ¹⁴ Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death.

Hebrews 4:15, NLT - ¹⁵ This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin.

1 Peter 4:12-14, NLT - ¹² Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. ¹³ Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world. ¹⁴ So be happy when you are insulted for being a Christian, for then the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you.

Revelation 21:1-5, NLT - ¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever." ⁵ And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true."

Matthew 25:34-40, MSG - ³⁴ *"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what's coming to you in this kingdom. It's been ready for you since the world's foundation. ³⁵ And here's why: I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was homeless and you gave me a room, ³⁶ I was shivering and you gave me clothes, I was sick and you stopped to visit, I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷ "Then those 'sheep' are going to say, 'Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? ³⁸ And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?' ⁴⁰ Then the King will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.'"*



Managing Stress

1. An Overview of Stress Management

A. Two types of stress

Eustress – “Eu” means “good”; “stress” means “force”... *Eustress* is the good stress in our lives. It may be a good family, good kids, a good marriage, fulfilling careers, athletics, “life”, etc. *“Remember, it is good stress but it is still stress!”*

Distress – “Dis” means “away” and/or “to deprive of”; “stress” means “force” ... *Distress* is a bad force that *takes force away* from our lives. It may be a tough family situation, bad acting kids, a straying mate, demanding careers, financial problems, “life”, etc.

B. Two denominations of stress

Accumulative – This is a lot of “little stressors” (e.g., *dis* or *eu*) over a long period of time.

Acute - This is a large stress event in a short/immediate time period.

Suggested Therapies for Distress v. Eustress (Based on Stress Denominations)		
DENOMINATION	TYPE	THERAPY
Accumulative	Eustress	<i>“Keep enjoying your life”</i>
Acute	Eustress	<i>“Celebration and personal recovery time.”</i>
Accumulative	Distress	<i>“Intentional stress management”</i>
Acute	Distress	<i>“Intentional grief management”</i>

If we live for the present and forget the future, trials will make us bitter, not better. ... It will move us away from God, not closer to Him. Our prayer to breath is not “God, make this storm cease!” but “God, what are You saying to me in this storm?”

- Dr. Warren Wiersbe

C. Ten Warning Signs of “Burnout” (i.e., “accumulative distress”)

Source: Unknown—but this is a “living list” that has been changed over time.

1. Your devotional life is suffering.
2. Your family is being adversely affected.
3. You have a nagging sense of always being behind.
4. You have difficulty tolerating inconvenience.
5. Sabbath rest is the exception rather than the norm.
6. You experience a sense of overall weariness.
7. Physical exercise is sporadic or nonexistent.
8. Physical ailments are increasing.
9. The sense of serving God with gladness is gone.
10. You fight periodic thoughts of fleeing from the will of God.

“It is very important that we know our “*stress voices*”—stress can and will have a cumulative effect on us.”

Compassion Fatigue is the fatigue we experience physically, psychologically, emotionally, sexually, intellectually, and spiritually, etc., because of being a caregiver.

2. “Accumulative Stress Management” (e.g., “rust out, don’t burn out”)

Source: Dr. Joe K. Taylor, Senior Pastor, South Reno Baptist Church

You become a candidate for burnout when

1. Devotional time is diminished.
2. Family time is deleted.
3. Recovery time is delayed.
4. “Sharpening time” is denied.
5. Health consideration is delinquent.
6. Focused priorities are deficient.
7. Personal holiness is disregarded.

“Your personal calendar and your ‘to-do list’ is the battleground!” -JKT

3. “Acute Stress Management”

Source: Dr. Joe K. Taylor, Senior Pastor, South Reno Baptist Church

1. Identify the specific “stressor”.
2. Gain every insight possible about that stressor.
3. Develop a good support team.
4. Enroll in a good grief management plan.
5. Enlarge the “margins” in your life:
 - i. *Emotional* – Relationships, “attunement”, CISDs (Critical Incident Stress Debriefing), Identify when you are “HALT” (hungry, angry, lonely and/or tired, etc.)
 - ii. *Physical* – Exercise, sleep, nutrition
 - iii. *Time* – “What are we cutting?”... to get personal, family, sharing, and/or God time, etc.
 - iv. *Financial* – Develop a budget, Finally, settle the issue of Lordship of God over finances, “simplicity”

“Of the 210 country groups on our globe, we spend more money in the US eating out than the GNP of 200 of those nations.”
(Source: Dolores Curran Study on “The Home and the Impact of Finances”)
6. “THE TWO BIG QUESTIONS” – “What blesses you?” and “What stresses you?”
7. Grasp an understanding of good long-term stress management objectives (cf., Section 2, page 2).
8. Develop a “Plan of attack” (via a calendar and a “do-list”).
9. Healing goal: ***Process your life story***

4. Ministering to those in “Acute Stress”

1. Acknowledge the “stressor” by your presence, words, and actions.
2. Focus on “active listening” and display attunement (by sincerely matching their emotions).
 - Follow a simplified “Critical Incident Stress Management Model” for ministry (i.e., Let them ‘vent’)
 - A. Outline a basic, but detailed chronology of the events (without an emotional response)
 - B. Ask the victim to identify the different emotions associated with each phase of the emergency
 - C. Observe biblical attunement—“*Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep those who weep.*”
 - D. Offer limited education
 - Do eat (healthy foods)
 - Do sleep
 - Reduce schedule and responsibilities
 - Reduce caffeine
 - Decrease intake of fat and sugar
 - No “big” decisions--none
 - Stay away from the media
 - Maintain some daily exercise
 - Increase water intake
 - If necessary, contact your physician

- Develop/provide resources that may be needed
- Don't allow for too much "idle" time—do something (some "busyness" is okay)
- Journal "feelings"
- "Watch the crowd" ("too many", people who drain, people who talk to much, etc.)

Throughout the process use words of care, comfort and mourning:

"I'm so saddened by all that you're feeling..."

"I feel a great deal of sorrow as I hear you say..."

"My heart is hurting for you because..."

"You are responding normally to an abnormal situation."

3. Offer/organize practical helps (e.g., food, cleaning the house, yard work, errands, ice, trash bags, etc.)
4. Offer to call others whose presence would encourage them. (e.g., heroes, ministers, family, friends, etc.)
5. Remember that people who are suffering from "acute stress" need to be rescued and ministered to.
6. Monitor daily and two weeks, then weekly for two months, then monthly for one year.

5. Closing statements about stress and care giving

- *"You manage your stress or your stress will manage you."*
- *"People need information in a major stress event."*
- *"As a caregiver, everybody needs something from you; seldom will something be given back."*
- *"Don't seek a short-term fix for a long-term problem."*
- *"Don't lose sight of 'compassion satisfaction'—your task is a valiant one for God."*



Slow me down, Lord!

Slow me down, Lord!

Ease the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind.

Steady my hurried pace with a vision of the eternal reach of time.

Give me, amid the confusion of the day the calmness of the everlasting hills.

Break the tension of my nerves and muscles with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in my memory.

Teach me the art of taking minute vacations—of slowing down to look at a flower, to chat with a friend, to pat a dog, to smile at a child, to read a few lines from a good book.

Slow me down, Lord, and inspire me to send my roots deep in the soil of life's enduring values, that I may grow toward my greater destiny.

Remind me each day that the race is not always to the swift; that there is more to life than increasing its speed. Let me look upward to the towering oak and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well.

- Orin Crain

6. Suggested Scriptures for the Stressed

Scriptures are printed verbatim with sources noted. The words of Jesus are printed in Red.

Psalm 73:25-26, NIV - ²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. ²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. ... ²⁸ But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.

Job 8:20-21, NIV - ²⁰ "Surely God does not reject a blameless man or strengthen the hands of evildoers. ²¹ He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy.

Job 8:20-21, NLT - ²⁰ "But look, God will not reject a person of integrity, nor will he lend a hand to the wicked. ²¹ He will once again fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy.

