

**PUTTING ON GOD'S
ARMOR OF LIGHT**

Spiritual Warfare in the Bible - Volume 6

Jonathan Carl

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SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN THE BIBLE

A Comprehensive Handbook for Deeper Study (With Course Video Lectures)

God's Answers about the Battle of the Followers of
Christ against the Unseen Spiritual Forces of Evil

Dr. Jonathan Carl

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Downloadable resources and helpful
study videos freely available at:
www.SpiritualWarfare.blog

I am so thankful to God for His strength and truth in Jesus!
I love and am so grateful for my amazing wife Brittney
and her loving, tireless support. Together we are blessed
with some amazing daughters in Sophia, Lydia, Alia, and
Mia! Our church family at South Fork has been incredible
in their encouragement :) *Thank you all for putting up with
my many hours of studying & writing for this work!*

Ephesians 6:10–12 (ESV) “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in
the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God,
that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.
[12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against
the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers
over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in
the heavenly places.”

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www.SpiritualWarfare.blog



Ephesians 6:10–12 (ESV) “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

Life is hard. Life is full of struggles and suffering. We need the reminder that our primary battles are not physical, financial, emotional, or mental, but spiritual. We ultimately are in an ongoing spiritual battle.

What is “spiritual warfare”? Spiritual warfare, based on Ephesians 6:12, is “the battle of the followers of Christ against the unseen spiritual forces of evil.”

This resource is designed to help you find God’s answers about the battle of the followers of Christ against the unseen spiritual forces of evil.

Visit our website to find freedom and victory in your daily battles through Christ’s finished work on the cross. Share our free resources with others to help them as well!

[www.TrustworthyWord.co](http://www.TrustworthyWord.com)

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TRUSTWORTHY WORD

Titus 1:9 “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.” (ESV)

Trustworthy Word was born out of a desire to equip churches with free, downloadable handouts as a resource for biblical teaching on various topics. We wanted to see the people of God think deeply about the Word of God and realize the implications that come about as a result.

One of the great things that we have seen happen though is that members of our church (South Fork Baptist Church in Hodgenville, KY) have begun to use the site as a mobile resource when they are sharing the gospel or having bible-centered conversations.

Trustworthy Word has become a digital filing cabinet where with a few taps of the finger, we can quickly locate helpful resources both for our own spiritual growth and to engage those with whom we are having Christ focused conversations.

Our hope is that you too will find Trustworthy

Word as a digital discipleship and evangelism resource you can utilize in moments when you have your phone, tablet, or computer with you. You may enjoy using some of the free handouts to help guide your small group into a deeper walk with Jesus in Bible study. With just a few clicks we hope you begin to think deeply about the Word of God and see how that impacts your life.

www.Bible.video - “The Video Bible”

@TheVideoBibleChannel



Bible.Video

“Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.” - 1 Timothy 4:13

Did someone read to you growing up? Did that time impact you? Help you? Grow you? Comfort you?

We feel that reading the Bible visually and audibly to one another is important and helpful too! What a joy it is to see print Bibles reaching the ends of the earth (through amazing groups like the Gideons and The International Bible Society and especially www.NetBible.com).

How incredible it is that translations are made (Wycliffe) and digitally distributed (Bible.com and BibleStudyTools.com) all over the world! In the past few decades, audio Bibles have also become numerous and more accessible through wonderful ministries like Faith Comes By Hearing.

Unfortunately, there isn't much of a presence currently of someone visually reading the Bible to another. We hope to help provide this through the “The Video Bible”!

We feel this is a needed resource for evangelism

and discipleship and we pray that it will be extremely effective! The biblical origins of both visually watching someone read and listening simultaneously is important to how we process and respond to the Word.

We hope to have the opportunity to help get complete bible translations free into the ears, eyes, minds, and souls of millions more over the years ahead via video.

www.Catholic.blog

The **CATHOLIC BLOG**

www.catholic.blog

Ephesians 2:8–9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (ESV)

What does the Catholic Church really believe? Many people have their opinions, experiences, or second-hand information on Catholic beliefs but a true understanding of the Catholic faith is found in its *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The Catholic Blog simply presents portions of the Catholic Catechism with relevant Bible verses and introspective questions to consider. This free resource will help you on your journey to consider the beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church and examine for yourself, through tough questions, whether The Catechism of the Catholic Church is biblically valid and trustworthy.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is a substantial document of significant history and tradition. If you have yet to read it, I encourage you to read it in its entirety. This guide should be a helpful start and reference! As you consider the “essential and fundamental contents of Catholic doctrine” (CCC, 11), I hope you will be like the Bereans of Acts 17:11 who always put the Bible first to test what they were learning.

The Bereans are described as “noble” after hearing the teaching of the Apostle Paul for two reasons:

1) getting into the Bible with “eagerness”

2) testing the teaching of the Apostle Paul in light of Scriptures to verify his truthfulness.

Similarly, may we evaluate what we see in The Catechism of the Catholic Church in the light of the Bible to “see if these things were so.”

Acts 17:11 “Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” (ESV)

A 3 Part Approach: Here is the approach you will find to this Bible study.

1) Interesting highlights and quotes - Due to the massive volume of writings in The Catechism of the Catholic Church, I have picked quotes from the text that I think you will find most useful and fascinating.

2) Relevant Scriptures - Likewise, I selected passages of Scripture that I thought particularly helpful in evaluating and understanding the Catholic teachings. Both The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Bible passages should be considered in their original context and setting. There are many more possible Catholic teachings and Biblical passages to consider but I hope this is a helpful start to your studies.

3) Helpful Questions - I have chosen not to insert opinions and assertions but instead propose tough questions that help us to think critically for ourselves about what we are reading.

My end goal and hope is that we all follow God's directive to us in 2 Corinthians 13:5 to "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" (ESV). May we all have the joy of an eternity in the presence of Jesus!

Here are the top 10 Catholic questions answered in this book with biblical answers:

1. What is the Catechism of the Catholic Church?
2. What is Sin According to the Catholic Catechism? Do Different Sins Need Different Sacrifices?
3. Does Salvation Come through Catholic Mass? Does Giving Money to Church Help Us?
4. Is Catholic Baptism Necessary for Salvation? What about Confirmation?
5. Is Catholic Eucharist Necessary for Salvation? What about Penance?

6. Was Mary Always Saved? Did Mary Never Sin? Is Mary the Cause of Salvation? Was Mary a Virgin Her Entire Life? Did Jesus Have Any Brothers? Is It True that Mary Never Died? Did Mary Ascend to Heaven?
7. Are Images of Jesus, Mary, Saints, or Angels Helpful or Harmful? Do Relics & Rosaries have Power?
8. Should We Pray to Mary and Saints? Is it OK to Pray to Angels?
9. Will I Go to Purgatory? Do Indulgences Help Us?
10. Can Marriages Be Annulled? What about Catholic Divorce and Remarriage?

Whether you are Catholic, considering Catholicism, or just curious to understand the Catholic Church better, this Bible study will be a great help to you. Download *A Biblical Study of The Catechism of the Catholic Church* free at www.Catholic.blog

INTRODUCTION

Titus 1:9 “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.” (ESV)

This book is different than many others that you might read. The vast majority of the content is simply Bible verses and references. This approach, with lots of bullet points, is intentional in order to help you clearly hear and see God’s truths and not merely human opinion. May this work be a helpful resource for your study of God’s Word. May it help you increase in your love and awe of your Savior. If you aren’t yet a follower of Christ, may the Lord save you through the reading of His Word throughout it!

I have used these resources in teaching my church, small groups, pastors, seminary students, and doctoral students about the subject of spiritual warfare. The source of these writings has been from my own studies, counseling with church members, and sermons. These subjects have arisen from some of the most important conversations that I have had in pastoral ministry for over a decade. I hope and pray that this work serves as a tool for the Lord to use in helping His children through His Spirit and Word.

Ultimately, I have written this for the Lord. He has grown me so much through the years and I pray that this work is faithful to honor and glorify Him. I have also always told my wife and daughters that I wrote this for them as well. I love them so much and if they were the only ones to read this, then I would count it a success!

I do hope that this is a useful Bible study resource for many around the world. I have made these chapters, videos, and the book (and other books too) in its entirety, freely downloadable and accessible at www.SpiritualWarfare.blog and also at www.TrustworthyWord.com. It has been a joy of mine to see so many souls find Scriptural counsel online at The Spiritual Warfare Blog and Trustworthy Word over the years and I pray that it continues to aid many more until the Lord returns!

In Christ,
Jonathan Carl

Ephesians 6:17 “take the helmet of salvation,
and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”

OUTLINE

Here is a brief outline of the sections of this book and Scriptural reminders of their importance. The links below contain video lectures to help you as well!

This book is a compilation of 10 other books you can find here:

www.spiritualwarfare.blog/free-books and
www.amazon.com/author/jonathancar1

- *God and Satan: Spiritual Warfare in the Bible*
- *Angels and Demons: Spiritual Warfare in the Bible*
- *Believers & Unbelievers: Spiritual Warfare in the Bible*
- *Heaven, Hell and Salvation: Spiritual Warfare in the Bible*
- *Frequently Asked Questions about Spiritual Warfare in the Bible: God's Answers about the Battle of the Followers of Christ against the Unseen Spiritual Forces of Evil*
- *Putting on God's Armor of Light: Spiritual Warfare in the Bible*
- *Resisting Satan's Schemes: Spiritual Warfare in the Bible*
- *Prayer and Fasting: Spiritual Warfare in the Bible*
- *Biblical Health: Spiritual Warfare in the Bible*
- *Evangelism and Missions: Spiritual Warfare in the Bible*

1. God & Satan

www.spiritualwarfare.blog/god-satan

Proverbs 1:7 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (ESV)

Ephesians 6:10 “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.” (ESV)

The story of the Bible is not a story about spiritual warfare. The story of the Bible is the story of God. As we clearly focus on who God is (His names and characteristic) and what He has done (miracles), our enemies and struggles will seem so much smaller. Although God is the Bible's primary focus, He reveals much to us about our chief enemy in Satan. Don't miss out on what God has to tell us about our enemy's names, character, and tactics that we be best prepared to live lives that enjoy and honor our Creator.

2. Angels & Demons

www.spiritualwarfare.blog/angels-demons

Colossians 1:16 “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.” (ESV)

2 Corinthians 11:14–15 “And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. [15] So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.” (ESV)

God's created angels are important in the storyline of history. In Scripture God shares many stories that explain their purposes and abilities. This section will help you to rightly understand the mostly unseen angelic beings, both faithful (angels) and fallen (demons).

3. Believers & Unbelievers

www.spiritualwarfare.blog/believers-unbelievers

1 John 3:10 “By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.” (ESV)

Matthew 12:35 “The good person out of his good treasure brings

forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.” (ESV)

Humanity is divided by those who follow Jesus in faith (Christian believers) and those who follow Satan, the world, and their fleshly sin (unbelievers). It is essential to understand the identities of both groups as well as the evidences of their character and works. There is no neutral ground in this battle of the followers of Christ against the spiritual forces of evil. Here are some truths to help us be aware of who we are and rightly see the world around us with a spiritual understanding.

4. Heaven & Hell and Salvation

www.spiritualwarfare.blog/heaven-hell

Romans 10:1 “Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.” (ESV)

Luke 19:10 “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (ESV)

Matthew 7:21–23 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. [22] On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ [23] And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” (ESV)

God speaks clearly to us both about eternal life (Heaven) and eternal death (Hell). He wants believers to look forward to being in His presence in Heaven and also wants unbelievers to be warned of the danger of eternal suffering in Hell. Salvation is God’s offer and work through Christ and He has much to tell us in the Scriptures. Here are some truths about Heaven, Hell, and God’s work of salvation.

5. Spiritual Warfare Passages in the Bible

www.spiritualwarfare.blog/bible

Ephesians 6:12–13 “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. [13] Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.” (ESV)

God warns believers about the ongoing battle between His followers and the devil’s followers. He wants us to rightly understand the underlying issues of our struggles that we may daily rely on God’s strength and not our own. Here are some important truths to understand about spiritual warfare.

6. Putting on God’s Armor of Light

www.spiritualwarfare.blog/armor

Romans 13:12 “The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.” (ESV)

1 Thessalonians 5:8 “But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.” (ESV)

God calls us to go into battle covered in His armor of light and wielding the “sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” This section will help you to hear God’s commands and wisdom of how to live life in a way that takes into account the reality of our spiritual battles.

7. Resisting Satan’s Schemes

www.spiritualwarfare.blog/schemes

Ephesians 6:11 “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.” (ESV)

2 Corinthians 2:11 “so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.” (ESV)

James 4:7–8 “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” (ESV)

God wants us to be informed of our enemy’s strategies and tactics. We have a responsibility and urgent call to resist the attacks of our enemies. In this section we will hear many of the ways God shares of how to resist Satan’s temptations and deception.

8. Prayer and Fasting

www.spiritualwarfare.blog/prayer

Ephesians 6:18 “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints” (ESV)

God cares for us by growing and changing us through our time with Him in prayer and fasting. As we receive God’s Bible truths, we get to respond to Him and ask Him for knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and help in our times of need.

9. Biblical Health

www.spiritualwarfare.blog/health

3 John 2–4 “Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. [3] For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. [4] I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.” (ESV)

God speaks to us wholistically through the Scriptures, desiring us to be healthy spiritually but also physically, mentally, emotionally, financially, relationally, and sexually. He wants us to fulfill His purposes for us in our homes, workplaces, churches and wherever we go. This section will help you to evaluate your

health, identify strengths and weakness, and walk forward in God’s truths for life.

10. Evangelism and Missions

www.spiritualwarfare.blog/missions

Ephesians 6:18–20 “praying ... also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, [20] for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.” (ESV)

The Christian life is a life called to love in action. We must be on the offense in sharing the hope of the Gospel news of Jesus Christ. This section will encourage and equip you to tell others about the loving life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

11. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

www.spiritualwarfare.blog/faqs

1 Peter 3:15 “but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (ESV)

Colossians 4:5–6 “Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. [6] Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.” (ESV)

Ephesians 4:11–14 “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, [12] to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, [13] until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, [14] so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.” (ESV)

JONATHANCARL

There are many other questions you may have that this book has not yet answered. This section will answer a few of those questions but will also challenge you to think biblically through other questions and scenarios you have already faced or that you may face in the future.

VOLUME 6: PUTTING ON GOD'S ARMOR OF LIGHT

Free Video Lectures @
[www.spiritualwarfare.blog/
armor](http://www.spiritualwarfare.blog/armor)

Romans 13:12 “The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.” (ESV)

1 Thessalonians 5:8 “But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.” (ESV)

God calls us to go into battle covered in His armor of light and wielding the “sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” This section will help you to hear God’s commands and wisdom of how to live life in a way that takes into account the reality of our spiritual battles.

Peter Delivered from Prison by Paul Gustave Doré.



WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT CHRISTIAN IDENTITY?