Psalm 119:49-50, NLT - ⁴⁹ Remember your promise to me; it is my only hope. ⁵⁰ Your promise revives me; it comforts me in all my troubles.

Psalm 9:9, NLT - ⁹ The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

Psalm 23:1-4, NLT - ¹ The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need. ² He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. ³ He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name. ⁴ Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.

Psalm 18:2, NLT - ² The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety.

Psalm 30:5, NLT - ⁵ For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime! Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning.

Psalm 31:7, NLT - ⁷ I will be glad and rejoice in your unfailing love, for you have seen my troubles, and you care about the anguish of my soul.

Psalm 46:1-2, NLT - ¹ For the choir director: A song of the descendants of Korah, to be sung by soprano voices. God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. ² So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea.

Psalm 55:22, NLT - ²² Give your burdens to the Lord, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall.

Psalm 71:20, NLT - ²⁰ You have allowed me to suffer much hardship, but you will restore me to life again and lift me up from the depths of the earth.

Psalm 103:13, TLB - ¹³ He is like a father to us, tender and sympathetic to those who reverence him.

Psalm 126:5-6, NLT - ⁵ Those who plant in tears will harvest with shouts of joy. ⁶ They weep as they go to plant their seed, but they sing as they return with the harvest.

Psalm 147:3, NLT - ³ He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds.

Isaiah 41:10, NLT - ¹⁰ Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

Isaiah 43:2-3, NLT - ² When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. ³ For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

Matthew 5:4, 10-12, NLT - ⁴ God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ... ¹⁰ God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. ¹¹ "God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. ¹² Be happy

about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

Jeremiah 29:11-13, NLT - ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² In those days when you pray, I will listen. ¹³ If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.

Lamentations 3:31-33, NLT - ³¹ For no one is abandoned by the Lord forever. ³² Though he brings grief, he also shows compassion because of the greatness of his unfailing love. ³³ For he does not enjoy hurting people or causing them sorrow.

Matthew 10:29-31, NLT - ²⁹ What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. ³⁰ And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.

John 14:1-6, NLT - ¹ "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. ² There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going." ⁵ "No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

John 14:27, NLT - ²⁷ "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.

Matthew 11:28-30, NLT - ²⁸ Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

Matthew 11:28-30, MSG - ²⁸ "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. ²⁹ Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. ³⁰ Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

John 16:33, NLT - ³³ I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

Romans 8:28, NLT - ²⁸ And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Romans 8:35, NLT - ³⁵ Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?

2 Corinthians 4:8, NLT - ⁸ We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair.

2 Corinthians 4:16-17, NLT - ¹⁶ That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. ¹⁷ For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!

2 Corinthians 12:7-10, NLT - ⁷ even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. ⁸ Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. ⁹ Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. ¹⁰ That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Hebrews 2:14, NLT - ¹⁴ Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death.

Hebrews 4:15, NLT - ¹⁵ This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin.

1 Peter 4:12-14, NLT - ¹² Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. ¹³ Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world. ¹⁴ So be happy when you are insulted for being a Christian, for then the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you.

Revelation 21:1-5, NLT - ¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever." ⁵ And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true."

Matthew 25:34-40, MSG - ³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what's coming to you in this kingdom. It's been ready for you since the world's foundation. ³⁵ And here's why: I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was homeless and you gave me a room, ³⁶ I was shivering and you gave me clothes, I was sick and you stopped to visit, I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷ "Then those 'sheep' are going to say, 'Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? ³⁸ And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?' ⁴⁰ Then the King will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.'

7. Quotes for those who minister to the stressed.

Scriptures are printed verbatim with sources noted.

"Every person you meet in need is a person through whom you can love our resurrected Lord."
- Tony Campolo in *Power Delusion*.

"As Jesus engaged in His Father's work, so must we. An anonymous writer vividly captured the essence of pastoral stewardship before the Lord with his exhortation to do God's work God's way according to God's Word:

Stick with your work. Do not flinch because the lion roars; do not stop to stone the devil's dogs; do not fool away your time chasing the devil's rabbits. Do your work. Let liars lie, let sectarians quarrel, let critics malign, let enemies accuse, let the devil do his worst; but see to it nothing hinders you from fulfilling with joy the work God has given you.

He has not commanded you to be admired or esteemed. He has never bidden you defend your character. He has not set you at work to contradict falsehood (about yourself) which Satan's or God's servants may start to peddle, or to track down every rumor that threatens your reputation. If you do these things, you will do nothing else; you will be at work for yourself and not for the Lord.

Keep at your work. Let your aim be as steady as a star. You may be assaulted, wronged, insulted, slandered, wounded and rejected, misunderstood, or assigned impure motives; you may be abused by foes, forsaken by friends, and despised and rejected of men. But see to it with steadfast determination, with unfaltering zeal, that you pursue the great purpose of your life and object of your being until at last you can say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do."

- Dr. John F. MacArthur in *Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry : Shaping Contemporary Ministry With Biblical Mandates*.

"Ministry is not something we do for God; it is something God does in and through us."
- Dr. Warren W. Wiersbe in *The Integrity Crisis*.

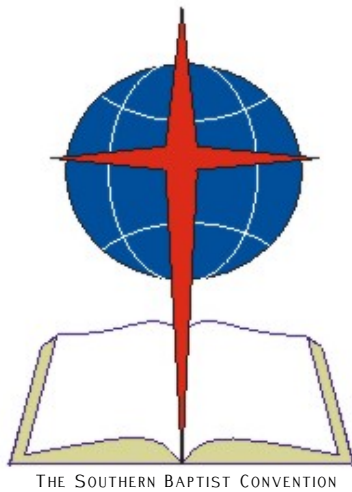
"Jesus did not reach nor heal everybody that came to Him—shall we expect to do more than did the Son of God?"

- Dr. Barney Self in *Setting Healthy Boundaries in Ministry*

STRESS MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

For those who want to “rust out” and not “burn out!”

GROWTH AREA	AREAS FOR CONSIDERATIONS	SPECIFIC GROWTH GOALS
Devotional Time	Worship Attendance, Prayer Time, Bible Reading Time, Ministry Opportunities, Other Church Commitments, Reading, Scripture memorization, Personal retreats, Christian Music, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Family Time	Date nights, Family Nights, Family Weekends, Couch time, Reading books about marriage issues, attending seminars, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Recovery Time	Days off, Guy’s “Garage time,” Ladies “Girl time,” any “down town,” camping, fishing, reading, hobbies, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
“Sharpening” Time	Accountability Group, Encouragement Group, Prayer Group, any regular, planned, interaction that has the purpose of “sharpening” who you are in the Lord, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Health Consideration	Regular Exercise and dieting (i.e., lifelong healthy eating habits), medications if needed, regular checkups, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Focused Priorities	“What is really important to you?” What “good” things in your life are robbing you of the “great” things? How does your personal schedule and “to-do list” (maybe even your check book) demonstrate what your priorities are. What needs to go and what needs to stay?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •
Personal Holiness	Are you being a person of holiness? Are your thoughts pure? Are you being overly influenced by TV and media? Are you a worthy vessel for God’s use? Are your thoughts and intentions holy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •



What is a Southern Baptist?