The greatest gift of Christianity is not merely a future existence in Heaven, but it is the present and eternal reality of a relationship and union with Christ (John 15:1-11, 1 Corinthians 6:17). As Christians we must realize that we are not products of our past or present decisions, failures, or successes. Our identity, value, & worth are rooted in our new name and identity in Christ. We focus on knowing, enjoying, & exalting God first and foremost and simultaneously discover our amazing nature as God's forever adopted children.

In Christ, I am...

- **Accepted.** (Romans 15:7)
- **Alive. Truly & Forever.** (Romans 6:23, John 11:25-26, Romans 6:8, Philippians 1:21)
- **Aroma of Christ.** (2 Corinthians 2:14-17)
- **Born of God** (John 1:12-13)
- **Blessed.** (Ephesians 1:3)
- **Called to Not Fear or Worry.** (John 14:1, Isaiah 41:10, Joshua 1:8-9, Phil 4:6-7, Heb 13:6)
- **Child and Heir of God.** (Romans 8:16-17, Galatians 4:6-7, 2 Cor 6:18)
- **Chosen and Adopted.** (Ephesians 1:4-5)
- **Citizens of Heaven.** (Philippians 3:20-21, Hebrews 13:14, Ephesians 2:19)

- **Comforted and Comforters.** (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
- **Crucified, Buried, Risen, and Free with Christ.** (Romans 6:4-8)
- **Empowered Representatives.** (2 Corinthians 5:20, Acts 1:8)
- **Filled with God's Holy Spirit.** (John 7:38-39)
- **Free.** (John 8:32-36)
- **Friend.** (John 15:15)
- **Forgiven.** (Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:13-14, Colossians 2:13-14)
- **Heard.** (1 John 5:14-15)
- **Inconceivably Rich.** (2 Corinthians 8:9)
- **Justified and Made Righteous.** (Romans 5:17-19, 2 Corinthians 5:21)
- **Known.** (John 10:14, Jeremiah 1:5)
- **Light of the World.** (Matthew 5:14-16)
- **Loved.** (Romans 8:31, Jeremiah 31:3, John 3:16)
- **Never Alone.** (Matthew 28:20)
- **New Creation.** (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- **Part of the Body of Christ.** (Romans 12:4-5, 2 Corinthians 5:20)
- **Purchased and Purposed.** (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Ephesians 2:10, 2 Corinthians 5:18-19)
- **Reconciled with God.** (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)
- **Redeemed, Rescued, and Saved.** (Ephesians 1:13-14, Matthew 20:28, Romans 5:8)
- **Saints.** (Ephesians 5:3, Philippians 4:21, 1 Peter 2:9-10)
- **Salt of the Earth.** (Matthew 5:13)
- **Sealed.** (2 Corinthians 1:22)
- **Secure.** (Romans 8:38-39, Ephesians 2:4-7)
- **Strengthened.** (2 Corinthians 12:10, 1 John 4:4, Philippians 4:13)
- **The Temple of God and of Priceless Worth.** (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
- **United with God.** (1 Corinthians 6:17, Colossians 3:3-4)
- **Victorious.** (Romans 8:37)
- **Washed. Cleaned. Declared Innocent. Atoned. Not Condemned.** (Isaiah 6:7, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Romans 8:1-2)

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SANCTIFICATION?

What is sanctification?

Sanctification is the process by which God's Spirit changes the heart, mind and soul of a Christian to conform to His will in joyful obedience to and imitation of the holiness of God.

- Romans 6:19-22 "For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life."
- Acts 26:18 "to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3 "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;"

How does sanctification happen?

- Acts 26:18 "sanctified by faith"
- 1 Corinthians 11:1 "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."

- Philippians 3:17 “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.”
- Philippians 4:9 “What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13 “God chose you as the first fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.”
- Colossians 4:12 “Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.”

What speeds & impedes sanctification?

- New Self VS. Old Self – Colossians 3 & Ephesians 4
- Ephesians 4:30 “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”
- 1 Thessalonians 5:19 “Do not quench the Spirit.”

What is God’s role and my responsibility?

- Passive VS. Active
- 1 Peter 1:22 “Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart”
- John 17:17,19 “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ... And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.”
- Galatians 3:3 “Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”
- Romans 15:16 “sanctified by the Holy Spirit”, 1 Peter 1:2 “sanctification of the Spirit”
- 1 Corinthians 1:30 “And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption”
- Hebrews 13:12 “So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order

to sanctify the people through his own blood.”

What about “Carnal Christians”?

Although there are varying degrees of maturity and fruitfulness among believers, there is no such category of Christians who do not bear fruit of God's Spirit.

- 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 “But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? 4 For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human?”
- 1 John 3:6 “No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.”
- James 2:26 “faith without works is dead”

Can we be “perfected” (i.e. “entire sanctification” or “sinless perfection”)?

No, "perfection" does not happen as Christians will continue to struggle with sin while on earth. "Glorification" describes the guarantee of true believers receiving their resurrection bodies when they enter into Heaven.

- Romans 8:30 “And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”
- Hebrews 10:14 “For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”
- Romans 7:14-24 v.15 “For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.”

Why is it so important?

- 1 Thessalonians 5:23 “Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus

Christ"

- 1 Peter 1:14-19 "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." 17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, 18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot."

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT LOVE?

1 John 4:8-11

"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

Mark 12:28-31

"One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" ²⁹"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. ³¹The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.'"

Ephesians 5:1-2

"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

Romans 5:8

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 8:38-39

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

John 13:34

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

1 Corinthians 13:1-8

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. ⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸Love never fails."

Galatians 5:22-24

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

1 John 4:10

"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us

and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

ONE ANOTHERS

"The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Mark 12:31

Accept one another - Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. (Romans 15:7)

Admonish one another - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16)

Bear one another's burdens - Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

Bear with one another - Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2)

Build up one another - Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. (Romans 14:19)

Care for one another - . . . so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. (1 Corinthians 12:25)

Comfort one another - Therefore encourage each other with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

Confess faults to one another - Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

Be Devoted to one another - Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. (Romans 12:10a)

Encourage one another - Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Forgive one another - Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

Greet one another - Greet one another with a holy kiss. (Romans 16:16)

Be Honest with one another - Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices . . . (Colossians 3:9)

Honor one another - Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10b)

Be Hospitable to one another - Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. (1 Peter 4:9)

Be Kind to one another - Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

Love one another - Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another . . . (Romans 13:8)

Members one of another - So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. (Romans 12:5)

Pray for one another - Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

Be of the Same Mind with one another - May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus . . . (Romans 15:5)

Serve one another - You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. (Galatians 5:13)

Spur one another on - And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. (Hebrews 10:24)

Submit to one another - Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Ephesians 5:21)

10 Truths about Love from Proverbs

1. **The World Offers False Love.** “Come, let us take our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with love.” (Proverbs 7:18 ESV)
2. **Watch Out for a Love of Laziness & Ignorance.** “How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?” (Proverbs 1:22)
3. **Love the Wisdom of God.** “Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you.” (Proverbs 4:6)
4. **Love in Marriage Is an Amazing Gift, Don’t Waste It.** “Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth ... be intoxicated always in her love.” (Proverbs 5:18-19)
5. **God’s Love Requires a Loving Response.** “I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.” (Proverbs 8:17)
6. **Hatred of God’s Wisdom = A Love of Death.** “but he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me love death.” (Proverbs 8:36)
7. **God Cares for Those Who Love His Wisdom.** “granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries.” (Proverbs 8:21)
8. **Wise Friends Love Wise Friends.** “Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.” (Proverbs 9:8)
9. **Love Covers Sin.** “Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.” (Proverbs 10:12)
10. **Forgiving and Forgetting Is an Act of Love.** “Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.” (Proverbs 17:9)

WHAT BIBLE VERSES ARE GOOD FOR CHRISTIANS TO MEMORIZE?

TOP GOSPEL VERSES

The Good News of Jesus is important for Christians for us to daily remember for our identity in and gratitude towards God. Through it we enjoy the goodness of God & prepare ourselves for Gospel-sharing!

GOD’S GLORY

- Psalms 19:1 “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.” (ESV)

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

- Mark 12:30 “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”

MAN’S SIN

- Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

CHRIST’S LOVE

- John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”
- Romans 5:8 “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY

- John 14:6 “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
- Acts 4:12 “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
- 1 John 2:23 “No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.”

OUR SALVATION

- Romans 10:9 “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”
- 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

ETERNAL LIFE

- 1 John 5:12-13 “Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

MORE AT: www.trustworthyword.com/what-bible-verses-are-good-to-memorize-for-evangelism

More Helpful Verses for Common Life Issues and Struggles:

Addictions: 1 Corinthians 6:12 “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-addictions

Dating: Proverbs 12:4 “A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/dating

Depression: “Mark 14:35-36 “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/depression and www.trustworthyword.com/suicide
- www.trustworthyword.com/mental-health

Fear: Hebrews 13:6 So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”

- www.trustworthyword.com/enemies and www.trustworthyword.com/risk

Forgiveness: Colossians 3:13 “bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/forgiveness

Heaven: John 14:3 “I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-heaven

Hell: Revelation 20:15 “And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-hell

Identity: Romans 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation

for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

- Romans 8:31 “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-christian-identity

Love: John 13:34 “As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-love

Lustful Temptations: Matthew 5:28 “everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

- Hebrews 13:4 “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”
- 1 Corinthians 6:18–20 “Flee from sexual immorality...your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”
- www.trustworthyword.com/sexual-health
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sexual-sin
- www.trustworthyword.com/protect-from-porn
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-homosexuality

Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage: Ephesians 5:33 “However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.” 1 Corinthians 7:1 2-15

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-marriage-roles
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-divorce-and-remarriage

Money: Hebrews 13:5 “Keep your life free from love of money,

and be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”

- Acts 20:35 “by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-money

Physical, Emotional, and Relational Health: 1 Corinthians 6:20 “So glorify God in your body.”

- 1 Timothy 4:8 “bodily training is of some value”
- www.trustworthyword.com/biblical-health

Politics: 1 Timothy 2:1-2 “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-voting-and-politics

Prayer & Fasting: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/prayer-fasting

Sin: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? ... And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sin
- www.trustworthyword.com/human-sin

Suffering, Death, & Life: Romans 8:18 “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

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- Hebrews 9:27 “it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment”
- Philippians 1:21 “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-suffering-worry-death-life-and-heaven

Work & Retirement: Ephesians 6:7 “rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man”

- Ephesians 5:15–17 “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”
- www.trustworthyword.com/work-place-health
- www.trustworthyword.com/retirement-health

Worry: Matthew 6:25 “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life”

- Philippians 4:5–7 “The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
- www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-worry

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

For helpful resources, download one of our free books like *Week by Week Bible Reading* at www.trustworthyword.com/free-books

10 Reasons to Read and Study the Bible

1. **Encounter God** - The Bible is where we meet God and hear His voice and truth!
2. **Know God** - We don't just seek to know about God, but to relate to and grow in love for Him.
3. **Glorify God** - We desire to grow in holiness and imitation of Christ in order to honor God.
4. **Experience God's Past Work** - We learn from God's revealed historical work among humanity.
5. **Understand God's Present Work** - We hear how God desires to work in & through us today.
6. **Look Forward to God's Future Work** - We trust in His promised future return and work.
7. **Protect from Satan's Attacks** - We remember our real enemy in Satan, his demons, the world, and our flesh and are reminded that His truth is a spiritual weapon of offense and defense.
8. **Share True Hope with Others** - We evangelistically speak God's hope, love, and Gospel truth.
9. **Live Life According to God's Wisdom** - We submit to

our Father's loving instruction for life

10. **Obedience** - God has commanded us to listen and obey His voice through the Bible.

10 Ways to Read the Bible

As you seek to read the Bible, ensure to prioritize time to take the Bible for study and meditation: understanding, absorbing, internalizing, memorizing, and applying the Scriptures.

1. **Through the Bible** - Read the whole Bible from beginning to end or in some other order!
 - Try about.esvbible.org/resources/reading/ or www.biblestudytools.com/bible-reading-plan/
2. **New Testament** - If you read a chapter per weekday, you can read the whole Bible in a year
3. **Proverbs** - There are 31 Proverbs, so seek to read the one corresponding to the calendar day (i.e. read Proverbs 17 on the 17th day of the month, Proverbs 18 on 18th day of the month, etc.).
4. **Psalms** - There are 150 Psalms, so choose a Psalm each day to help guide your prayers (i.e. on the 17th day of the month select either Psalm 17, 47, 77, 107, or 137 to read and instruct you in prayer).
 - See Don Whitney's *Praying the Bible*
5. **Read slowly through Romans** - Go deeper and digest and study theology.
 - Use a resource like Wayne Grudem's *Christian Beliefs* or *Systematic Theology* to help you!
6. **Pick a single Bible book to read** - John: learn the basics of Jesus' life and death. James: know and apply God's wisdom. 1 John: ensure you are a believer.
7. **Subscribe to a faithful devotional aid to compliment**

your Bible reading

- Try www.biblestudytools.com/devotionals
- 8. **Study a character. Search and read wherever their name appears.**
 - Check out *The Baker Encyclopedia of Bible People*
- 9. **Study a place. Search and read wherever that place is mentioned.**
 - Check out www.bibleplaces.com/sites for some incredible descriptions and pictures!
- 10. **Study a topic. Search and learn about what God teaches about key issues.** Check out GotQuestions.org

Where did the Bible come from? What is the Bible?

The Bible was spoken and revealed from God into the hearts of men that the Scriptures might be written and shared among God's children. Some of these writings are historical descriptions, prophetic writings, poetry and songs, wisdom, and letters. Although written by the hands of men, these writings were not written by the will of man, but were inspired and given by the power and will of God's Spirit. The Bible is the specific revelation by God about Himself, His work, and His plan for all of humanity so that we may love, trust, and obey Him. The whole Bible is breathed out by God, to make His people wise for salvation and to equip His people to lovingly teach, train, correct, and confront with God's truths (2 Timothy 3:10-17)

"And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1:19-21

"For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." 2 Peter 1:16

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deuteronomy 29:29

Can we expect more books to be discovered or added to the Bible?

No. God has clearly spoken in the Scriptures and across early church history such that the current collection of recognized biblical books (canon) is complete. This process of recognizing the words of God comes through the recognition of the authorship as a biblical prophets or apostle, the self-attestation of the book within the Scriptures themselves, and their continuity with other books of the Bible.

Does the Bible have errors?

The original writings (autographs) have no errors at all. The ancient copies (manuscripts) we possess have small differences between them. These differences have primarily arisen from those who were copying and translating them. These differences have been recognized, described and corrected via a modern-day comparison of the thousands of manuscripts to produce reliable Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) compilations that have been reliably translated into many languages. None of the manuscript differences affect or speak to major theological issues but are most commonly mere grammatical issues. Comprehensive resources are available to explain the process of translation and decisions made concerning the compilation of manuscripts.

Is the Bible trustworthy?