A. Introduction and Overview

1. The phrase “Southern” refers to our origins—where we started. Our Convention began in the Southern part of the United States. Our convention “birth place” was Augusta, Georgia in 1845.
2. The phrase “Baptist” refers to our theology—what we believe. (That will be discussed later.)
3. SRBC is a Southern Baptist Church fully cooperating and fully aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention. We count it a privilege to be affiliated with what we feel represents the best way to reach our world for Christ.
4. The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is the largest association of protestant churches in the world.
5. There are 16 million Southern Baptists in the United States.
6. There are over 42,000 SBC Churches in the United States.
7. The SBC has over 5,000 Home Missionaries in the United States.
8. The SBC has over 5,000 international missionaries outside the US serving overseas in almost 200 countries.
9. SBC churches baptize nearly 1,000 people every day.
10. SBC churches start around 5 churches every day.
11. The world famous evangelist, Dr. Billy Graham, is our most well-known “Southern Baptist.”
12. We operate six seminaries in the United States and many more worldwide.
13. We operate many children homes, orphanages, crisis pregnancy centers and family and adoption services throughout the world as well as the Baptist Press.
14. Our “Ethics and Religions Liberty Commission” is our political watchdog entity.
15. We have numerous Baptist Hospitals.
16. “LIFEWAY CHRISTIAN RESOURCES” is our printing and church resource division (its facilities are so big it has its own designated zip code).
17. BROADMAN AND HOLMAN PUBLISHERS is our publishing arm.
18. **The heart of the Southern Baptist Convention is the “Cooperative Program”—the pooling of monies to support our missionaries and our ministries. The Cooperative Program sets us apart from other “Baptists”. It is how we carry out our goal to reach the world for Christ. All SBC Churches support the “Cooperative Program”.**
19. We have two major convention offerings: The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (for International Missions) and The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (for Home Missions). 100% of these offerings go “to the field”.

B. Memory Hook: *What is a Baptist?*

B	Bible is our sole authority! Baptists are typically “inerrantists”—that is, we believe there are no errors in the original scriptures given by God. God’s Holy Word is the only divinely authoritative foundation that makes the plan of salvation knowable. The Bible is our standard for living and is our basis for belief and action. (Our pulpits are always in the center of the platform to picture the <i>priority</i> of the Word of God in our lives.)
A	Autonomy of the local church! In “Baptist life”, churches are autonomous. They select their own government, develop their own ministries, chose their own leaders, and yet <i>voluntarily</i> cooperate with other churches of “like faith and purpose.”
P	Priesthood of the believer! Baptist churches believe that every single believer—from the pastor to the person in the pew—have the same access to Holy God. (Our Lord’s Supper Table is always on the floor with the people indicating that all people have access to God.)
T	Tithing as a standard for giving! Baptists believe in the biblical principal of “tithing”. It is <u>not</u> “giving 10% of your income” to the church. <u>It is</u> “keeping 90% of all that God gives you” as Baptists believe that “all things” belong to God. Tithes and offerings are God’s plan for furthering His Work on the Earth.
I	Immersion as the mode of baptism! “Full immersion” (i.e., going all the way under the water) is the biblical mode of baptism in Baptist life. The Greek word <i>baptizo</i> means “to sink” or “to immerse”. Baptism is a public witness of one’s belief in Jesus’ ministry and their own salvation. (A baptistery is always in the front and center as this ordinance is a “public witness” made by the new believer.
S	Security of the believer! In Baptist life, this is sometimes called “once saved, always saved.” To be theologically accurate, we might better say, “once saved, always changed.” The early church fathers referred to it as “the perseverance of the saints.” Salvation is an act of God in a new believer’s life, therefore, once a person is saved, they cannot lose their salvation (or “undo” the work of God in their lives).
T	Telling others about Jesus! Baptists are most known for being “evangelical”, that is, we share our faith with nonbelievers in hope that they too will become followers of Christ. It is why most Baptist churches give public invitations and encourage personal “soul-winning”. It has been said, “The heartbeat of Southern Baptists is missions and evangelism.”

C. Basic Beliefs

The following is a summary of “The Baptist Faith and Message” (A detailed copy of our beliefs as Southern Baptist can be found, with supportive scriptures, at following web site:

<http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp>.

The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

God

There is one and only one living and true God. ...The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. ...God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. ...He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross, He made provision for the redemption of men from sin.

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. ...He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. ...He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Man

Man is the special creation of God, in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. ...By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. ... The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore every person of every race possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification.

God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. ...All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end.

The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

Baptism & the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water. ...It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members ... memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Evangelism & Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations... to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness under girded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. ...It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion.

Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. ...Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly...the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell. ...The righteous... will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Education

The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence ... there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. ...The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions.

Cooperation

Christ's people should ... organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. ...Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations.

The Christian & the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society... in the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death...

Religious Liberty

Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. ...A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal.

Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. ... The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation... Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage.

Someone asked me,
"What would you be if you weren't a Baptist?"
I said, "I'd be ashamed."

- Pastor Joe



The Church & How You Fit In to its Ministry.

A. Quotes about *THE CHURCH*

The Church represents the highest priority of God's agenda and it is His blueprint for completing His work on the earth. We have embarked upon an enterprise that has God's highest priority: success is inevitable if we stay with God's plan for the church."

- Dr. Paul Powell

The Church does not lead the world nor echo it; she confronts it. Her note is the supernatural note. The Christian Church should not be a secret society of specialists, but a public manifestation of believers in Jesus. The church is a separated band of people who are united to God by the regenerating power of the Spirit, and the bedrock of membership in the Church is that we know who Jesus is by a personal revelation of Him. The one right thing to be is a believer in Jesus Christ. The indwelling Spirit is the supreme Guide, and He keeps us absorbed with our Lord. The emphasis today is placed on this statement, "We must keep this thing going." If we are in God's order this thing will keep going; if we are not in His order, it won't.

- Oswald Chambers

A church that is soundly rooted cannot be destroyed, but nothing can save a church whose root is dried up. No stimulation, no advertising campaigns, no gifts of money and no beautiful edifice can bring life to a rootless tree. The church is dedicated to things that matter. The task of the church is twofold: to spread Christianity throughout the world and to make sure that the Christianity she spreads is the pure New Testament kind.

- A. W. Tozer

The Great Commission bids us teach the disciples to observe all things commanded. Our word "observe" has two meanings today. It may mean to behold, to look on, to view the scene. It may also mean to adhere to, keep the rules, abide by the terms, obey the laws of an organization or society. Most Christians belong to the first category; they are balcony Christians, spectators, onlookers, non-participants. We hire a church staff to do church work, and on Sunday we sit and watch them do it. Too many are in the

grandstands; too few are playing the game. It's time for all Christians in the grandstands to get into the game and make their lives count for God.

- Vance Havner

The scandal of the 21st century church will be the people of God, doing the work of God, without the power of God. The world at its worst needs the church at its best. We know that any *bush* will do as long as God is in the *bush*. I submit to you that any *church* will do as long as God is in the *Church*.

- Joe K. Taylor

It is our earnest prayer that when the chronicles of this great church are written, it will record a people intimately a part of His story in this place, walking together as family and dear friends. We look forward to standing with literally thousands of people whose eternal destiny and lives were changed through the ministry of our church—all meeting together for the first time with Christ outside the *Eastern Gate* of Heaven. Our prayer is that our lives will eternally cast glory and honor to the name of our dear savior, Jesus Christ. May the dreams and plans recommended here be quickly caught and not easily forgotten.

– SRBC Strategic Planning Task Force (2007)

Then he asked them, “Who do you say I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ Jesus replied ... upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. ¹⁹ And I will give [the church] the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you lock on earth will be locked in heaven, and whatever you open on earth will be opened in heaven.”

- Jesus Christ in Matthew 16:15-19 (NLT)

STUDY VERSE SECTION - Matthew 16:13-19, NASB95 - ¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.” ¹⁸ “I (Jesus) also say to you that you are Peter petros—meaning “a rock or stone”, and upon this rock petra—meaning “A ledge or very large rock” cf. v. 16, “You are the Christ...” I will build My church; and the gates of Hades rf., Hell will not overpower it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys symbolic of “power and authority” of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”

A. Christ builds the church “I will build my church...”

B. Christ owns the church “I will build my church...”

C. Christ protects the church “...and the gates of Hell shall not overpower it...”

D. Christ empowers the church “...I will give you the keys to the kingdom of Heaven.”

B. Understanding What God did for the Church

e has **H** given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ.
- Ephesians 4:7, NLT

1. The receiver of the gifts.

Ephesians 4:7, NIV - ⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

Ephesians 4:7, MSG - ⁷ ... Out of the generosity of Christ, each of us is given his own gift.