Yes. The Bible shows its own trustworthiness through its self-attestation in the lives of believers and its internal consistency over thousands of years at the hands of many writers. The

Bible is clearly seen to be the most accurate book in all of human history through archaeological, historical, scientific, and documentary evidence. The biblical content clearly reveals that its author is God Himself. The Bible has the most and best manuscript evidence, seen in its thousands of copies that were written soon after its original writing and discovered in a multiplicity of geographic locations. No literary work in all of human history is comparable to the trustworthiness of the Bible.

"He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it." Titus 1:9

"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account." Hebrews 4:12-13

"The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces." Psalm 119:72

Is the KJV the best translation?

The King James Version (KJV) of the Bible is a good translation of the Bible. When it was written only a few manuscripts had been discovered, which limited the scope and accuracy of its translation. Since its translation hundreds of years ago, many additional archaeological discoveries have been made which provided thousands of more trustworthy manuscripts in the twentieth century. Many modern day translations have been written since the KJV translation, providing plenty of accurate biblical translations. Many people prefer the KJV because of their personal familiarity with it. Many others struggle with the KJV since it uses Old English, a language that is antiquated, no longer spoken, and difficult for many modern day English

speakers to understand.

Many teachers give the false impression that the KJV is the only accurate Bible to be used. This is a touchy issue, one which must be handled with great care and humility. Such teachers may have genuine motives in preventing any corruption of the Biblical translations, but such opinions are often rooted in human pride and personal ignorance of the translation process and manuscript evidence. Those who prefer the KJV have the joy of continuing in their freedom of this preference but must humbly encourage and accept the fact that many prefer translations based on a more comprehensive collection of biblical manuscripts and translated into the common languages of the day.

Suggested book: *The King James Only Controversy* by James White

Why are there so many translations?

When translating the Bible, the translators must make decisions to translate either literally with a word for word approach (formal) or with a thought for thought approach (dynamic equivalence). These two approaches are both accurate and helpful. Some writings are written with more simple wording to recognize the differences in literary capabilities of different people and communities.

There are also other translations based upon a paraphrase approach. The paraphrase approach is when the Biblical text is not translated but is instead summarized and restated. Although such an approach may be helpful for children's Bibles and chronological Bible storying, it is not a good approach for maturing and literate Christians.

The English language is blessed to have many translations, but some languages possess only one translation. Many languages have yet to have the Bible translated. Although the multiple translations are extremely beneficial, we must recognize and be aware that there are translations that make unhelpful and

heretical changes to the meaning of the biblical text.

There are modern translations that have removed gender specific language (NIV), removed references to Christ's deity (Jehovah's Witnesses' New World Translation), added books to the Bible (Catholicism), or subjugated the Bible to other books and authorities (Catholicism and Mormonism).

"Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son." 2 John 1:9

Which translation is the best?

Assuming the translation is faithful to the biblical text, the best translation is the one that you can easily read and understand. As some grow in their reading and comprehension abilities, they may find that more formal translations are most helpful to them in the process of study.

Are devotional guides and books ok?

Devotional guides and books can be helpful for Christians as an aid and tool to enhancing their personal study of God's Word. Devotional guides and books can also be a dangerous impediment to spiritual growth if Christians never grow in their own abilities to study Scripture. True Christians seek to mature and should never be content with solely a second hand experience with God as related through others. The Bible is clearly understood (perspicuity of the Bible), which means that it is intelligible through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. If you struggle with your own personal and direct study of God's Word, pray to God and seek help from others in order to enhance and increase your ability to hear God's voice through the study of His Word.

How can I go about reading more of the Bible?

Make a plan. Make time. Be intentional. The reading of God's Word is essential for spiritual growth. The best plan is the one in which you will be able to follow. It could be as simple as picking

a Bible book and reading through it one day at a time. It could involve a goal like reading through the entire New Testament in a year by reading one chapter per weekday. Many books, Bibles, and apps have a plan for reading through the entire Bible in a year. We tend to prioritize that which we find valuable. Prioritize and make time for the reading of God's Word, it is of infinite value.

"the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb." Psalm 19:9-10

Is the New Testament more important than the Old Testament?

What is their relationship?

All of Scripture is valuable and trustworthy. The Bible is one big story, not two separate sections (Hebrews 1:1-2, 2 Timothy 3:14-17). God speaks not only through his prophets, but also through the life of Christ. The expression that "the New is in the Old concealed and the the Old is in the New revealed" helps us to understand this relationship. We need to give equal attention to the study of both the Old Testament and New Testament for "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

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

"Therefore I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold. Therefore I consider all your precepts to be right; I hate every false way." Psalm 119:127-128

How can I understand the meaning of the Bible?

The best way to understand the Bible is to spend time in it. Study Bibles, commentaries, and online resources (GotQuestions.org, BibleStudyTools.com, and BibleHub.com). Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself, and seek answers to, as you

discover the meaning of the Scriptures:

- Who is writing this?
- Who is it being written to?
- What type of writing is this?
- What does the Scripture mean?
- What do we learn about God?
- What do we learn about God's work?
- What do we learn about ourselves?
- Why does this passage matter?
- How do I need to respond to and apply these truths to my life? (Is there a sin to avoid, a command to obey, an example to follow, a prayer to offer, a truth to remember, an attitude to change, or a teaching to share?)

What does it mean to meditate on God's Word?

Meditation on God's Word is the filling up of one's heart and mind with the truths of God. As these truths are internalized, we are to spend more time in mental contemplation and processing over His truth in order to grow in our faith and to share our faith with others. Meditation happens when we read, listen to, pray over, learn, think, speak, write, and share about God's truths.

"Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." Joshua 1:7-8

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Romans 12:2

How can I share and speak God's truths lovingly to others?

Memorizing the Scripture is the best way to prepare to share God's truths. We should pray to God for opportunities and courage to witness. When we pray according to His will we know he hears and answers us (1 John 5:14-15), and we know it is His will that we be His witnesses (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8). The more we meditate, study, and memorize God's Word, the more our hearts and lips will naturally and courageously bear witness to the glory and goodness of God.

We must remember that we have a responsibility to warn others of God's coming judgment (Ezekiel 3:17-19 & 33:7-9). When we share the Gospel we ought to communicate the truths concerning God as Creator (Colossians 1:16-17, Hebrews 4:13, 9:27), mankind's sinful rebellion (Romans 3:23), Christ's sacrifice and gift (Romans 6:23), and our need to respond to God as our Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9). The Gospel must be clearly spoken from our lips but also must be faithfully lived out in our lives, marriages, families, and workplaces (Ephesians 5 & 6).

Here are three great online resources to learn how to share your faith:

- ***The Way of the Master*** (Ray Comfort) www.livingwaters.com
[our personal favorite!]
- *Share Jesus without Fear* (William Fay)
www.sharejesuswithoutfear.com
- *Steps to Peace with God* (Billy Graham) www.peacewithgod.net

Many people fear the questions that may arise when witnessing, but it is ok to answer that "I do not know, but will find out." A great resource for discovering God's answers to difficult questions is www.gotquestions.org. Finally we must always remember that our calling is not simply to make converts, but to make disciples, connecting believers into church fellowships where they can grow in their love and knowledge of God.

How can I recognize false teachers and false prophets?

The best way to recognize false teachers is to listen to their teachings and watch their lives (Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18:15-22, Matthew 12:33-37, Galatians 1:8-9, 2 Peter 2, Jude 1:1-10, 2 John 1:9, James 3:1). If their teachings and lives do not line up with Scriptural truths, they may be false teachers, false prophets, or immature believers who do not need to be teaching or leading.

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

"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:8-9

Steps to Studying the Bible

- **Pray** before Studying the Bible - ask God to open your mind and heart to His truths
- **Read** the Bible - follow a plan, be disciplined, seek accountability, use an audio bible such as found from faithcomesbyhearing.com ("Bible.is" as an app)
- **Listen** to Faithful Teachings - commit to regularly listen to your pastor's and others' teachings while diligently checking the Scripture to ensure what they say is true (Acts 17:11).
- **Study** the Bible - slowly and intentionally dig deep into the Scriptures
- **Meditate** on the Bible - remove distractions and seek the work of the Spirit for your understanding and application of these truths in your life
- **Pray** through the Bible - use the Scriptures to guide your prayer. The Psalms are the best for this, but you can pray as the Lord leads for conviction and turning from sin as well as for the increased maturity in Christ
- **Memorize** the Bible - write, speak out loud, draw, use games, acronyms, songs, and repetition, recite portions of verses and progress to the whole verse, keep accountability to your memorization goals
- **Teach** the Bible - find someone to mentor and teach, learning how to study the Bible, in teaching you will learn and grow most rapidly
- **Evangelize** with the Bible - the Bible is meant to be shared, focus on Gospel presentation passages to use in witnessing
- **Pray** for God to remind and deepen you into the truths of God, asking Him to help you to obey His Word

Passages Emphasizing the Importance of the Study of the Bible

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the

word of truth. - 2 Timothy 2:15

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. - Isaiah 55:10-11

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. - John 5:39-40

Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?" - Mark 12:24

You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra - which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. 12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:10-17

Command and teach these things. 12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to

teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. - 1 Timothy 4:11-16

Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. - James 1:21-25

take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, - Ephesians 6:17

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. - Revelation 22:18-19

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. - Hebrews 4:12-13

If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, 4 he is puffed up with conceit

and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. - 1 Timothy 6:3-5

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. - Hebrews 1:1-2

10 TIPS FOR BETTER BIBLE STUDY

"Half our fears arise from neglect of the Bible." Charles H. Spurgeon

1. Pick a Plan

Ever hear the expression, "a goal without a plan is just a wish"? If you want to draw closer to the Lord through the Bible you've got to make a plan that is "SMART" or 1)Specific, 2)Measurable, 3)Achievable, 4)Realistic, and 5)Timely

2. Be Realistic, Keep It Simple

Consider your past and present situations as you evaluate your goals for the future!

3. Set a Time

Are you a morning person or an evening person? Do you need to wake up earlier or block off a particular time of day a little better?

4. Pick, Prepare, & Protect a Place

Where is a spot (chair, room, car) where you avoid distractions while being focused on reading or hearing God's Word?

5. Make Reminders

What will help you to remember daily? Leaving your Bible or devotional out in a particular spot? Sticky note? Dry eraser on the mirror or fridge? Phone app notification? Repeating calendar event?

6. Keep Track of Your Progress

Use a bookmark, check off a reading plan, use a chart to see what you've accomplished!

7. Have a Catch-Up Plan, Readjust If Necessary

Block off time (evening, weekend, a day per month) to pick up when you inevitably miss a reading or day. Find yourself getting too far behind, adjust your goals to be more realistic and achievable or stretch out your goal's end date.

8. Create Accountability

Aim for the same goal with a child, spouse, friend, or family member. Share your goal and progress or setbacks online or with others for encouragement. Confess your failures or struggles to receive wisdom or prayer.

9. Use Tools for the Journey

Whether it is highlighters, gel pens, or a commentary, concordance, atlas, or app - find practical resources that make your journey more enjoyable and profitable.

10. Celebrate Small Wins Along the Way

Make celebratory steps and incentives as you keep up for a month, finish a book, or complete your next chapter. Make an end of the year prize that you look forward to using a small reward!

"The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts." George Mueller

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

Church attendance is essential, not optional Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near”

We are the Body of Christ

- Ephesians 1:22-23 “the church, which is his body”
- *Ekklesia* – “called out ones,” “assembly”
- Universal Church – positionally identified
- Local Church – practically identified

What is God’s plan for the church?

• **Offense: Reaching the Lost with the Gospel**
Matthew 16:18 “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

• **Defense: Teaching, Rebuking, & Correcting with Biblical Truth**

Matthew 18:17-20 “If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 Truly, I say to

you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

• **United: Working Together for the Glory of God**

1 Corinthians 12:21, 26 “The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you. ...If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”

What are the purposes of the church? (Acts 2:42-47)

- Individual Responsibility – letting the Holy Spirit grow and use me in God’s good work
- Fellowship – developing caring and committed relationships
- Service – sharing towards each other in times of need & reaching outside the church to show Christ’s love in a tangible way
- Worship – ascribing glory to God
- Evangelism - connecting people to Christ by intentionally sharing the Gospel message
- Prayer – speaking with God personally, regularly, and for one another
- Teaching – a great place to ask questions and to learn from others about God’s Word

What are the roles in the church? What is your role?

1 Corinthians 12:20 “As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.”

1 Corinthians 12:27-31 “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all

interpret? 31 But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.”

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT “ONLINE CHURCH”?

Is “Online Church” Really a Church?

True followers of Christ are always described as part of God’s “universal church” (all genuine believers across history). But what about the “local church”? Can we BE the church merely through our virtual attendance? Although the concept of “internet live streams” would be foreign to biblical times, across the Bible we see important descriptions, commands, and principles for the “local church” gathering together...

Why We Gather: 12 Biblical Reasons The Church Gathers In Person

1. We Gather because God Chose and Called Us Out of Isolation and Into Our Purpose Together

1 Corinthians 12:18 “But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.” (ESV)

- Modern day “Christianity” has advocated for an individualism (“Lone Ranger Christianity”) that is far from the biblical descriptions of corporate responsibility and accountability. The biblical church (*Ekklesia*) is BOTH the people who gather and the act of gathering.

2. We Gather because We Need Each Other; the Body Assembled, Not Disassembled

1 Corinthians 12:21 “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’”

- If a piece of your body were physically severed, its disconnection would both evidence & lead towards the severed-member's damage & death. Likewise, the “believer” who severs

themselves from the local body of Christ will both evidence & lead themselves on a path towards spiritual damage & death.

- 1 John 2:19 “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.”

3. We Gather to Suffer & Celebrate Together

1 Corinthians 12:26–27 “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

- God created us for relationships where we lovingly share the ups and downs of life together.

- Genesis 2:18 “Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone”

4. We Gather to Serve God

1 Corinthians 12:27 “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

- We were created and gifted with purpose to love God and one another, in and through our local church. Don't waste the life and gifting God has given to you. You are not called to be a consumer, you are called and created to be a contributor.

- 1 Peter 4:10 “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace”

5. We Gather, because Outside the Church is Dangerously Described as Satan's Realm

1 John 5:19 “We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

(see also... 1 Corinthians 5:5, Luke 4:5–6, & Ephesians 2:2)

- We live in dangerous times and the local church is a place where our presence together brings wisdom, encouragement, safety, and strengthening as we engage in real spiritual battle with our eternal enemies.

6. We Gather In Person, In Spite of Risk, Because God

Commands Us

Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near”

- The early church faced great risk of persecution when they gathered. Many “underground” churches today gather together in spite of the very real possibility of financial consequences, arrests, beatings, and death.

- “What Does the Bible Say about Risk” - www.trustworthyword.com/risk

7. We Gather Together As a Foretaste of our Heavenly Gathering

1 Thessalonians 4:17 “Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.”

- The act of gathering together in a biblical church service is a picture, shadow, and foretaste of the delightful activities of worshipping and enjoying God's presence together in Heaven.

8. We Gather for Lasting Joy in God and One Another

2 John 12 “Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.”

- The early church had a safe alternative to physically gathering together - letter writing - but they never saw such a connection as being a sufficient replacement to physical presence in gathering. Gathering together in worship through a local church brings unique joy that can't be fully experienced by other means of connection.

9. We Gather, Because Separation Leads to Grief

Acts 20:37–38 “And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.”

- When physical separation occurred between Paul and his church family, it brought sorrow and grief. Likewise, true believers should discover a sincere and pressing desire to be together in person consistently whenever possible.

10. We Gather, as a Local Flock of Sheep Waiting, Preparing, and Uniting for the Chief Shepherd

1 Peter 5:2-4 “shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

- One of the most common descriptions of both the universal and local churches is that of a flock of sheep with a chief Shepherd (Jesus) and under-shepherds (pastors). When a sheep wanders from the flock, the distance and separation results in a lack of nutrition, protection, and guidance. Our local gatherings help us to grow, heal, strengthen, and prepare for the return of Christ.

11. We Gather, because “Online Church” Is Not A Real Church - Don’t Settle for Less than what God Commands

3 John 14 “I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.”

- Although connecting to your church family via online live streams may be an occasional and temporary necessity, “online church” does not meet the Biblical purposes, functions, and commands of gathering in person.

12. We Gather because We Have Been Purchased for Purpose

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

- The practice of going to church, is the practice being the church - loving God and loving others. We have great purpose when we come together. Our coming together prepares us to go out and live lives that radiate God’s love and truth. Let’s not miss out on our purpose in life and as a church.

- Acts 2:42-47 “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. [43] And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. [44] And all who believed were together and had all things in common. [45] And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. [46] And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, [47] praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

5 Purposes of Live Streaming a Church Service

If “online church” is not a real church, should we still stream our services? Where possible, Yes!

Online Live Streaming of Our Church Services Serves As...

1. **Outreach** to believers disconnected from a local church...to reconnect them to presence in a local fellowship.
2. **Evangelism** to unbelievers needing to hear the Gospel...to connect them to Jesus in salvation.
3. **Encouragement** to those temporarily disconnected from our local church due to travel, sickness, or disability...to overwhelm them with God’s love and strength.
4. **A blessing** to our homebound church members who are unable to leave their home...to help them remain faithful to Christ until they meet Him face to face.
5. **A supplemental discipleship tool** to compliment your belonging in a local church...to help one another mature and grow as followers of Christ.

6 Things that Happen When We Don’t Gather Together...

1. **We disobey** God.
2. **We miss** our purpose.
3. **We endanger** ourselves to Satan, the world, and our flesh.
4. **We grieve** our local body of Christ.
5. **We disable** and weaken our local body of Christ.
6. **We isolate** ourselves relationally, emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually.

How have you handled gathering with your local church in the past? How can you grow and improve?

1 Thessalonians 2:17 “But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face”

8 OF SATAN’S BEST TEMPTATIONS TO KEEP YOU OUT OF CHURCH

Here are some of the most common thoughts that Satan tempts us with to try to disconnect us from our local church family. While there are often times that God calls His people to a new church, Jesus will never call His people away from gathering with a local church altogether.

1. “I don’t need to go to church to be a Christian”

God describes true Christians as desiring corporate worship, instruction, fellowship, & being obedient to His commands. The biblical church (*Ekklesia*) is BOTH the people who gather and the act of gathering.

2. “The church is not a building; the people are the church.”

God calls the people of the church out of their homes to gather together in worship. The church is not passive, it is active.

3. “I’m safer at home”

God calls us to gather, even in the midst of risky situations.

4. “ ____ Church is a bunch of cliques”

God calls us into small groups and fellowship, even if it is hard.

5. “ ____ Church is a bunch of hypocrites”

JONATHANCARL

God calls uses the church gatherings to heal & grow the sinful.

6. “ ____ Church doesn’t meet my needs...I’m not getting fed”

God calls us to serve, not to be served. Church is about God, not us.

7. “There are better sermons/worship online”

God calls us into local fellowships, not just online resources. Watching at a distance can never replace participating in person.

8. “It’s too early... I’m too busy... I’m too tired”

God calls us to give Him one full day a week & to prepare for His return.

***Your Presence Reveals Your Priorities:
5 Steps Forward Together to Gather***

- 1) **Admit** Your Need to Gather with Your Local Church.
- 2) **Confess** Your Past Sinful Failures in Attitude and Action Towards God and His Church.
- 3) **Ask** God for Help to Resist Satan’s Temptations.
- 4) **Protect** Your Lord’s Day - One Day a Week.
- 5) **Make** Your “Church Ethic” Exceed Your “Work Ethic” & Practice Mutual Accountability.

*Let’s learn and grow together as we await the
return of our Lord and Savior!
He died for us, let’s live & gather for Him!*

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT CHURCH DISCIPLINE?

What is church discipline? Church discipline is a process clearly described by Matthew 18:15-20 that describes a progression from personal/private confrontation/rebuke to a small group confrontation/rebuke to a level of church awareness of the unrepentant state of huge church member. The process ends either with repentance or the eventual expulsion of the unrepentant individual outside of the church.

What are the goals of church discipline? The goals of church discipline are:

- 1) Restore the relationship between a Christian in sin and Christ (Galatians 6:1).
- 2) Restore the relationship between a Christian in sin with other believers and their church in a spirit of love (2 Corinthians 2:5-11).
- 3) Rebuke and expel an unrepentant church member for the sake of their salvation (1 Corinthians 5:3-5).
- 4) Rebuke and expel an unrepentant church member for the protection of the flock (1 Corinthians 5:2, Matthew 18:17, 1 Corinthians 5:6).
- 5) Rebuke and expel an unrepentant church member as a warning for church members (1 Timothy 5:20).

Why is church discipline so important? Church discipline is

so important because Satan is constantly attacking the love, forgiveness, and unity of the church (2 Corinthians 2:11). Satan also uniquely attacks and seeks to divide and misdirect the church through false teachers (2 Peter 2, 3:17-18). Public punishment and discipline is difficult, but necessary for obedience to the Lord in His plan for the shepherding of His children (2 Corinthians 2:6). When repentance occurs, loving forgiveness and restoration is a beautiful picture of God's mercy and grace. Churches are warned of the danger of not confronting sin and unrepentant believers within their churches (Revelation 2:20-25).

How is church discipline to be done? Church discipline is designed to be done with truth-filled conviction but also grace-filled gentleness (Galatians 6:1). In that process Christians are also reminded to be watching their own attitudes and thoughts to prevent themselves from also falling into temptation (Galatians 6:1).

What do these stages of discipline look like today? The stages should always be done one on one first, secondarily through the inclusion of a pastor or church leader, thirdly through the church leadership as a whole before the issue being carried in front of the church in a godly and orderly manner. In the case of a charge against a pastor, the charges must be verified by two or three witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19).

What is an example of a mutual decision to "part ways"? Paul and Barnabas and Mark in Acts 15:36-41 are an example of a mutual decision to "part ways." Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement over using Mark (Barnabas' cousin, Colossians 4:10) in ministry. Paul's concern was over Mark's faithfulness after Mark had previously abandoned them on a mission trip to Pamphylia and had proved unfaithful to do the work he was called to do (Acts 15:38). Paul replaced Barnabas and Mark with Silas whose faithfulness was attested to by other Christian brothers.

Were Paul and Barnabas and Mark ever restored? Although that we do not see a restoration between Paul and Barnabas, we do see a restoration between Paul and Mark in 2 Timothy 4:11 Paul states "Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry." Time in faithful ministry evidenced Mark's restoration to Gospel service alongside Paul and his instruction to the church at Colossae to welcome Mark (Colossians 4:10).

WHAT ARE THE STEPS OF BIBLICAL DISCIPLINE?

How is Matthew 18:15-20 to be conducted? Biblical discipline continues until either true repentance or expulsion from the church results. The spirit to which it is done is a spirit of love and gentleness, with an emphasis on prayer towards God granting repentance (2 Timothy 2:8, 24-26). The intent is not to embarrass or humiliate the offender with a self-righteous attitude. The goal is forgiveness and restoration of unity within the church (2 Timothy 2:10). The church must diligently follow Matthew 18:15-20 to completion with the awareness that Satan seeks to destroy and divide churches (2 Timothy 2:11). A little tolerated sin within the church threatens to spread and corrupt the entire church (1 Corinthians 5:7, Revelation 2:20, Romans 6:17-20).

What sins are to be dealt with according to Matthew 18:15-20? Although no specific list of sins is given, it appears that public sins against the holiness of God, the unity and leadership of the church, and the teachings of the Scriptures are the areas of sins most commonly dealt with by church discipline.

When has true repentance happened? True repentance ends the process of discipline within Matthew 18:15-20 and is the optimal goal. True repentance is not made merely in the fear of consequences, but is clearly heartfelt, sincere, and lasting.

True repentance shows an understanding of the particular sins committed, confessing them completely and specifically to those to whom they have been against. True repentance does not make excuses for one's sin, verbally apologizes without qualification, asks for forgiveness, and demonstrates repentance through a changed life (Acts 26:20).

Who does the apology need to be directed towards? The scope of the apology needs to be as wide as the scope of the offense. In simple terms, the offender needs to apologize to as many people as they sinned against. If they sinned against the whole church, the apology should be to the gathered congregation in an orderly and appropriate manner.

What is biblical discipline? Discipline is a form of punishment designed to correct the offender back to a right practice that demonstrates true repentance. Biblical discipline may be implemented "by the majority" (2 Corinthians 2:7) in "the presence of all" (1 Timothy 5:20) and seems to almost always to involve an expulsion from church membership (1 Corinthians 5:1-10).

What if the offending individual is in church leadership? If the offender is in church leadership, but repents, they should be restored but wisdom should be used in regard to the roles of leadership they are within. Even though they may remain within the membership of the church it may be wise for them to take a voluntary or enforced sabbatical from leadership until they demonstrate trustworthiness and "obedience in everything" (2 Timothy 2:9). If the offender is unrepentant, then the process should continue to follow Matthew 18:15-20 towards a public rebuke and expulsion.

What if the individual is ordained as a deacon or pastor? In the case of a charge against a pastor, the charges must be verified by two or three witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19). Pastors and Deacons should be reevaluated to see if they continue to meet

their biblical qualifications for their position (1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9, Acts 6:1-6). If they do not meet these qualifications, they do not need to be serving in such a role and should be removed from active service. Furthermore, if they were licensed or ordained as a church affirmation, such an affirmation may need to be suspended or revoked. If the offender is unrepentant, then the process should continue to follow Matthew 18:15-20 towards a public rebuke and expulsion.

When and how does expulsion occur? When an individual demonstrates a persistence in sin (1 Timothy 5:20) they are to be treated as a non-believer (“Gentile and a tax collector,” Matthew 18:17). This punishment and expulsion is also referred to as:

- “rebuke them in the presence of all” (1 Timothy 5:20)
- “removed from among you” (1 Corinthians 5:2)
- “deliver to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 5:5)
- “cleanse out the old leaven” (1 Corinthians 5:7)
- “not to associate with” (1 Corinthians 5:11)
- “purge the evil person from among you” (1 Corinthians 5:13)
- “must be silenced” (Titus 1:11)
- “rebuke them sharply” (Titus 1:13)
- “handed over to Satan” (1 Timothy 1:20)

What happens after an individual is cast out of a church?

Part of treating an individual like a “Gentile and a tax collector” (Matthew 18:17) is the understanding that by their unrepentance they have demonstrated their spiritual deadness and lostness. The primary efforts and focus of prayers should be towards the salvation of the individual (Acts 26:18). Their impact and influence of their sinful teachings or practices must be minimized.

What if an individual leaves the church instead of repenting or facing church discipline? Running away from accountability is helpful to neither the individuals involved, the current

congregation, or any future congregations involved. Avoiding accountability is a form of unrepentance that should be brought to the attention of the church. It may also be necessary and helpful to warn a future church of the unrepentant church member's aggrieved condition upon their departure. This warning may occur through the form a formal church letter or a pastor to pastor warning (2 Timothy 4:14-15).

What is an example of a church constitution and by-laws that includes church discipline? Here is an excerpt from our church. A more comprehensive version of church discipline procedures and comments can be found at: peacemaker.net & alliancedefendingfreedom.org.

(1) In cases of differences between members or broken fellowship with the church, reconciliation rather than punishment shall be the objective, which governs the attitude of one toward another. It is our purpose to pursue every reasonable measure to assist any troubled member. The pastor, staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance.

(2) Should any unhappy difference arise between members, the aggrieved member shall follow in a tender spirit the rules of Christ given in Matthew 18:15-22, in an effort to settle the difficulty.

(3) Should a member repeatedly become an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, public scandal, persistent breach of our Church Covenant, or undermine the mission of the church, the deacons with the counsel of the pastor, following the Matthew 18:15-22, shall attempt to correct the offense; and if such an effort fails, they shall report the case to the church.

(4) In case of grave difficulty, the church may request the advice of an acceptable council of brethren from churches of like faith and order.

(5) In such cases the church may withdraw church membership by a three-fourths (3/4) majority ballot vote of those members

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present and voting, but only after notice and hearing and faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and reconciliation.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT BAPTISM?

15 Truths And Examples

1. FORESHADOWED in the Flood & Old Testament

(1 Peter 3:20-21) because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. 21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

2. John's ministry of baptism POINTS TO JESUS

(Mt 3:11) I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

3. Jesus was baptized because it was GOD'S PLAN

(Mt 3:15) But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.

4. In Jesus' baptism we SEE THE TRINITY

(Mt 3:16-17) And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and

coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

5. Jesus LED HIS DISCIPLES

to baptize others (John 3:22) After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing.

6. Baptism was the FIRST STEP of being a disciple

(John 4:1) Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John

7. Jesus COMMANDS us to baptize believers

(Mt 28:19) 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

8. Baptism was always connected with REPENTANCE AND BELIEF

(Acts 2:37-41) v.38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

9. Baptism was always IMMEDIATE

(Acts 2:37-41) v.41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

10. Baptism was always by IMMERSION

(John 3:23) "baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there"

11. Baptism is always by a biblical, Christian church leader, with a BIBLICAL understanding of baptism

(Mark 1:1-11) "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins."

12. Jesus said baptism is a PICTURE of faith

(Acts 1:5) for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

13. For UNITY, not division

(1 Corinthians 1:10-17) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

14. BAPTISM ALWAYS FOLLOWS SALVATION

Peter commands the Gentiles (non-Jews) to be baptized when they had already received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:47-48) "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

The Ethiopian eunuch was EAGER when he saw water, asking, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:38)

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE LORD'S SUPPER?

THE LORD'S SUPPER IS...

(from 1 Corinthians 11:17-34)

Part of Regular Gathering

v.17 But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse

Designed for Unity

v.18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, 19 for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

God-Focused: What not to do...

v.20 When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. 21 For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

Important: Christ Delivered and Modeled

v.23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you,

A Symbolic Remembrance & Proclamation: Received as a Gift of God

v.23 that the Lord Jesus on the night when 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 also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Purposed for Self-Examination

v.27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

Serious: Judge Yourself or Be Disciplined in Love

v.29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

Selfless: Put Others First

v.33 So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another—34 if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT WORSHIP THROUGH SINGING?