God gives to each of us a gift. Our gifts and talents should also be turned over to Him. They should be recognized for what they are, God's loan to us and should never be considered in any sense our own. The God who gave all 'to' us will continue to give all 'through' us as we remember that he will never ask less than all 'of' us.
- A.W. Tozer

2. The giver of the gifts.

Ephesians 4:7-10, TLB - ⁷ However, Christ has given each of us special abilities—whatever he wants us to have out of his rich storehouse of gifts. ⁸ The psalmist tells about this, for he says that when Christ returned triumphantly to heaven after his resurrection and victory over Satan, he gave generous gifts to men. ⁹ Notice that it says he returned to heaven. This means that he had first come down from the heights of heaven, far down to the lowest parts of the earth. ¹⁰ The same one who came down is the one who went back up, that he might fill all things everywhere with himself, from the very lowest to the very highest.

"We never look on the back of a 'spiritual gift' and find a returned check stamp saying, 'insufficient grace' or 'insufficient power.'"
- Dr. John MacArthur

3. The nature of gifts.

Ephesians 4:11, NIV - ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers ...

"Spiritual Gifts" in Scripture (cf., 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:11)

A. Building Gifts – Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers.

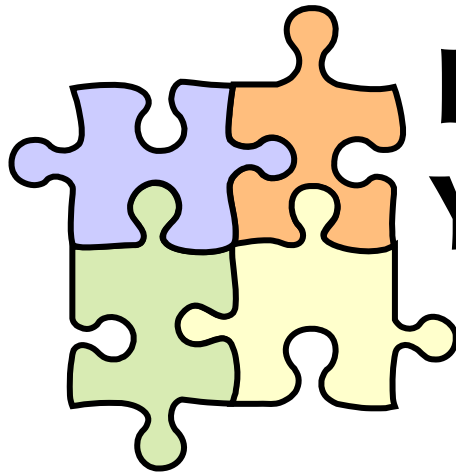
B. Wellbeing Gifts – Wisdom, Faith, Healing, Miracles, Teaching, Mercy, Discernment, Tongues, Helps, Service, Administration, Exhortation, and Giving.

4. The reason of the gifts.

Ephesians 4:12-13, KJV - ¹² For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: ¹³ Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Ephesians 4:12-13, MSG - ¹² to train Christ's followers in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, ¹³ until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ.

A GUIDE TO HELP YOU DISCOVER YOUR PLACE OF PERSONAL MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH
MINISTRY SERVICE QUESTIONNAIRE:



Discovering Where You Fit In The Church!

Adapted from "THE PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE" by Dr. Rick Warren and "SHAPE" used by Saddleback Church

There are different kinds of service to God, but it is the same Lord we are serving. The Holy Spirit displays God's power through each of us as a means of helping the entire church. All of you together are the One Body of Christ and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it!

- The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians



God has been molding and shaping you for ministry since you were born. Your S.H.A.P.E. will determine your ministry.



Your ministry will be most effective and fulfilling when you are using your gifts and abilities in the area of your heart's desire. Your ministry will complement your personality and be strengthened by your experiences.

This Personal Ministry Profile was designed to help you find your necessary place of ministry within our church. Please give as much information as possible. Thanks!

S-Spiritual Gifts: "What are your Spiritual Gifts?"

As you read through this list, check off your initial impression concerning yourself. Mark "Yes: if you know you have the gift, "Maybe" if you may have the gift and "No" if you are confident you do not have the gift.

PREACHING (Prophecy)

1 Cor. 1:3

The ability to publicly communicate God's Word in an inspired way that convinces unbelievers and both challenges and comforts believers. The ability to persuasively declare God's Word.

☐ Yes ☐ Maybe ☐ No

EVANGELISM

Acts 8:26-40

The ability to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ to unbelievers in a positive, non-threatening way. The ability to sense opportunities to share Christ and lead people to respond with faith.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

MISSIONS

1 Cor 9:19-23, Acts 13:2-3

The ability to adapt to a different culture in order to reach unbelievers and encourage believers from that culture.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

APOSTLE

Rom 15:20

The ability to start new churches and oversee their development.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

TEACHING

Eph 4:12-13

The ability to educate God's people by clearly explaining and applying the Bible in a way that causes them to learn. The ability to equip and train other believers for ministry.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

ENCOURAGEMENT ("Exhortation")

Acts 14:22

The ability to motivate God's people to apply and act on Biblical principles, especially when they are discouraged or wavering in their faith. The ability to equip and train other believers for personal ministry.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

WISDOM

1 Cor 2:1, 6-16

The ability to understand God's perspective on life situations and share those insights in a simple, understandable way. The ability to explain what to do and how to do it.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

DISCERNMENT

1 John 4:1-6

The ability to understand right from wrong, truth from error and to give an immediate evaluation based on God's Word. The ability to explain whether the source of an experience is Satan, self, or God's spirit.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

KNOWLEDGE

Daniel 1:17

The ability to discover, collect, analyze, and organize information that is vital to individual believers or the entire church family. The ability to comprehend a large amount of information and provide it when needed for effective decision-making.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

SERVICE

Acts 6:1-7

The ability to recognize unmet needs in the church family and take the initiative to provide practical assistance quickly, cheerfully, and without a need for recognition.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

MERCY

Luke 10:30-37

The ability to detect hurt and empathize with those who are suffering in the church family. The ability to provide compassionate and cheerful support to those experiencing distress, crisis or pain.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

HOSPITALITY

1 Peter 4:-10

The ability to make others, especially strangers, feel warmly welcomed, accepted, and comfortable in the church family. The ability to coordinate factors that promote fellowship.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

PASTORING (Shepherding)

1 Peter 5:2-4

The ability to care for the spiritual needs of a group of believers, and equip them for ministry. The ability to nurture a group in spiritual growth and assume responsibility for their welfare.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

GIVING

2 Cor 8:1-7

The ability to generously contribute material resources and/or money beyond the 10% tithe so that the Body may grow and be strengthened. The ability to earn and manage money so it may be given to support the ministry of others.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

MUSIC

Psalm 150

The ability to celebrate God's presence through music, either vocal or instrumental, and lead the church family in worship.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

DESIGNER/CRAFTSMAN

Exodus 31:3-11

The ability to build, maintain or beautify the place of worship for God's glory. The ability to express worship through a variety of art forms.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

INTERCESSION

Col 1:9-12

The ability to pray in faith specifically for the need of others in the church family over extended periods of time on a regular basis. The ability to persist in prayer and not be discouraged until the answer arrives.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

HEALING

James 5:14-16

The ability to pray in faith specifically for the people who need physical, emotional, or spiritual healing and see God's answer. The ability to sense when God is prompting you to pray this kind of prayer.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

MIRACLES

Mark 11:23-24

The ability to pray in faith specifically for God's supernatural intervention into an impossible situation and see God's answer. The ability to sense when God is prompting you to pray this kind of prayer.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

TONGUES/INTERPRETATION

1 Cor 14:13-15

The ability to pray in a language known only by God or one who could interpret it at that time. There is some controversy about this gift within the church. As Baptists we do not practice this gift publicly.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

LEADERSHIP

Heb 13:7, 17

The ability to clearly communicate the purpose and direction ("Vision") of a ministry in a way that encourages others to get involved. The ability to motivate others, by your example, to work together in accomplishing a ministry goal.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

ADMINISTRATION ("Organization")

1 Cor 14:40

The ability to recognize the gifts of others and recruit them to a ministry. The ability to organize and manage people, resources, and time for effective ministry. The ability to coordinate many details and execute the plans of leadership.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

FAITH

Rom 4:18-21

The ability to trust God for what cannot be seen and to act on God's promise, regardless of what the circumstances indicate. The willingness to risk failure in pursuit of a God-given vision, expecting God to handle the obstacles.