What is worship? *Worship is a truth-based, spiritual relationship with God that responds to God's greatness by a daily dying to oneself, internalization of His truths, and practice of faith-filled actions in Christ.* Romans 12:1-2 "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." 1 Corinthians 10:32 "whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Why does God want us to sing? *Singing is one aspect by which we worship God, publicly proclaiming His glory and holiness and our gratitude to Him for who He is and for the gift of Son for our salvation.* Hebrews 12:28-29 "Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire."

What does God want us to sing? *Scripture-Focused Songs:* Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,

teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

What sorts of methods & instruments should we use for worship in song? (Ps 150:3-6)

- *All Sorts of Passionately-Played Instruments:* Psalm 150:3-5 "Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!"
- *Dance:* Psalm 150:4 "Praise him with...dance"
- *Human Singing:* Psalm 150:6 "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!"

How does God want us to sing? (Ephesians 5:18-21, 1 Chronicles 15:16, 2 Chronicles 30:21)

- *Spirit-Filled:* Ephesians 5:18 "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit"
 - *Congregationally-Sung:* Ephesians 5:19 "addressing one another"
 - *All Sorts of God-Focused Songs:* Ephesians 5:19 "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs"
 - *Singing with your heart to God:* Ephesians 5:19 "singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart"
 - *Thanks-Filled:* Ephesians 5:20 "giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father"
 - *Focused on Jesus' Name:* Ephesians 5:21 "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"
- Hebrews 13:15 "Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name."
- *Self-less:* Ephesians 5:21 "submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."
 - *Loudly to Raise Joyous Sounds:* 1 Chronicles 15:16 "David also commanded the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their

brothers as the singers who should play loudly on musical instruments, on harps and lyres and cymbals, to raise sounds of joy.”

- *Mightily & Passionately*: 2 Chronicles 30:21 “...praised the Lord day by day, singing with all their might to the Lord”

Do we need to sing in tune? *Our hearts need to be in tune with God*, for “those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24) as we make our “joyful noises” (Psalm 98:4).

How does singing happen in the Bible?

- **Are there solos/special music?** *Almost exclusively in Scripture, all singing seems to be led by large groups and sung congregationally.* An exception may be seen in Mary’s “Magnificat” (Luke 1:46-55), but that seems to be a more private song that she sings devotionally to God. Miriam’s song in Exodus 15:21 is another possible example, but it is only one verse that follows 20 verses of congregational singing and is accompanied by all of the women playing tambourines and dancing. Deborah, a judge of Israel, and Barak, a military leader, sing a song together after defeating a foreign army (Judges 5). David is spoken of playing music (not singing) with his lyre as Saul is attacked by demons (1 Samuel 16:14-23). Solos seem to be a rare exception in biblical examples of singing.
- **Are there choirs?** *The Levites were commanded by their spiritual leaders to function as a band, choir, with leaders who organized and led the nation of Israel to worship God.* 2 Chronicles 29:28-30 “The whole assembly worshiped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded. ...And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed down and worshiped.”
- **Who picks the songs?** *God’s appointed leaders are responsible for the praying, reading, teaching, and singing of God’s Word.* (Judges, Kings and priests in Old Testament, pastors/shepherds/elders in New Testament) 2 Chronicles

29:30 “Hezekiah the king and the officials commanded the Levites to sing praises to the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the seer.”

- **Are there bands/praise teams?** *Yes, Israel was led in worship by a group of skilled musicians and singers.* 1 Chronicles 16:4-7 “Then he appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the Lord, to invoke, to thank, and to praise the Lord, the God of Israel. Asaph was the chief, and second to him were Zechariah, Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Jeiel, who were to play harps and lyres; Asaph was to sound the cymbals, and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests were to blow trumpets regularly before the ark of the covenant of God. Then on that day David first appointed that thanksgiving be sung to the Lord by Asaph and his brothers.”
 - 2 Chronicles 34:12 “The Levites, all who were skillful with instruments of music”
- **What instruments are used?** *Every sort available.* 1 Chronicles 16:42 “Heman and Jeduthun had trumpets and cymbals for the music and instruments for sacred song. The sons of Jeduthun were appointed to the gate.” (see also Psalm 150 and many other passages)
 - 1 Chronicles 23:5 “4,000 shall offer praises to the Lord with the instruments that I have made for praise.”
 - Genesis 4:21 – Jubal, the great-x-6-grandson of Adam was “the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe”
- **How does Jesus sing?** *Jesus sings congregationally:* Hebrews 2:12 “I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation, I will sing your praise.”
 - Matthew 26:30 “And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”
- **Do we stand or sit?** *Worship in song involves active participation, not passive listening.* 2 Chronicles 7:6 “The priests stood at their posts; the Levites also, with the instruments for music to the Lord that King David had made for giving thanks to the Lord—for

his steadfast love endures forever—whenever David offered praises by their ministry; opposite them the priests sounded trumpets, and all Israel stood.”

- **Do we need worship leaders?** *Biblical worship in song involves leadership over the congregation.* 2 Chronicles 23:5 “all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets, and the singers with their musical instruments leading in the celebration.”

Multiple references to “the choirmaster” who selects songs and leads the singers and musicians. Habakkuk 3:19, multiple introductions to Psalms.

- **Do we sing new songs or old songs?** *We sing both unfamiliar (new) and familiar (old) songs.* ‘New songs’ (Psalm 40, 149, Isaiah 42:10, Revelation 14) and ‘Hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs’ (Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:19) are biblical phrases used to describe what we sing.

How important are lyrics? *Lyrics are the most essential aspect of singing; they must be rooted in God’s truths and wisdom.* David, (2 Samuel 23:1) “the sweet psalmist of Israel”, wrote over half of the 150 psalms, but King Solomon, known for his God-given wisdom, wrote the most songs of any biblical author (1 Kings 4:32), “He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005.”

Can singing be spontaneous in worship? Can just anyone “bring a song” as they feel led? *God commands orderly worship with the leadership and execution of both music and teaching.* Since leading worship has the inescapable elements and focus of teaching and authority, it is wise and biblical to have godly male leaders that both plan and lead worship in song, along the other elements of a congregational service (1 Timothy 2:12-14). According to the service expectations of teaching and leadership, worship leaders should fit the qualifications of overseers/elders/pastors/shepherds (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9). Likewise, in an era full of heretical teachings, lyrics, and songs, it is wise to have an equipped and prepared leader to

shepherd by ensuring that false teachings are not introduced or supported in song or statement. These steps help ensure that God’s people are properly built up through the teaching, prayer, and singing of the Word of God. 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 “v.40 But all things should be done decently and in order.”

What is the role of our minds in singing? *Spiritual singing cannot be only with spiritual passion and emotions, but must be rooted in truth and processed through our minds.* 1 Corinthians 14:15 “What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.”

Is singing dangerous? *We are warned of the danger of self-centered and self-entertaining singing.* Amos 6:4-5 “Woe to those who...stretch themselves out on their couches...who sing idle songs”

What will we sing in Heaven? *Worshiping God in song is one of our joyous responses to experiencing God’s greatness in heaven.* Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8 depict angelic, living creatures unceasingly singing “Holy, Holy, Holy.” Revelation 5:2 and 16:8 reference the angelic and human use of harps in worship. Angels are described as singing a “new song” (Rev 5:9-10) and the people of God are described as singing a “new song” to God (Rev 14:3) as well as the song of Moses (Rev 15:3).

What songs are shallow? *Any song that emphasizes our subjective personal experience and emotions over God’s objective truths and biblical responses to those truths are extremely shallow and potentially heretical.*

What songs are heretical? *Songs that fail to present a biblical understanding of God and His work in salvation are heretical and dangerous.* They often are written in a mystical or romantic manner to focus on an emotional understanding of who God is (a diminished view of God’s majesty and greatness, more emphasis on us than on God), an imbalance emphasis on hope for Heaven (rather than a biblical focus on a hope in and for God

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as our central desire), or how “we achieve” salvation (rather than God’s work in saving us).

- Early Church History Examples: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/messenger/earlyhymns.c5.html>
- More Recent Church Examples: <http://www.modernreformation.org/default.php?page=articledisplay&var2=698>

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT PASTORS AND DEACONS?

What are the biblical offices within a church? While all Christians are spiritually gifted by God for ministry work (Romans 12:6–8, Ephesians 4:11, and 1 Corinthians 12:7–11, 28) “for the common good”, pastors and deacons are the two offices within the church. The term pastor is used synonymously with overseer, elder, and bishop across the Bible to describe the same role (example: Acts 14:23, Acts 20:17, 28). Their qualifications and purposes are listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The qualifications and calling of deacons are listed in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The office of pastor is distinguished from the office of deacon in function by the call for pastors to be the teachers and authoritative leaders over a local church.

Top Bible Passages to Consider

A simple reading of the below passages will be the most helpful answer to understanding the qualifications, role, and functions of pastors and deacons:

1 Timothy 2:8-15 I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; [9] likewise also that women should adorn themselves in

respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, [10] but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. [11] Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. [12] I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. [13] For Adam was formed first, then Eve; [14] and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. [15] Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control. (1 Timothy 2:8-15 ESV)

1 Timothy 3:1–7 “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. [2] Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, [3] not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. [4] He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, [5] for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? [6] He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. [7] Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.” (ESV)

1 Timothy 3:8–13 “Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. [9] They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. [10] And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. [11] Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. [12] Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. [13] For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”

1 Corinthians 14:33-35 “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, [34] the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. [35] If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.”

Acts 14:23 “And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

Acts 15:6 “The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter.”

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

Philippians 1:1 “Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons”

1 Timothy 4:14 “Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.”

1 Timothy 5:17 “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.”

Titus 1:5–9 “This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—[6] if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. [7] For an overseer, as God’s steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain,

[8] but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. [9] He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”

1 Peter 5:1-5 “So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: [2] shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; [3] not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. [4] And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. [5] Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT A CALL TO MINISTRY?

What does the Bible say about a call to ministry? A call to ministry is important to discern. All Christians are called to the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18) and to be equipped for such work through their local church (Ephesians 4:12). Every Christian has a call to bear witness to Gospel truth and love in both familiar and unfamiliar relationships through evangelism and discipleship (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8). Here are some biblical truths to consider in evaluating God’s call for you to serve within His kingdom:

Satan – Beware the False Call of Satan.

- *Adam & Eve* – “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” Genesis 3:1
- *False Prophets* - “Behold, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, declares the LORD, and who tell them and lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness, when I did not send them or charge them. So they do not profit this people at all, declares the LORD.” Jeremiah 23:32
- *False Teachers* – “they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. “They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to

myths.” 2 Timothy 4:3b,4

- *Anti-Christ* – “Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son.” 1 John 2:22

Abraham – Step Away from the Familiar when Called.

- “Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.” Genesis 12:1

Moses – Don't Make Excuses when God Calls.

- “Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say” Exodus 4:12

Aaron – Don't Call Yourself.

- “No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was” Hebrews 5:4

Isaiah – Be Willing to Answer God's Call without Qualifications.

- “Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’” Isaiah 6:8

Jonah – Don't Run Away from God's Call.

- “But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish” Jonah 1:3

Jeremiah – Go to Whomever and Speak Whatever God Calls You To Do.

- “I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations....Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. ⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD...Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.” Jeremiah 1:5-9

Ezekiel – Follow even when God's Call is Difficult

- “he said to me, ‘Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel,

to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me” Ezekiel 2:3

Disciples Chosen – God's Call Means He Chose You & Appoint You to Bear Fruit.

- “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.” John 15:16

Sending of the Twelve – Answer God's Dangerous Call.

- “If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town... I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” Matthew 10:14, 16

Peter – Do Not Doubt God's Call.

- “‘Lord, if it's you,’ Peter replied, ‘tell me to come to you on the water.’ ²⁹‘Come,’ he said... Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. ‘You of little faith,’ he said, ‘why did you doubt?’” Matthew 14:28,29a,31

Jesus to the Cross – God's Call is for God's Will.

- “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done” Luke 22:42
- “offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” – Romans 12:1-2

Disciples Sent – God's Call involves Great Power and Distance.

- “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” Acts 1:8

Christ's Ambassadors – God's Call is for Us to be Messengers.

- “We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's

behalf: Be reconciled to God.” 2 Corinthians 5:20

Paul & Barnabas – Be Willing to Part Godly Company in Order to Follow God’s Will.

- “They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, ⁴⁰but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.” Acts 15:39,40

Paul – God’s Call Often Involves Unplanned Situations and Unfinished Work.

- “But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain.” Romans 15:23,24a

Elder/Shepherd/Pastor/Overseer/Bishop – God’s Call has Standards.

- “Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. ⁵(If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.” 1 Timothy 3:2-7 (also Titus 1:6-9)

John Bisagno – *Letters to Timothy* - “Find God’s tailor-made will for you and do it...Don’t be deterred. If God has called you, God will use you...don’t drift from your call. Better to be on a side street in Calcutta in the will of God than in the White House in Washington, D.C., out of his will. If you’re called to be a servant of the king, don’t stoop to be president. The body of Christ has many parts and many different kinds of folks, and the toes are

just as important as the hands.” (38)

John Bisagno – *Letters to Timothy* - Read Charles Spurgeon’s “How to Know the Call of the Ministry” in *Lectures to My Students...* summarizes the five main points that influenced him (p.34-36)

- **Desire** – “There was a time when I was passionate about the music ministry, but simultaneously that passion began to fade and a new passion to preach begins to grow. I wanted it more than anything else, and I knew it to be the call of God. He will put the desire in the sincere heart to do what he wants done... if you can do anything else but preach, by all means, don’t preach. But if the passion burns, then you must preach. If it is your all-consuming, magnificent obsession, then do it.”
- **Ability** – “This is not to say you will be the greatest orator...God gives us some natural abilities and gifts to do what he wants us to do...If you have the ability to organize your thoughts and express them, let alone some special skills in communication, and this is reinforced with a passion to sue them, then the call of God is indicated.”
- **Opportunity** – “Where God leaves us to serve and gifts us to serve, he provides opportunity to serve. Open and closed doors are important in reading the hand of God in our lives... God will open the door for you to do what he wants you to do. A closed door is usually an indication of wrong timing or a detour.”
- **Blessing** – “There should be some degree of visible affirmation of your ministry as you pursue it.”
- **The Opinion of Others** – “Discuss your decision with those in whom you have great spiritual confidence. Ask their advice; seek their counsel. Let them hear your heart, and listen to them.”

Curtis C. Thomas – *Practical Wisdom for Pastors: Words of encouragement and counsel for a lifetime of ministry* (21)

Six Questions to Consider:

- “Does the man reach out for the work?”

- “Is he qualified biblically?”
- “Does he possess the gifts necessary to fulfill the functions?”
- “Do the elders and the church think he is gifted and morally qualified?”
- “Are his life and doctrine sound?”
- “Will he live as an example before the flock?”

Charles Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, “The Call to Ministry”

- “an intense, all-absorbing desire for the work...this desire must be a thoughtful one...the desire I have spoken of must be thoroughly disinterested...[no] other motive than the glory of God and the good of souls...[a desire] that continues with us, a passion which bears the test of trial” (27-28)
- “aptness to teach and some measure of the other qualities needful for the office of a public instructor...mere ability to edify, and aptness to teach, is not enough; there must be other talents to complete the pastoral character. Sound judgment and solid experience must instruct you; gentle manners and loving affections must sway you; firmness and courage must be manifest; and tenderness and sympathy must not be lacking...Gifts administrative in ruling well...be fitted to lead, prepared to endure, and able to persevere...read carefully the qualifications of a bishop, given in 1 Tim. iii. 2-7 and in Titus i. 6-9” (28-31)
- “must see a measure of conversion-work going on under his efforts...if the Lord gives you no zeal for souls...avoid the pulpit as your heart’s peace and your future salvation” (31-32)
- “your preaching should be acceptable to the people of God...none of you can be pastors without the loving consent of the flock...the sheep will know the God-sent shepherd” (32-33)

John Newton’s letter to a friend on the call to ministry:

- “A warm and earnest desire to be employed in this service... [not] from a selfish principle...[but] from the Spirit of God”
- “some competent sufficiency as to gifts, knowledge, and utterance”

- “a gradual train of circumstances pointing out the means, the time, the place, of actually entering upon the work”

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT DIVORCED MEN SERVING AS DEACONS AND PASTORS?

Many people have their own answer to this sensitive question, but have largely based their answer on experience and tradition rather than Scripture (Acts 6:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:8-13, & Titus 1:5-9). In light of the possibility of divorced or remarried deacons and pastors, the verses to consider are 1 Timothy 3:2 “Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife,” 1 Timothy 3:12, “Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children & their own households well,” and Titus 1:6 “if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife”

“Husband of One Wife” or “One Woman Man”? *The phrase “husband of one wife” in the Greek is better translated as “one-woman man” (i.e. a faithful husband):*

- The Greek word for “husband” (*aner*) is actually translated as “husband/husbands” 52 times and “man/men” 143 times in the New Testament (biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/aner.html)
- The Greek word for “wife” (*gune*) is actually translated as “wife/wives” 82 times and as “woman/women” 130 times in the New Testament (biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/)

[gune.html](#))

Note the similar phrase in 1 Timothy 5:9-10 which considers which widows are worthy of being supported by the church. “Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.” (1 Timothy 5:9-10 ESV)

- Note that this is also a listing of characteristics that point towards her current faithfulness.
- Would a twice-widowed (i.e. widowed-remarried-widowed, a.k.a. wife of two husbands) woman not be considered for the care of the church?
- The “wife of one-husband” phrase is best understood as a “one-man woman” (i.e. a faithful wife).

5 Important Points About Which Men Can Serve as Deacons and Pastors (Acts 6:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:8-13, & Titus 1:5-9)

- These biblical characteristics are all present-tense (verbs = Present-Active-Participles and Present-Active-Imperative)...i.e. “Who are they now?” NOT past-tense...i.e. “Who were they?” ***Christians are all considered by who they are now in Christ, not who they were (past-tense) in their sins. That stated, their past sin must not be so recent that they might not be considered “of good repute” (Acts 6:3).***
- Would you ever select a former murderer as a deacon or pastor? *If not, you eliminate the Apostle Paul.*
- Would you ever select a former thief as a deacon or pastor? *If not, you eliminate the Apostle Matthew, a tax collector who would've taken more than he legally needed to collect for taxes.*
- Would you ever select a single man (unmarried, i.e. not a “husband”) as a deacon or pastor? *If not, you eliminate Jesus and the Apostle Paul.*
- Would you ever select a widower or a remarried widower as a deacon or pastor (i.e. not a “husband” or a “husband of one wife”)?

IN SUMMARY... *The act of selecting a man to serve as deacon or*

pastor, who has been in any past sin (to include remarriage after divorce...see Matthew 5:32, 19:3-12, Mark 10:1-12, Luke 16:18, 1 Corinthians 7:10,39, Romans 7:2-3), *does not condone the sin, but recognizes God's grace and faithfulness in the life of a believer over time*. Christians are now considered dead to sin and alive in Christ (Romans 6:11) but yet we continue to struggle with sin (Romans 6:12-14, 7:15-20). Christians are consistently referred to as saints (Ephesians 1:1; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1 and many more) while non-believers are identified by their sins (Romans 1:28-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). As servants in the church, deacons and pastors are called meet or display specific characteristics that evidence the fruit of God's Spirit within them (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-13). *So in summary, a man's past divorce does not automatically disqualify him from the possibility of serving as a deacon or pastor.*

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT WOMEN PASTORS?

Does gender matter? Are gender and sex different? What does it mean to be made male and female? God has created our gender identity and gender purpose in line with our biological sex. Men and women are equal in value and worth but distinct in particular aspects of their roles, purposes, and responsibilities.

Some have attempted to redefine gender by arguing that gender is a separate concept of cultural influence or personal choice. Others have resisted the differences God has created between genders, instead arguing that no distinctions or boundaries should be placed on either gender in any setting.

Genesis 1:27 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (ESV)

What is egalitarianism and complementarianism?

Egalitarianism argues accordingly that there should be no limitations on the service of women within the church, to include the position of pastor.

Complementarianism is the biblical position and argues that God clearly creates men and women as equal in value and worth, while laying out particular differences and responsibilities for men and women within the family, church, and society. The Bible specifically teaches that the role and functions of the

pastorate are designed and ordered for men.

Isn't complementarianism misogynistic and hateful towards women?

Complementarians hold to the biblical understanding that men and women are equal in value, but different in role and function. It is extremely loving and views highly the roles and calling of women.

Is it ok to call a woman in ministry "pastor" as long as she doesn't teach men or exercise leadership authority over men? (i.e. Children's Pastor, Women's Pastor, etc.?). It is confusing and unhelpful to use a title that does not correspond most accurately with the functions and office with which it is biblically connected (teaching and authoritative leadership over the church).

Isn't it chauvinistic and misogynistic to not allow women to serve equally in the church? Does denying women ordination or service in the office of pastor deny or belittle their personhood?

Women are equal in value and worth, with undeniable gifting from the Lord, however God has designed them to have different roles within marriage and the church. Christians cannot be true believers and have hatred or condescension towards women. There is no place for chauvinism in the church, even if the culture surrounding it condones such practice. In many cultures and seasons of history, women have (and continue to be) mistreated and disrespected. It is a wicked lie to believe, teach, or treat women as inferior to men.

We need to treat women with respect, created in the image of God with equal value and worth as men. We need women and need them to use their God-given gifts within the church. The bible gives countercultural prominence to the value, worth, & purposes of women and so should we. See the amazing ways God uses and speaks about women in the Bible:

www.trustworthyword.com/women

What does the Bible say about a woman serving as a pastor/overseer/elder/bishop?

The Bible is clear that this office is reserved for men and rooted in God's order for creation and Consequences of the Fall. www.trustworthyword.com/pastors-deacons

What does the Bible say about a woman serving as a deacon?

Some churches and denominations teach that as long as this office does not connote teaching and authoritative leadership over men, it may be open to women (a "deaconess"). Both biblical and early church evidence do not support or model the practice of women serving as deacons.

What about women who feel the desire and "calling" to serve?

Many define their calling by their subjective feelings and experiences rather than by the objective truth of the Scripture. The Bible must be our guide and authority on such questions and issues.

What about Phoebe in Romans 16:1? Isn't she called a "deacon"?

When Paul calls Phoebe a "διάκονος" (in Greek) in Romans 16:1, the word must be understood in its context. Just preceding this statement, in Romans 15:8, Paul also calls Jesus a "διάκονος." It is important to note that the word "διάκονος" can be understood to mean "servant" and not exclusively as a referral to the church office of deacon.

What about "there is no male or female" in Galatians 3:28?

Galatians 3:28 is commonly misinterpreted. It says "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This verse is not talking about different roles, responsibilities, and functions within the church. This passage is speaking about our union together with Christ in salvation.

**Can women serve in ministry or function ministerially?
What does the Bible say about a woman serving as _____?**

The Bible is clear that every Christian, male or female, is called to serve the Lord ministerially in proclaiming the Gospel message of reconciliation. They have been placed by God into homes, workplaces, churches, and in missions settings in order to be purposeful in making disciples.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ... [20] Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

Although the offices of pastor and deacon are clearly set aside within the Scriptures for men, other roles within the church may be places that women are both gifted and called for ministry. Different churches have varying perspectives on whether or not women should be in various positions based on the amount of teaching and leadership influence each role would have over adult men. 1 Timothy 2:12-14 and Titus 2:3-5 are particularly helpful to consider when evaluating roles within the church. While some may argue that this was a cultural practice, this passage explains that the foundation of this command is trans-cultural and rooted in both the Creation and the Fall.

- 1 Timothy 2:12-14 “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. [13] For Adam was formed first, then Eve; [14] and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.”
- Titus 2:3-5: “Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, [4] and so train the young women to love

their husbands and children, [5] to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”

All Christian women are called to serve in ministry with the gifting, time, relationships and resources that God has given them. Their place of ministry may be at home, in the workplace, in their local church, or in the mission field.

A helpful resource in considering specific positions within a church is *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. Section IV helps covers some areas of application and implication that would be helpful to study. A free PDF is downloadable here: <https://document.desiringgod.org/recovering-biblical-manhood-and-womanhood-en.pdf>

What is the difference between serving in ministry and pastoral ministry?

**Can women be ordained or serve in pastoral ministry?
Isn't this just an issue of different interpretations and understandings of Scripture?**

While women are ordained by many churches and denominations, the greater question is not contemporary practice, but what the biblical qualification is for teaching authority within the church. The office, role, and function of the pastorate is distinguished by its teaching and leadership authority over men within the local church. That functionally means that men are called by God to be the pastoral leaders and teachers within a church body. The Bible is extremely clear on the issue, demonstrating that this is not merely an issue of differing opinions, understandings or interpretations.

Aren't these just cultural descriptions common to that period of time?

Paul is clear to explain that it is not his mere contextual application or understanding, but that “the things I am writing

to you are a command of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:37). Paul also follows God’s truths within 1 Timothy 2 with the connection being back to the creative plans of God and to the consequences of the fall of man when he concludes that “For Adam was formed first, then Eve; [14] and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (1 Timothy 2:13-14). Paul then continues explaining the high calling of women by highlighting one of their many particular giftings, blessings, and responsibilities in the example of motherhood (1 Timothy 2:15).

Do these passages mean women can speak at all? Can’t even pray in churches?

No. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 11, verses 5 and 13 references are made to women praying and prophesying within a church context. The issue is not sharing a heartfelt prayer to God or speaking a comment or impression from the Lord on a particular teaching. The issue at hand in the above passages involved women who would usurp the God-assigned male role and authority of the pastorate. The covering of a woman’s head is merely a cultural symbolic means of demonstrating their biblical submission to their husband’s and pastor’s authority.

Top Bible Passages to Read, Study, and Consider

- **1 Timothy 2:8-15** “I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; [9] likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, [10] but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. [11] Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. [12] I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. [13] For Adam was formed first, then Eve; [14] and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. [15] Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith

and love and holiness, with self-control.”

- **Titus 2:3-5** “Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, [4] and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, [5] to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”
- **Romans 16:1** “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae,”
- **1 Corinthians 11:3,8, 11-13, 16** “But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. ... [8] For man was not made from woman, but woman from man... [11] Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; [12] for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. [13] Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? ... [16] If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.”
- **1 Corinthians 14:33-35** “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, [34] the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. [35] If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.”
- **1 Timothy 3:1-7** “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. [2] Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, [3] not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. [4] He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, [5] for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? [6] He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up

with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. [7] Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.”

- **Titus 1:5-9** “This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— [6] if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. [7] For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, [8] but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. [9] He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”

Helpful Resources to consider:

- **WATCH: “Can women be pastors or deacons?” By Stephen Wellum** www.youtube.com/watch?v=zic0Q6foE_8
- **WATCH: “Should women preach in church?” by Albert Mohler** www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDezFVOJWQw
- **Men and Women in the Church by Kevin DeYoung**
- **“Where Can Women Teach: Eight Principles for Christian Churches”** www.desiringgod.org/articles/where-can-women-teach
- **Women Teaching Men - How Far is too Far?”** www.desiringgod.org/articles/women-teaching-men-how-far-is-too-far
- **“A Challenge to Women”** - <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-challenge-to-women>
- **50 Crucial Questions about Manhood and Womanhood** www.desiringgod.org/books/50-crucial-questions-about-manhood-and-womanhood
- **Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism** - <https://document.desiringgod.org/recovering-biblical-manhood-and-womanhood-en.pdf>
- **The Danvers Statement - CBMW** <https://cbmw.org/about/danvers-statement/>
- **“What does the Bible say about a call to ministry?”** www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-a-call-to-ministry
- **“Essential and Indispensable: Women and the Mission of the Church”** <https://www.9marks.org/article/essential-and-indispensable-women-and-the-mission-of-the-church/>
- **“Can Male Elders Serve the Whole Congregation?”** www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/male-elders-serve-congregation
- **“What Does the Bible say about women as pastors?”** www.trustworthyword.com/women-pastors
- **“What Does the Bible say about a call to ministry?”** www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-a-call-to-ministry

- **“What Does the Bible Say About divorced men serving as deacons?”** www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-divorced-men-serving-as-deacons
- **“What Does the Bible Say About Pastors and Deacons?”** www.trustworthyword.com/pastors-deacons
- **“What Does the Bible Say About Marriage Roles?”** www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-marriage-roles
- **Complementarianism - A Moment of Reckoning (several helpful articles):** <https://www.9marks.org/journal/complementarianism-a-moment-of-reckoning/>
- **Complementarianism As a Second Order Doctrine** (“that frequently implicates first order doctrines”): <https://www.dennyburk.com/complementarianism-as-a-second-order-doctrine/>

Helpful resources from GotQuestions.org

- **“What does the Bible say about women pastors?”** www.gotquestions.org/women-pastors.html
- **“Complementarianism vs. Egalitarianism - which is biblically correct?”** www.gotquestions.org/complementarianism-vs-egalitarianism.html
- **“What does it mean that women are the `weaker vessel` (1 Peter 3:7)?”** <https://www.gotquestions.net/Printer/weaker-vessel-PF.html>
- **What roles can women fill in ministry?** <https://www.gotquestions.org/women-in-ministry.html>
- **“Why do women have such a small role in the Bible?”** <https://www.gotquestions.org/women-in-the-Bible.html>
- **Do women have to remain silent in church?** <https://www.gotquestions.org/women-silent-church.html>

PASTOR AND DEACON ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS

Below is a sample process our church has used in both considering new pastors and deacons as well as a form of ongoing accountability.