☐Yes ☐Maybe ☐No

1. Based on the above information, please circle the following gifts you feel you have.

Preaching	Evangelism	Missions	Apostle	Administration
Teaching	Encouragement	Wisdom	Discernment	Faith
Knowledge	Service	Mercy	Hospitality	Tongues
Pastoring	Giving	Music	Designer/Craftsman	
Intercession	Healing	Miracles	Leadership	

2. I feel I have these Spiritual Gifts because:

H-Heart: "What do you Love to do?"

1. Please circle the words from the following list that describe what you love to do:

Design	Pioneer	Follow rules/guidelines	Organize	
Operate	Study	Maintain	Serve	Lead
Help	Acquire	Repair	Excel	Influence
Develop	Perform	Oversee	Improve	

2. Who do you enjoy working with the most (i.e. babies, preschool, children, adults, singles, couples, special needs, etc.)?

3. List church issues, ministries or possible needs that excite or concern you most.

4. If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you attempt for God?

A-Abilities: “What natural talents and skills do you have?”

1. What is your current vocation?
2. What do you do in this vocation?
3. List other jobs or skills in which you have some experience.
4. List any classes or seminars you have taught.
5. What do you think is your most valuable personal asset (talent wise)?
6. Please circle the words from the following list that describe “specialized abilities” you feel you possess that complete the following sentence.

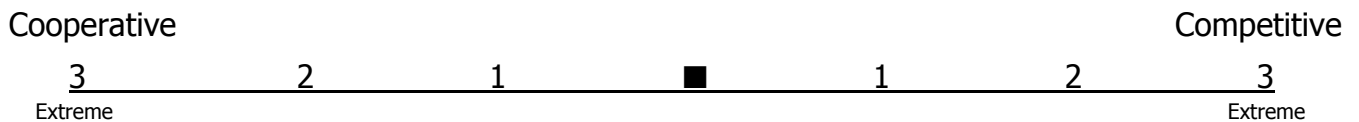
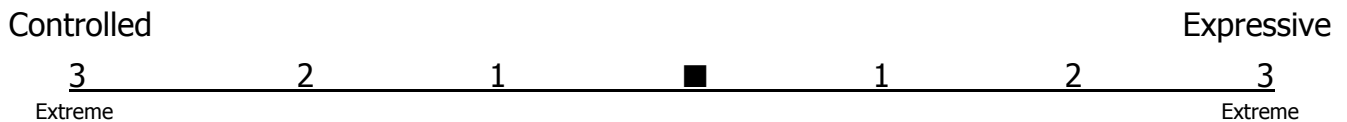
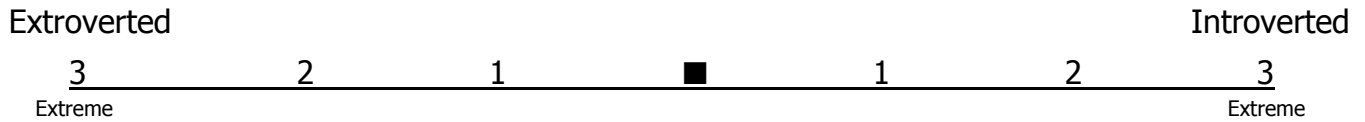
“I have _____ability.”

Entertaining	Recruiting	Interviewing	Researching
Artistic	Graphic Art	Evaluating	Planning
Managing	Counseling	Teaching	Writing
Editing	Promoting	Repairing	Feeding
Recall	Mechanical	Resourceful	Counting
Classifying	Public Relations	Welcoming	Composing
Decorating	Speaking	Acting	Musical

P-Personality: "How does your personality complement your ministry?"

1. How do you see yourself? (Place an "X" on the line to describe your personality.)

HOW DO YOU SEE YOURSELF



2. Based on what you know about your personality, what ministries of our church would you NOT be suited for?

3. What ministries of our church would you be interested in based simply on your personality?

E-Experiences: “What experiences have you had that will affect your personal ministry?”

Your Spiritual Journey

1. Describe how you became a Christian, and what it has meant to you since then.
2. Describe a time(s) when you have felt closest to God and give any meaningful spiritual experiences that stand out in your mind.

Your Ministry Experiences

1. Where have you served before in a church/religious organization?

Organization	Where	Position of Service	Years Involved
*			
*			
*			
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2. Questions you have about yourself, your ministry, or your purpose in the Body:

*

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*

So be careful how you live, not as fools but as those who are wise. ¹⁶ Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days. ¹⁷ Don't act thoughtlessly, but try to understand what the Lord wants you to do.

- Ephesians 5:15-17 (NLT)

You better be sure that God has called you to a ministry, there will be times when only the call of God will keep you in that ministry."

- Dr. Ronnie Armstrong

Please bring a copy of this Personal Ministry Profile (pages 155-164) with you when meeting with the Pastor or Ministry Counselor of the Church...Thanks!



The Lord's Supper

A. What is the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic observance to honor Christ's sacrificial death for all believers. The first communion was observed the night before the Jewish celebration called "Passover". Passover commemorated the Jew's deliverance from slavery and God's gracious provision for their escape. Similarly, the Lord's Supper commemorates our own deliverance from slavery in sin and God's gracious provision for our escape from eternal damnation.

Focus Passage: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, NIV - ²³ *For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."* ²⁵ *In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."* ²⁶ *For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

1. The Lord's Supper is a memorial service.

1 Corinthians 11:24, NIV - ²⁴ *and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."*

- A. We are to remember that He died.
- B. We are to remember why He died.
- C. We are to remember how He died.

2. The Lord's Supper is a time of communion (fellowship—we are all together).

1 Corinthians 10:16-17, NIV - ¹⁶ *Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?* ¹⁷ *Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.*

- A. Communion (i.e., fellowship) with the Lord.
- B. Communion (i.e., fellowship) with the Lord's family.

3. The Lord's Supper is a time of examination.

1 Corinthians 11:28-29, NIV - ²⁸ *A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.* ²⁹ *For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

4. The Lord's Supper is a time to give thanks.

1 Corinthians 11:24, NIV - ²⁴ *and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."*

5. The Lord's Supper is a time for proclamation.

1 Corinthians 11:26, NIV - ²⁶ *For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

The link between the cross and the crown is the Table of the Lord. Do not forget, when you sit down at the Communion, that the bread and the cup point back to Christ's accomplished work, and forward to your accomplished salvation -A. T. Pierson

A. What do different denominations believe about the Lord's Supper?

THEOLOGICAL VIEWS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER		
VIEWS	CHRIST AND THE ELEMENTS	SIGNIFICANCE
Transubstantiation (Catholic)	Bread and Wine literally change to the body of Christ	Recipient literally partakes of Christ's body and blood, who is being sacrificed in the Mass to atone for sins.
Consubstantiation (Lutheran, Episcopalian through many in this circle have "backed off" this literal belief.)	Bread and wine contain the body and blood of Christ but do not literally change. Christ is actually present "in, with and under" the elements.	Recipient receives forgiveness of sins and confirmation of one's faith through partaking of the elements, but they must be received through faith.
Reformed (Presbyterian, Reformed)	Christ is not literally present in the elements but there is a spiritual presence of Christ present.	Recipient receives grace through partaking of the elements.
Memorial (Baptist, Mennonite)	Christ is not present physically or spiritually in the actually elements.	Recipient commemorates the death of Christ.
<p><i>The memorial view has much to commend it in the Scriptures. An examination of the passages reveals the significance of the Lord's Supper. <u>It is a memorial to His death</u> (1 Corinthians 11:24 -²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.") <u>The recurring statement, "in remembrance of Me," makes this clear, the bread symbolizing His perfect body offered in sin-bearing sacrifice</u> (1 Peter 2:24 -²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.) <u>and the drink represents His blood shed for forgiveness of sins</u> (Ephesians 1:7 -⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace). <u>It is a proclamation of the death of Christ while waiting for His coming</u> (1 Corinthians 11:26 -²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.) <u>It involves a looking back to the historical event of the cross and an anticipation of His return in the future</u> (Matthew 26:29 -²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."). <u>It is a communion of believers with each other</u> (1 Corinthians 10:17 -¹⁷ Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.) <u>They eat and drink the same symbolic elements, focusing on their common faith in Christ.</u></i></p> <p>- Source: <u>The Moody Handbook of Theology</u> with Scriptures added in the quote for clarity—printed from the NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION.</p>		

C. In the Hands of Jesus, the Bread and Juice Embody the Most Profound Facts in the Christian Faith:

1. Jesus' Incarnation

1 Corinthians 11:23-24, NIV - ²³ ... The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ ... he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you ...