Why are we doing this? How is this anyone's business? God has given us the personal responsibility to examine ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5) to see God's work of faith in us. He has also called His church to a process of holding one another accountable to God's standards for pastors and deacons (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:7-9). Accountability, confession and discipline is tough and painful but yet so helpful and fruitful (Proverbs 27:5-6, 27; Hebrews 12:3-17). We do this together that we might be faithful to God's call to select qualified pastors and deacons for His church and to our ever-present responsibility to be growing in holiness as He is holy (1 Peter 1:13-19, Psalm 139:23-24).

When will we do this? This will be an annual process of accountability to God's biblical standards for all pastors and deacons at our church, just as God has called us to “test” ourselves in order to “prove” ourselves “blameless” (1 Timothy 3:1-13).

What if I have failed? If you are willing to sincerely confess and turn from your specific sin, we are confident God will

provide His healing. We will come alongside you in extending grace, praying with you, and helping with your growth (James 5:13-20). We encourage you not to take this process lightly, as God warns us through the example Israel's corporate guilt of Achan's sin (Joshua 7) and in the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11 as they are held accountable for their giving record.

Why must I (if married) discuss this with my wife? If you are married, God describes you as united in "one flesh" with your wife (hence their own qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:11). Accordingly, apart from sinning against God (and his church), our sin is secondarily against our wives. Since our marriage and family are so essential to our Gospel witness, such accountability with our spouses helps us to ensure that we honestly and completely confess and repent of our sin.

Are you going to keep this as a legal record? No, this is about the process, not the paper. Once you have shared this verbally or in writing, you are welcome to keep your copy of this paper for yourself. Retaining this for yourself might be a helpful reminder towards spiritual growth and encouragement over the years.

Current Pastors and Deacons: Please answer the following questions and bring this questionnaire with you when we will meet and share our answers together.

Nominated Deacons/Deacons-In-Training: If you feel the Lord leading you to serve as a deacon/deacon-in-training at South Fork, please answer the following questions and bring this questionnaire with you to share with the pastors and deacons.

What is your favorite part of our church? Why?

How are you currently serving God at our church?

When did Jesus save you? What was your life like before Jesus was in control? How has your life changed since? (1 Timothy 3:6)

What do your current Bible study habits look like? What has Jesus been teaching you recently? (Acts 6:3)

What is your current practice of prayer and fasting? How is God growing your prayer life this year? How is God challenging and teaching you through fasting this year?

Please describe a recent experience of when you shared the Gospel with someone and how you saw God work through you.

How do you see God calling you to serve as a pastor or deacon at our church? (1 Timothy 3:1,10)

How may have you compromised your Gospel witness this past year?

(Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:7,10)

Where does your wife (if married) and children (if given them) stand in their relationship with God? Please share how you are leading your wife (if married) and family to love Jesus more deeply. (1 Timothy 3:4, 12; Titus 1:6)

If married, how does your wife meet the qualification of being "dignified, not slanderer(s), but sober-minded, faithful in all things"? (1 Timothy 3:11)

Please share if your wife (if married), family, or friends have any concerns about you serving as a pastor or deacon. (Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:7,10)

What is your greatest temptation? How are you seeing victory in your battle against this temptation?

Would my wife, kids, and close friends describe me as gentle, sober-minded, self-controlled, dignified, faithful, upright, holy, disciplined, and above reproach? Or would they describe me as quarrelsome, violent, double-tongued, a slanderer, arrogant, and quick-tempered? (1 Timothy 3:3,8; Titus 1:7-8)

Please share details about your practice of using any addictive

JONATHAN CARL

substances or behaviors. (1 Timothy 3:3,8; Titus 1:7)

What percentage of your gross income did you and your wife (if married) give to God through our church's undesignated offerings last year? (1 Timothy 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7)

This past year, when and how have you intentionally looked at images or persons with the intent of being sexually aroused? How are you currently struggling with lust (be specific)? How are you seeing victory in your battle against sexual temptation? (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6)

What additional information do you feel God leading you to share with the pastors and deacons?

Are there any answers you have included above that you have misrepresented, exaggerated, or not fully shared?

Have you read and are in agreement with the biblical and church expectations of a pastor or deacon, the church covenant, and our statement of beliefs?

(CIRCLE) YES / NO

If married, please discuss your answers with your wife and have her sign below.

My husband has discussed and shown me his above answers, and to my knowledge, he is telling the truth. I believe he is biblically qualified to continue serving as a pastor/deacon.

_____ **Wife of Pastor/Deacon**

_____ **Date**

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT WOMEN WARRIORS OF THE FAITH?

Here are some of the best examples of faithful women across the Scriptures.

It is amazing to see how God worked in and through them.

What examples of faithfulness to us all!

Eve - a helper fit for man, taken out of man, the first mother - Genesis 2:18-4:1, 2 Corinthians 11:3, 1 Timothy 2:13

- Genesis 2:18 "Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (ESV)
- Genesis 2:23 "Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."
- Genesis 3:20 "The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living."

Noah's Wife - endurance through disaster, faithfulness as a wife and mother for hundreds years (Noah lived until 950 years old) in the midst of an evil generation where "every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5) - Genesis 5:28-9

Sarah - obeyed and courageously moved along with her husband into a faraway land at the call of God, wife to Abraham, denied protection by a cowardly Abraham and allowed to be taken by Pharaoh and Abimelech, barren/childless until 90, sinned multiple times in her treatment of Hagar, laughed at God's promise of a child, yet the Lord blessed her with a child in Isaac and praised her faith, lived until 127 years old - Genesis 11:29-23; Romans 9:9; Hebrews 11:11; 1 Peter 3:6

- Genesis 21:1 "The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised."
- Hebrews 11:11 "By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised."
- 1 Peter 3:6 "as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening."

Hagar the Egyptian - mistreated by Sarah, used and cast off by Abraham, mother to Ishmael with Abraham, cared for and protected by the Lord - Genesis 16, 21:8-21

- Genesis 16:13 "So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me."
- Genesis 21:17 "And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, 'What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.'" (ESV)

Rebekah - attractive but modest, virgin, selfless servant, kind, hard-working, wife to Isaac, struggled with infertility, seeks the Lord during her pregnancy, husband is cowardly in denying her in front of the people of Gerar (Abimelech), provides sinful advice and favoritism to her son Jacob, yet the Lord chooses and uses Jacob through Rachel - Gen. 24-27, Rom. 9:10-13

- Genesis 25:21 "And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. And the LORD granted his prayer, and

Rebekah his wife conceived."

Rachel - hardworking shepherdess, beautiful, patiently waits for her husband, Jacob's wife, loved, barren for many years, envied her sister Leah, mother to Joseph and Benjamin, stole her father's idols and deceived him, died giving birth to Benjamin - Genesis 29-31, 33, 35

- Genesis 30:22-24 "Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. [23] She conceived and bore a son and said, 'God has taken away my reproach.' [24] And she called his name Joseph, saying, 'May the LORD add to me another son!'"

Leah - not as beautiful as Rachel, Jacob's wife, marriage based on deception, hated by Jacob, blessed by the Lord with children, mother to Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah - Genesis 29-31, 33, 35

- Genesis 29:31 "When the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren."
- Ruth 4:11 "Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel"

Shiphrah & Puah - Hebrew Midwives in Egypt - feared God more than Pharaoh, disobeyed the evil laws of the government and refused to murder babies, risked their lives and lied to Pharaoh to protecting lives of the babies, blessed by God and the nation of Israel prospered through their faithfulness. Exodus 1:15-22

- Exodus 1:17 "But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live."

Jochebed - Moses' & Aaron's mother, enslaved, courageously protects her baby by hiding him as long as possible then giving him up for adoption when she had no other option, able to nurse Exodus 1, 2:1-10, 6:20; Numbers 26:59; Hebrews 11:23

- Hebrews 11:23 "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that

the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict."

Pharaoh's Daughter - courageously adopted Moses knowing the danger of disobeying her father - Exodus 2:5-10

- Exodus 2:6 "When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

Miriam - prophetess, Moses and Aaron's sister, protects her baby brother Moses by watching him until he is adopted, bravely speaks to Pharaoh's daughter so her mom can nurse Moses, leads women rejoicing in song and dance in response to God's salvation from the Egyptian army when they were drowned by God in the Red Sea, given another chance to serve God after failing in opposing Moses and punished with leprosy - Exodus 2:1-10, 15:20-21, Numbers 12:1-15

- Exodus 2:4, 7 "And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. ...[7] Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?'"
- Exodus 15:20-21 "Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing. [21] And Miriam sang to them 'Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.'"

Faithful Whole-Hearted Women - generous in giving, skilled in their work, hard-working, passionate heartfelt service for the purpose of providing for and building the Tabernacle to worship God - Exodus 35:20-29

- Exodus 35:29 "All the men and women, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work that the LORD had commanded by Moses to be done brought it as a freewill offering to the LORD."

Rahab - prostitute, believed in God, great-great-grandmother to

King David, bravely hid the spies of Israel from the king of Jericho, faith evidenced by her obedience - Joshua 2, 6; Matthew 1:5; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25-26

- Joshua 2:11 "for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath"
- Hebrews 11:31 "By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies."
- James 2:25-26 "And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? [26] For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead."

Deborah - faithful and brave when Barak failed to courageously lead Israel against General Sisera, wise prophetess and the 5th Judge of Israel, sang with Barak a song of gratitude to God - Judges 4 & 5

- Judges 4:4-5 "Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. [5] She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment."

Jael - clever in defeating General Sisera to lull him to sleep and killed him with a tent peg - Judges 4:17-22

- Judges 4:21 "But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand. Then she went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple until it went down into the ground while he was lying fast asleep from weariness. So he died."
- Judges 5:24 "Most blessed of women be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, of tent-dwelling women most blessed."

Samson's Mother - godly parent with Manoah, humbly shares the angelic appearances with her husband and lets him lead their family, barren, obeys the angel's command to abstain from alcohol and unclean food, given Samson as a son - Judges 13, 14:1-9; 16:17

Naomi - widowed, lost both sons, honored and blessed God even in her loss, gave wisdom to Ruth, great-great-grandmother to King David - Ruth 1; 4:13-22

- Ruth 1:5, 8 “the woman was left without her two sons and her husband. ...But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, ‘Go, return each of you to her mother’s house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.’”

Ruth - widowed, faithful to her mother-in-law Naomi, believed and trusted in God, great-grandmother to King David - Ruth 1-4

Hannah - loved by Elkanah, suffered from infertility, prayer and dedicated son Samuel to the Lord, endured provocation from Peninnah, Elkanah’s other wife, over her childlessness, depressed, took her sorrow and anxiety to the Lord in prayer, trusted in God’s promise through Eli, gave and dedicated Samuel over to serve the Lord, beautiful song of praise to the Lord, faithfully committed to the Lord and blessed her son, God gave her five more children - 1 Samuel 1; 2:1-11, 18-21

- 1 Samuel 1:10 “She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly.”
- 1 Samuel 1:27–28 “For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition that I made to him. [28] Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD.”

Abigail - discerning and beautiful, married to a wealthy but wicked man (Nabal), she showed understanding and generosity in providing an avenue for peace for her family, was culturally wise and humble, worked hard to care for others, selflessly and courageously offers to take on the penalty others deserve, trusted in the Lord, patiently endured much suffering, married King David - 1 Samuel 25:2-42

- 1 Samuel 25:3 “The woman was discerning and beautiful”

Bathsheba - beautiful, raped by King David, grieved over the murder of her husband, lost a son, given and raised a godly son

in Solomon, lineage of Jesus, wisely intercedes in a dangerous situation so that her son can become King, well respected - 2 Samuel 11; 12:13-24, 1 Kings 1-2

- 2 Samuel 12:24–25 “she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. And the LORD loved him [25] and sent a message by Nathan the prophet. So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.”
- 1 Kings 2:19 “Then he sat on his throne and had a seat brought for the king’s mother, and she sat on his right.”

Widow at Zarephath - hard working, humble, faithful to obey the Lord, hospitable, generously prepared a meal for Elijah out of her last food, Lord provides unending flour and oil, son raised from dead by Elijah - 1 Kings 17:7-24

- 1 Kings 17:24 “And the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth.”

Widow of a Prophet - faithfully served the Lord alongside her husband, widowed with two sons, poor and overcome with debt, faithfully followed Elisha’s advice, the Lord provided oil to pay off her debt - 2 Kings 4:1-7

- 2 Kings 4:7 “She came and told the man of God, and he said, ‘Go, sell the oil and pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on the rest.’”

Shunammite Woman - wealthy, generously hospitable with meals and built a guest room for Elisha, she was suffering from infertility and the Lord blessed her with a son through Elisha, her son dies but is raised from the dead by her persistence in seeking healing from God through Elisha- 2 Kings 4:8-37

- 2 Kings 4:30 “Then the mother of the child said, ‘As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.’ So he arose and followed her.”

Huldah - trustworthy, hardworking, encouraged King Josiah to read and believe the Bible (Book of the Law) that was

found, courageously proclaimed truth in obedience to God - 2 Chronicles 34:22-33, 2 Kings 22:14-20

- 2 Kings 22:15 “And she said to them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: ‘Tell the man who sent you to me ... “

The Woman Who Feels the Lord (Proverbs 31 Woman) - trustworthy, excellent wife, full of good works, diligent with her hands, wise with finances and a smart businesswoman, wakes up early and is not lazy, physically strong and healthy, generous to the poor, prepares for seasons of difficulty, thinks of the needs of others before herself, builds up the reputation of her husband, dignified, speaks with wisdom and kindness, praised by her husband and children, fears the Lord above all else - Proverbs 31:10-31

- Proverbs 31:30 “Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.”

Esther - orphaned and adopted, wise learner and submissive, beautiful and favored, though a foreigner, becomes queen, endures racist attacks by Haman, seeks the Lord through fasting and prayer, bravely risks her life and saves tens of thousands of Jewish people across the world

- Esther 2:15 “he asked for nothing except what Hegai the king’s eunuch, who had charge of the women, advised. Now Esther was winning favor in the eyes of all who saw her.”
- Esther 4:14 “And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”
- Esther 4:16 “hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.”

Jehosheba - bravely and wisely hides her nephew and future King from a murderous Queen for six years

- 2 Kings 11:2-3 “But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the king’s sons who were being put to death,

and she put him and his nurse in a bedroom. Thus they hid him from Athaliah, so that he was not put to death. [3] And he remained with her six years, hidden in the house of the LORD, while Athaliah reigned over the land.”

Elizabeth - righteous and faithful wife to a priest, childless until old, trusts the Lord’s promise, obedient to God’s commands, mother of John the Baptist, encourager and relative to Mary - Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

- Luke 1:6 “And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.”