Philippians 2:6-11, NIV - ⁶ [Jesus], being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

2. Jesus' Devotion

1 Corinthians 11:24, NIV - ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

3. Jesus' Suffering

1 Corinthians 11:24, NIV - ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, *"This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."*

John 10:17-18, NIV - ¹⁷ ... *I lay down my life ...* ¹⁸ *No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.*

4. Jesus' Substitution

1 Corinthians 11:24, NKJV - ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, *"Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."*

5. Jesus' Invitation

1 Corinthians 11:24, NKJV - ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, *"Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."*

1 Corinthians 11:24, NCV - ²⁴ *This is my body; it is for you.*

6. Jesus' Purpose

1 Corinthians 11:26, NCV - ²⁶ *Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup you are telling others about the Lord's death until he comes.*

7. Jesus' Promise

1 Corinthians 11:26, TLB - ²⁶ *For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup you are retelling the message of the Lord's death, that he has died for you. Do this until he comes again.*

D. Additional Truths Well Worth Noting:

1. The Lord's Supper Table always sits on the floor in a Baptist Church—always. It is symbolic that the Lord came to us and He is equally available to all.
2. The Minister does NOT play a "priestly role" in the handing out of the elements. The deacons (servants) hand out the elements so the pastor/ministry does not in any way communicate that the only way to Jesus is through a pastor or member of the clergy. All have equal access to God at anytime.
3. Wine v. Fruit Drink? The Greek word for "drink" (GK: **καρπός**) gives us our English words "carpal" (the area through the wrists) and chiropractor (one who uses his/her hands to induce healing). "Drink", used in Scripture, literally means, juice "squeezed by the hand" from a fruit. In the Passover Meal, the "drink" would never be allowed to ferment. It would never have impurities (needed for fermentation) to be allowed in the drink. The "drink" used during the Passover Meal would always be "squeezed by the hand" during the meal—it represented the purity of Christ's blood. The word "vine" is not used in passages dealing with the Lord's Supper. This is why Baptists (and many other protestants) use pure grape juice during the observance of the Lord's Supper.
4. How often shall we observe the Lord's Supper? The Scriptures do not define a specific calendar regarding when the Church should take the Lord's Supper. It simply says, "as often as you take it." SRBC general observes the *ordinance* of the Lord's Supper six times a year.
5. Why is it called "The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper?" If a denomination called it "The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper", then a "sacrament" is something you do to be saved. An "ordinance" is something you do because you are saved. The Lord's Supper does not save—only a personal relationship with Jesus does that. Once saved, we "observe" the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. (The other "ordinance" in Baptist Life is full-immersion baptism.)



Finances

The goal of this material is not to “make you rich” but to help you “honor God” with your finances.

Foundation Statements:

A. Life’s meaning is not to be found in possessions.

Luke 12:15, NIV - ¹⁵ Then he said to them, *“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”*

B. God can be trusted to meet all our needs if we put Him first.

Matthew 6:33, NIV - ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

C. Giving (i.e., generosity) is a vital part of our stewardship.

2 Corinthians 8:7 GN - Just as you excel in everything . . . in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness . . . see that you also excel in the grace of giving.

2 Corinthians 9:8-9, NIV - ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written: “He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.”

Ephesians 4:28, NIV - ²⁸ He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

D. We are stewards of all we possess—our family and our money (Matthew 25:14-30)

Leviticus 27:30, GN - A tenth of all you produce is the Lord’s, and it is holy.

Matthew 23:23, GN – [Jesus said] Yes, you should tithe, and you shouldn’t leave the more important things undone either.

- A Thought: *Tithing is not giving 10% of what you make, it is keeping 90% of all that God gives you.*

**THE PLAN (SUMMARY): TAKE OFF THE TITHE, TAXES AND SOCIAL SECURITY FIRST!
THEN, 10% TO RETIREMENT; 70% TO LIVING EXPENSES; 20% DEBT AND FUTURE PLANNING**

“No one gives at all until he/she gives it all to God!”

- A.W. Tozer

Practical Implications:

1. In marriage, it is no longer “my money” and “your money” but “our money” and if you are really on the ball *spiritually*, “it’s God money!”.
2. **Unity is the issue**: Decide together what God wants you to do about your money.
3. Agree now that no major purchases will be made without consulting the other person.
4. Develop a good budget—it is a great tool for communication and helps promote good stewardship.
5. “Shop...don’t just buy.”
6. Avoid the woe’s of credit buying...it will kill you.
7. Live *well* within your means.
8. Agree upon who will keep the books but communicate “financial status” to both partners.
9. Develop an “In Case of Death File” (e.g., Will, Power of Attorney., Medical Directives, Life Insurance) and a “My Funeral Plan” (cremation/burial, service desires, memorial gifts, etc.).
10. Remember what is really important... ***“It’s not the money.”***
11. **Get out of debt and stay out of debt**—it is the number one reason for divorce in America, the number two reason for suicide, and the number three reason for depression.

A Simple “Ten Step” Plan for Getting Out of Debt:

- Step ❶ - Make a major, dramatic, life changing decision to “get out of debt”!
- Step ❷ - Develop an accountability system to help you “stay the course”—it may take years!
- Step ❸ - “Pay the price” to develop a realistic budget, safe financial boundaries and a plan*.
- Step ❹ - Save \$1,000 cash for emergencies only (use it instead of credit cards).
- Step ❺ - Focus on paying off credit cards beginning with the highest interest rate.
- Step ❻ - Increase emergency savings to one month living expenses.
- Step ❼ - Focus on paying off consumer debt (auto, academic loans, medical, etc.)
- Step ❽ - Increase emergency savings to three months living expenses.
- Step ❾ - Begin saving for major purchases, medical, children’s education, and retirement.
- Step ❿ - Increase emergency savings to six months living expenses.

* *“The battle for marriage and family is the calendar and the checkbook!”*

- JKT

Develop a Realistic Budget:

Determine your "Net" income (post tithe, social security, taxes, and dividends, etc.)

Amount: _____

Expenditure	Amount	Sub Total	Notes
HOUSING			
Mortgage/rent			
Insurance			
Taxes			
Electricity			
Gas			
Water			
Sanitation			
Telephone			
Maintenance			
Upgrades			
Neighborhood fees			
Other:			
Other:			
FOOD			
Grocery Store			
Eating Out			
Other:			
Other:			
AUTOMOBILES / TRANSPORTATION			
Payments			
Gas			
Maintenance			
Insurance			
Licenses/Taxes			
Repairs			
Replacement			
Other:			
Other:			
Expenditure	Amount	Sub Total	Notes

INSURANCE			
Life			
Medical			
Other:			
Other:			
DEBTS			
C/Card A:			
C/Card B:			
C/Card C:			
Loan A:			
Loan B:			
Loan C:			
Other:			
Other:			
ENTERTAINMENT / RECREATION			
Eating Out (Family)			
Eating Out (Dates)			
Baby Sitter(s)			
Activities			
Major Trips			
Vacations			
Activities			
Other:			
Other:			
CLOTHING			
His			
Hers			
Children			
Other:			
Other:			
SAVINGS			
Emergency (cash)			
Future			
Educational			
Other:			
Other:			
Expenditure	Amount	Sub Total	Notes

MEDICAL			
Doctor			
Dentist			
Orthodontist(s)			
Medicines			
Vitamins/etc.			
Other:			
Other:			
"OTHER MATTERS"			
Pet food/maintenance			
Toiletry/cosmetics			
Beauty/barber			
Laundry/dry cleaning			
Allowances/lunches			
Subscriptions			
Gifts			
Cash			
Internet			
Cable/DSL			
Cell Phones			
Hobby A:			
Hobby B:			
Other:			
Other:			
INVESTMENTS			
A:			
B:			
SCHOOL / CHILD CARE			
Tuition			
Materials			
Transportation			
Day Care			
Other:			
Other:			
This sub total should be greater than "zero" →			

What The Bible Teaches About "Tithing"

What is tithing?

Answer: "Tithe" means "a tenth part."

What is the difference between a "tithe" and an "offering?"

- A "tithe" is giving a tenth of your income.
- An "offering" is anything you give above the tithe.

Why should you tithe?

The Bible teaches that the tithe is God's standard for giving.

"How" you decide is bigger than "what" you decide.

Romans 10:9, NCV - ⁹ If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved.

Deuteronomy 14:23, TLB - ^{23c} The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives.

- God commanded "tithing" (Leviticus 27:30)
- Jesus commended "tithing" (Matthew 23:23)
- Tithing gives God a chance to prove He exists (Malachi 3:10)
- God says refusing to tithe is stealing from Him (Malachi 3:8-10)

Malachi 3:8-10, NIV - ⁸ "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me. ¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

- It robs God
- It robs the church
- It robs *you!*

Selected Scriptures About Money, Debt, and Possessions

Psalms 24:1, NASB95 - ¹ The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it.

Colossians 1:16, NIV - ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2, NASB95 - ¹ Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

Deuteronomy 8:17-18, TLB - ¹⁷ He did [all these miracles in the desert] so that you would never feel that it was your own power and might that made you wealthy. ¹⁸ Always remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you power to become rich ...

Proverbs 21:20, TLB - ²⁰ The wise man saves for the future, but the foolish man spends whatever he gets.

Proverbs 22:7, NIV - ⁷ The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

Romans 13:8, AMP - Keep out of debt and owe no man nothing.

Ecclesiastes 5:13-15, TLB - ¹³ There is another serious problem I have seen everywhere—savings are put into risky investments that turn sour, and soon there is nothing left to pass on to one's son. ¹⁵ The man who speculates is soon back to where he began—with nothing.

Proverbs 21:5, TLB - ⁵ Steady plodding brings prosperity...



Sound Doctrine

"Important Words, Beliefs, and Concepts in the Christian's Life"

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

- Titus 2:1, NIV

The word *doctrine* literally means "instruction."

- Warren Wiersbe



Here is a little "sound instruction" about Important Matters that are not addressed elsewhere in this manual:

Angels: Lit., *messenger*. "Created" heavenly beings who serve as messengers from God (Gen 19:1ff, Matt. 2:13-15). See II Peter 2:4 for angels who sinned. Humans do not become angels (Heb. 2:7). Little babies who die do not become angels in Heaven. The role of Angels: Messengers, protectors, "death notification", servants, and instruments of God plan—including judgment.

Antichrist: Opponent of Christ, the evil figure who will come in the last days to oppose Christ and everything of God (I John. 2:18).

Ascension: Going up, refers to the return of the risen Jesus to the Father (Acts 1:8-11).

Atonement, to Make: To cover, to cancel one's sins (Ex. 30:16). God in Christ atoned for our sins by dying on the cross.

Baptism: Immersion, submersion (Rom. 6:1-4). Baptism doesn't save a person, but is a symbol of his or her salvation and a sign of their obedience to Christ. Water baptism is a picture of death, burial, and resurrection. It pictures new life with Christ and future resurrection from the grave (Rom. 6:1-6).

Believe: Trust, have faith in, commit to. May mean simply “to know” intimately (cf., Jas. 2:19), but usually means to trust in God with commitment and obedience (Jn.14:1, Rom. 10:9-10). Unconditional surrender to Christ is required for all who would believe in Him and trust Him as Lord and Savior.

Bible: The Bible is the inspired (by God alone) and inerrant (its origin has no mistakes) Word of God. The sixty-six books that make up Holy Scriptures. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew (except for a little Aramaic in Ezra, Jeremiah, and Daniel). The New Testament was written in Koine (common) Greek. “Plenary Verbal Inspiration” is the belief in a full word-for-word inspiration of the Bible as a God-breathed book.

Blaspheme, Blasphemy: Slander, insult, injure the reputation of, lie about. Usually refers to cursing God or using abusive language about Him, His Name, or His Word (Lev. 24:16, Rom. 2:24). The only unforgivable sin in the Bible is blasphemy (when used in the perfect tense—meaning a continual, unrepentant stance of disobedience.) In the simplest terms, it is never surrendering one’s life to Christ for salvation.

Born Again: our first birth was *physical* and our second birth is *spiritual* in nature (John 3:3). Jesus told Nicodemus that it was necessary to be “born again” (spiritually) to have a right relationship with God (John 3:5).

Covenant: Mutual agreement between two persons or parties (Gen 31:49-53). The covenant between God and people is unique: God alone sets the terms, and each person decides whether to agree and enter the covenant (Gen. 15, Heb 8:6, II Cor. 3:6).

Day of the Lord: The day of Christ’s return to the earth (Phil 1:6, 10).

Deity: God, being a god. Example: We believe in the *deity* of Christ.

Disciple: Learner, student, follower, apprentice, one who accepts the teacher’s teachings and imitates his practices (Luke 6:40, Isa, 8:16).

Discipleship: Commitment to learn a way or follow a leader. A commitment to Christ that includes learning and applying the Bible to life, sharing Christ with others, serving the church, and fulfilling the goals God designs for each person (Matt. 28:18-20).

Doctrine: Instruction. Teaching about God that affects how you live (Prov. 4:2, Titus 2:1).

Faith: Belief, trust (Heb. 2:4, Mark 11:22). Faith in Jesus Christ is essential for salvation (Eph. 2:8-10). Faith is active, showing in action and attitude.

Fornication: Sexual intercourse between two people who are not married to each other (I Thess. 4:3-6). Sometimes translated *immorality*, it can refer to sensual sins in general. Condemned by God because fornication hurts people (I Cor. 6:18, I Thess. 4:60). God designed sex for marriage (Prov. 5:19, I Cor. 7:2). *Fornication* is also used to picture unfaithfulness to God (Is. 23:17, Jude 1:7, John 8:41).

Grace: Favor; a gift from God that provides eternal life and/or gives the ability to accomplish something. It has been said that grace is getting what you don’t deserve. (cf., Mercy—which is not getting what you deserve).

Heaven: Place of perfect happiness, a Christian’s home after death. We will be with God in heaven, and there will be no more tears, death, sorrow, or pain (Rev.21:4). We will have new bodies and new experiences (I Cor. 15:35-57, II Cor. 5:1-10).

Hell: Place and condition of eternal punishment for those who reject Jesus as Lord and Savior (Duet. 32:22, Matt. 5:22, 29-30, 10:28, 16:18). Words related to *hell* include “Gehenna, Hades, and Sheol.”

Idolatry: Putting anything in place of God (as the priority of one's life) or putting anything ahead of God (Ex. 20:4-6).

Incarnation: Literally meaning "in flesh." (e.g. "God became man--incarnate.")

Intercession: Praying or pleading on someone else's behalf.

Jehovah: An alternate pronunciation of Yahweh (THE LORD—printed in SMALL CAPS). Yahweh was believed to be so holy by the Masoretes (writers of scriptures) that they took the consonants from Yahweh and the vowels of the name Adonai (The Lord—printed without small caps). This combination of vowels and consonants produces the hybrid "Jehovah" in English. The word "Jehovah" does not appear in the biblical text.

Justification: God's act of declaring and making the repentant sinner right with Him (Rom 4:24-25, 5:17. I Cor. 1:30). Memory hook: Justification—it's 'just-as-if-I had never sinned.

Love: Deep, enduring concern for other's welfare; affection, friendship. The highest form of love is "agape" love. It is a God-given love that is self-sacrificing in nature.

Lust: Desire that turns bad when a person wants something besides what God wants (Gal. 5:16-21).

Marriage: When a man and woman lovingly wed their lives together in a mutual commitment that is totally spiritual, mental, physical (Matt. 19:5-6, Mk. 10:7-9, I Cor 11:1, 2). God created marriage, encourages it, and commands unity in it as a life-long relationship (Gen 2:24-25. It was the first institution created by God.

Priesthood of all believers: Doctrine that all Christians can come directly into the presence of God with no mediator (Eph. 2:18, I Pet. 1:19-21). Jesus provided for Christians to have this priesthood (Rev. 1:6, 5:10).

Propitiation: Covering; atonement (I John 2:2), in general, sacrifice that appeases a god. In Christianity, propitiation is Christ's sacrificial death on the cross that makes divine forgiveness possible (I John 4:10). Propitiation is God's mercy and grace in action to put us in a right relationship with Him.

Rapture: To snatch from one place and put in another. Jesus will come again with those who have died in Christ and join them in the air with those Christians who are still alive (see Thess. 4:17). Note: The word *rapture* is not in the Bible, but the concept is.

Reconciliation: Restored relationship (II Cor 2:18-19), renewal of friendship. Christ's death provided for the removal of the barrier of sin to bring people back into a right relationship with God.

Redemption: Release that occurs when a price is paid (Lev. 25:51-52, Num. 3:49, Heb. 9:12). Jesus paid the price for our release from sin (Rom. 3:24, Eph. 1:7).

Repentance: A turning of the mind, heart, and life through trust in Christ (Jer. 26:3, II Cor. 7:8-10), may simply mean regret or change of mind (Matt. 27:3). God's repentance is not from sin but a judgment to undo what is done (I Sam. 15:11, 29, 35).

Pervert: This is Satan's main objective and role. Satan does not "create" evil, he only perverts what is good. Example: Much of our cussing language uses "God" or references to things precious to believers. Why do we use God's name so much; because Satan has perverted it and made it a name that is no longer holy to many people.

Righteous: Right or just; right with God (Mal. 3:18). A person is made right only through God in Christ (II Cor. 5:21).

Sacrifice: Something offered in worship. In the Old Testament, sacrifices expressed repentance from sin and obedience in worshiping God and receiving His favor. Christ became our Sacrificial Lamb so that we might find favor with God (John 1:29). Sacrifice can also be an individual commitment to God (Rom. 12:1).

Salvation: Safety; deliverance from evil; eternal life (Isa. 12:2, Luke 19:9). Salvation comes only by God's grace and through Christ when a person repents of sin and accepts Christ as Lord and Savior (Acts 4:12, Titus 2:11). It begins on earth and finds completion at death or at Christ's return.

Sanctification: God's cleansing process to make a person holy and like Jesus (1 Cor 1:30). It affects both character and conduct (Col. 3:1-17). It is the process by which God calls His followers to be "set apart" for Holy Living. God "call" enables the believer to live a life of purity and holiness.

Satan: The devil; evil one, the enemy in Matthew 4:10. Satan directly opposes God and hinders God's purposes (Zech. 3:1, Acts 26:18). He slanders God and His people (Job 1:6-12). He wants to control people and destroy them (John 10:10). Satan works through temptation, deception, and other subtle devices to take away the good God has given (Mark 4:15, II Cor. 11:14, Rev. 12:9, II Thess. 2:9). His power will one day be taken away, and he will be thrown into hell, where he will be forever (Rev. 20:2).

Saved: Rescued, brought to safety, delivered from the judgment of sin (Acts 2:21). A person is "saved" when they have surrendered their life to Christ and acknowledged His lordship over them.

Savior: Deliverer; one who saves (II Sam. 22:3, John 4:42). In the Old Testament, the word primarily refers to God. In the New Testament it is used primarily of Jesus, but also of God (Luke 1:47).

Security of the Believer: Also called "perseverance of the saints", it is the teaching that those who are saved will continue to be saved. (Romans 8:38-39; Phil 1.6). One's security is based on God's effort, not human effort. It has been explained, "Once saved, always saved" but might be more accurately put, "Once saved, always changed."

Sin: Lit., "Missing the mark" of God's will by choice and because of human weakness (Jas. 1:14-15, Rom 7:24-25). Action or attitude that disobeys God, betrays Him, or fails to do well (Rom 3:23, Jas. 4:17).

Sovereignty of God: Absolute authority and rule of God (Isa. 45:5-6, Rom. 9:20-21). God alone is sovereign.

Spiritual Gifts: Abilities given to believers by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:7). Every Christian has at least one and is to use it to build up other believers, create unity, express love, and reach new Christians (Eph. 4:13-16). For a lists of these gifts see I Cor. 12:1-11, Rom. 12: 4-8, and Eph. 4:11-13.

Temptation: Enticement to do wrong (Jas. 1:13-14), desire to do something bad, which appeals to you, at the risk of destruction. All temptation comes from Satan and is deceptive (Luke 4:1-13).

Tithe: One tenth; One tenth of all earned income should be given to the Lord as an offering (II Chron. 31: 5-6).



A Reminder:

How God Helps Us!

"A Word of Encouragement to Every Believer"

"HOW GOD HELPS US!"

2 Timothy 4:16-18

"The first time I was brought before the judge no one was here to help me. Everyone had run away. I hope that they will not be blamed for it. But the Lord stood with me and gave me the opportunity to boldly preach a whole sermon for all the world to hear. And He saved me from being thrown to the lions. Yes, and the Lord will always deliver me from all evil and will bring me into His heavenly kingdom. To God be the glory forever and ever. Amen!"

- 2 Timothy 4:16-18 (LB)

When asked, *"Does Christianity really work for you?"* The believer can state
GOD WORKS FOR ME, (AS HE WORKED FOR PAUL):

1. He gives me grace for the disappointments of the past.

(Paul) *"I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge."*

- 2 Timothy 4:16

(Stephen) *"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."*

- Acts 7:60

(Jesus) *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."*

- Luke 23:34

"This prayer for forgiveness is nothing less than the work of grace in Paul's life."

- Alexander MacLaren, *Exposition of Holy Scriptures*, vol. 16, p. 467.

"When we hate our enemies, we give them power over us—power over our sleep, our appetites, and our happiness. They would dance with joy if they knew how much they were worrying us. Our hate is not hurting them at all, but it is turning our days and nights into hellish turmoil."

- Dale Carnegie, *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, p. 114

2. He gives me strength for the storms of the present.

"But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished. . . ."

- 2 Timothy 4:17 (NASB)

Biblical examples of God "strengthening" in trials:

- Daniel and the Lion's Den
- The Hebrew Children and the Fiery Furnace
- David in the "Valley of the Shadow of Death"
- Jesus at the Cross (He said, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?"
Jesus said these words so we wouldn't have to! - Max Lucado)

3. He gives me hope for the end of life.

"(Jesus) . . . will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom . . ."

- 2 Timothy 4:18 (NASB)

". . . for the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

- 2 Timothy 4:6-8



The hands of Christ
Seem very frail.
For they were broken
By a nail.
But only They
Reach Heaven at last
Whom my frail, broken
Hands hold fast.

- Author Unknown