Mary - sexually pure, virgin until Jesus is born, raises Jesus, bravely follows and trusts God, widowed, watches son murdered, faithful - Luke 1:26-56; 2; 3; Matthew 1:18-25, 2, John 2:1-12, Luke 8:19-21, John 19:25-27

- Luke 1:38 “Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’”
- Luke 1:46-47 “And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior’”

Anna - married seven years, widowed for ~50+ years, worships God day and night at the Temple with fasting and prayer, sees Jesus, prophetess, full of gratitude and praise to God, speaks truth - Luke 2:36-38

- Luke 2:37-38 “She did not depart from the temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day. [38] And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.”

Samaritan Woman - married multiple times, living with a man, encounters Jesus, tells everyone in her town about Jesus - John 4:4-42

- John 4:29 “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”

Sinful Woman - sinful life, bravely enters the Pharisee’s house,

cries at Jesus' feet, cleans His feet with her hair, anoints His feet with an expensive ointment, sins forgiven by Jesus, loved Jesus greatly - Luke 7:36-50

- Luke 7:47 "Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little."

Sick Woman - weakened and impoverished by chronic bleeding, goes to Jesus, has faith in Jesus, works hard to get to Jesus in a crowd, touches Jesus and is healed - Mark 5:24-34

- Mark 5:27–28 "She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. [28] For she said, 'If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.'"

Mary of Bethany - sits at Jesus' feet, listening and learning, chooses wisely how to spend her time, pours perfume on Jesus' feet in gratitude for her brother Lazarus' resurrection and preparation for Jesus' death - Luke 10:38-42, John 11:1-45; 12:1-8

- Luke 10:39–42 "Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ...the Lord answered her, "... one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."
- John 12:3 "Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume."

Martha of Bethany - sister Mary brother Lazarus dies, loved by Jesus, welcomes Jesus into her home, works hard for Jesus, Jesus encourages her to worry less and listen at his feet - Luke 10:38-42, John 11:1-45

- Luke 10:38 "Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house."
- Luke 10:40–41 "But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that

my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." [41] But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things"

Widow with Two Coins - impoverished, lonely, gives sacrificially of everything she has, trust the Lord for His provision - Luke 21:1-4; Mark 12:41-44

- Luke 21:3–4 "And he said, 'Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. [4] For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.'"

Mary Magdalene - was possessed by demons but set free by Jesus, faithful to Jesus to the end - Luke 8:1-3; 24:1-10; John 19:25; 20:11-18, Matthew 27:55-61; 28:1; Mark 15:40-41; 16:1-11

- Mark 16:1 "When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him."

Dorcas (Tabitha) - helped others with works and generosity, died, resurrected by Peter - Acts 9:36-42

- Acts 9:36 "Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity."

Lydia - businesswoman, seller of purple cloth, believes in Jesus through Paul at Philippi, hospitable - Acts 16:11-15, 40

- Acts 16:14 "One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul."

Priscilla - Aquila's wife, mentors alongside her husband, church in their home - Acts 18:1-3, 18-26, Romans 16:3-4, 1 Corinthians 16:19

- Acts 18:26 "He [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they

took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”

- Romans 16:3–4 “Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, [4] who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well.”

Lois & Eunice - grandmother and mother to Timothy, provided godly instruction and example of genuine faith in God - 2 Timothy 1:5, Acts 16:1

- 2 Timothy 1:5 “I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.”

Younger Widows -

- 1 Timothy 5:14 “So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander.”
- 1 Corinthians 7:39–40 “A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. [40] Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.”

Older Women - modeling godliness, teaching and training younger women as wives and mothers

- Titus 2:3-5 “Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, [4] and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, [5] to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”

Phoebe - a servant

- Romans 16:1 “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae”

Mary - a hard worker

- Romans 16:6-7 “Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. ... They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.”

Andronicus and Junia - relatives and prisoners with Paul

- Romans 16:7 “Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.”

In Every Place Women - respectable, modest, self-controlled, humble, doing good, learning, submissive, not teaching or exercising leadership over men in church (rooted in the order of creation and the fall), faithfully enduring as mothers and godly women

- 1 Timothy 2:8-15 “I desire then that in every place ... women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, [10] but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. [11] Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. [12] I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. [13] For Adam was formed first, then Eve; [14] and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. [15] Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.”
- 1 Corinthians 11:3,8, 11-13, 16 - “But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. ... [8]For man was not made from woman, but woman from man... [11] Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; [12] for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. [13] Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? ... [16] If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.”

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- 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, [34] the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. [35] If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church."

In Marriage - Godly Wives - Ephesians 5:22-33 - 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 - 1 Peter 3:1-7 - Colossians 3:18-25

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-marriage-roles

- Helpmate (Gen 2:18)
- Loving and gracious submission to the leadership of her husband (Eph 5:22, Col 3:18)
- Not strive/resist the leadership of her husband (Gen 3:16, 1 Pet 3:1)
- Respect her husband (Eph 5:33)
- Diligent worker, whether at home or in the workplace (Pro 31)
- Hospitable towards others and generous towards poor (Pro 31)
- Cares for children and household (Prov 31)
- Meet sexual needs of husband (1 Cor 7)
- Be beautiful on the inside (1 Pet 3:4)

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT FORGIVENESS?

www.trustworthyword.com/forgiveness

Consider these four questions...

- Is there someone you haven't forgiven?
- Have you forgiven everyone the way Jesus commands you to?
- Is there hate, bitterness, anger, or resentment in your heart?
- Do you realize the presence of unforgiveness may be a sign you are going to Hell?

Before you answer these tough questions, read below...

Understand the definition of these words

- **Forgive** - to stop feeling angry or resentful toward (someone) for an offense, flaw, or mistake;
- to cancel (a debt)
- **Hate** - to feel intense or passionate dislike
- **Bitterness** - anger and disappointment at being treated unfairly; resentment
- **Anger** - a strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility
- **Resentment** - bitter indignation at having been treated unfairly

What is forgiveness and why do I need it? How do I become forgiven by God? Forgiveness is the restoration of a relationship through the removal of obstacles and offense.

All people have loved themselves more than God and separated themselves from God through sin.

Jesus Christ is the only way for the obstacle and offense of sin to be removed. Here are two resources to consider to ensure that you get to enjoy Him forever in Heaven and are not forever separated from Him in Hell:

- **“How Can I Become a Christian”** : trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian
- **“How Can I Be Sure I’m A Christian”** : trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian
- Hebrews 10:17 “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”
- Psalm 103:8-14 “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; **as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.** As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame he remembers that we are dust.”
- Hebrews 8:12 “For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”

“Resentment is like taking poison and hoping the other person dies.”
~Unknown

Forgiveness Is In Imitation of Jesus and Is Evidence of Salvation

- Matthew 6:14 “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you”
- Ephesians 4:30-32 “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another,

tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

- 1 John 4:19-21 “We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”
- 1 John 5:2-3 “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome”

Lack of Forgiveness Is Sin and Is Evidence of Lostness

- 1 John 2:9 “Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.”
- Hebrews 12:15 “See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled”
- Matthew 5:22-24 “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”
- Matthew 6:15 “but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”
- Matthew 18:32-35 “Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

How can I know if I have truly forgiven someone?

- You see their spiritual problem before their other issues.
- You feel pity, not hate.
- You feel compassion, not anger.
- Your heart is broken, not bitter.
- You trust God's revenge, not plotting your own.
- You bless them, instead of curse them.
- You pray for their salvation (if they are lost), not their destruction.
- You pray for God to convict, change and bless them (if they are saved).
- You refuse to bring up the hurt, instead of repeating and resisting the matter.

Colossians 3:12-17 "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Un-forgiveness Affects Your Prayer Life

Mark 11:25 "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

Hatred of Others Is A Manifestation of Hatred of Self

Ecclesiastes 2:17-18 "So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after

wind. I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me"

Hatred of Self and Hatred of Others Is A Manifestation of a Hatred of God

- Titus 3:3 "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another."
- Ephesians 5:29-30 "For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body."
- Psalm 81:15 "Those who hate the LORD would cringe toward him, and their fate would last forever."
- "What does the Bible say about suicide?"
www.trustworthyword.com/suicide

Forgiveness Does Not Necessitate Friendship

- 1 Corinthians 15:33 "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.'"
- Galatians 6:1 "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted."

Forgiveness Trusts Jesus' Judgement, Justice, and Vengeance

- Romans 12:19 "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'"
- Proverbs 19:11 "Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense."
- Matthew 5:39 "But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."

Forgiveness Shows Kindness to Your Enemy

- Romans 12:14 "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do

not curse them.”

- Romans 12:20-21 “To the contrary, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Forgiveness Intentionally Pursues Peace

- Romans 12:17-18 “Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”
- Romans 14:19 “So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”
- Matthew 5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

A Forgiving Spirit in the Offended Precedes the Offender’s Repentance

Luke 6:31 “And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.”

Forgiveness Does Not Remove Earthly Consequences for their Sin

Luke 6:35-36 “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. [36] Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”

Giving Forgiveness: Forgive As You Would Want Someone to Do To You: Quickly, Repeatedly, Genuinely

Matthew 18:21-22 “Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you

seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

Personal and Private - The Offended Has Responsibility

- Matthew 18:15-17 “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”
- Luke 17:3-4 “Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”
- God Wants to Restore Us To Himself & Others
- 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
- 1 John 2:10-11 “Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

Helpful Resources from www.gotquestions.org

- What is forgiveness?
- Got Forgiveness? How do I receive forgiveness from God?
- Does the Bible instruct us to forgive and forget?
- Do Christians have to keep asking for forgiveness for their sins?
- Will God continue to forgive you if you commit the same sin over and over again?
- How can I forgive those who sin against me?
- Is there any sin that God will not forgive?
- What does the Bible say about forgiving yourself?
- If I do not forgive others, does that mean my sins are not

forgiven? What does Matthew 6:14-15 mean?

- What does the Bible say about self-hatred? What does the Bible say about hate?

“Live Peaceably with All, If Possible” by John Piper
www.desiringgod.org/messages/live-peaceably-with-all-if-possible

Choose Freedom. Choose Forgiveness.

*Forgiveness is a choice you must make.
Your decision to forgive evidences your salvation
& has serious consequences for your life.*

Consider Tamar's Hurt. Consider Your Hurt - 2 Samuel 13:15 (ESV) “Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, ‘Get up! Go!’”

Everyone Has Been Hurt: How about you...

- **Why were you hurt?** Intentionally and Unintentionally
- **By Whom were you hurt?** Family, Friends, Strangers, by Ourselves
- **When were you hurt?** Repeated or One-Time; Past, Present or Future
- **How Bad were you hurt?** Deep or Shallow, Significant or Silly
- **How were you hurt?** Words, Relationships, Actions, Inactions

Questions to consider...

- What wounds do you have?
- What will you do with your hurts?
- How will you live?
- Will you forgive?
- Will you heal?

Remove Bitterness: Some Truths & Warnings...

1. Time Does Not Heal Wounds

2. Untreated Wounds Get Worse with Time

3. Covering Up A Wound Is Dangerous

- **Wounds Need:**
Timely Intervention
Internal Healing
Intentional Treatment

4. “Hurt People Hurt People”

Choose God's Forgiveness: Only God Truly Heals Wounds

- A Healthy Heart Heals Wounds: No matter the hurt...how great, deep, or often.

10 TRUTHS ABOUT FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness....

1. Requires Confession

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2. Must Be Experienced In Faith

Acts 2:38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

3. Releases and Removes Infection

Colossians 3:13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

4. Heals Wounds

2 Chronicles 7:14 if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

5. Strengthens Our Lives

2 Corinthians 2:5-7 Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. [6] For such a one, this punishment by the

majority is enough, [7] so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

6. Frees Our Living

Galatians 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

7. Reveals Salvation

Matthew 6:14-15 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, [15] but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

8. Reminds Us of Our Ultimate Enemy

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 "Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs."

9. Is Extended by True Believers

Matthew 26:28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

10. Enjoys & Shows the Gospel

Romans 4:7-8 Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE DEATH OF BABIES & CHILDREN?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-the-death-of-babies-children

When babies or children die, the pain of parents, family and friends is immense.

Whether the situation is from an intentional act (abortion or crimes) or an unintentional act (miscarriage, illness, accidents), grief abounds. Tough questions arise. Answers are sought.

What happens to babies or children who die before they are mature enough to respond to the Gospel? John MacArthur helpfully and succinctly answers this question, "Instant Heaven."

Here are 5 Bible passages that are helpful to seeing these truths:

- **David's Response to the Death of His Baby** (punishment for his adultery with Bathsheba): David realizes he will be united in heaven with his child one day. "Then his servants said to him, 'What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive; but when the child died, you arose and ate

food.' 22 He said, 'While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who knows whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' 23 But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.'" (2 Samuel 12:21-23, ESV)

- **Entry into the Promised Land is Granted to Young Children.** Why? Israel's sin of rebellion against God (for not entering into the promised land) was held only against those who were mature enough to discern between good and evil. "And as for your little ones, who you said would become a prey, and your children, who today have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in there. And to them I will give it, and they shall possess it." (Deuteronomy 1:39, ESV)
- **Job's Response to Suffering:** Job realized that to be stillborn was better than to be alive. Why? Job understood stillborn babies to be in heaven. "Why did I not die at birth, come out from the womb and expire? ...13 For then I would have lain down and been quiet; I would have slept; then I would have been at rest 16 Or why was I not as a hidden stillborn child, as infants who never see the light? ...17 there the weary are at rest." (Job 3:11-17, ESV)
- **King Solomon's comparison of living a prosperous, long-lived life with that a stillborn child.** Who is better off? A stillborn child who "finds rest." "If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life's good things, and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. 4 For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. 5 Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he." (Ecclesiastes 6:3-5, ESV)
- **When unbelieving parents sacrifice their children for**

their own selfish purposes, God refers to them as "innocents." This implies God's grace in looking upon them as innocent. "Because the people have forsaken me and have profaned this place by making offerings in it to other gods whom neither they nor their fathers nor the kinds of Judah have known; and because they have filled this place with the blood of innocents." (Jeremiah 19:4, ESV).

Are babies and infants conceived in sin? Do they sin? Yes. Are they guilty before God and deserving of eternal death? Yes. (Original sin, inherited sin nature, total depravity) (1 Kings 8:46, Isaiah 48:8, Proverbs 20:9, Psalm 58:3; 143:2, Ecclesiastes 7:20, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 5:12, Ephesians 2:3) "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalm 51:5, ESV)

"It is true they sin, little ones sin. Little children disobey, they're selfish, they're angry, etc. But they are incapable of understanding the moral essence of that sin. They are incapable of understanding God. And they are incapable of understanding the gospel. They are incapable of exercising a true repentance toward God and a saving faith so that they are with excuse. Whereas the pagans in Romans 1 are without excuse because they are capable of knowing and understanding the revelation God has given them in creation and conscience and they are capable of faith. So unbelief for them is a willful choice." John MacArthur

Does God's grace cover those babies and children who die? Yes. The weight of Scripture points to them being safe in God's grace.

"All children who die before they reach the condition of accountability by which they convincingly understand their sin and corruption and embrace the gospel by faith are graciously saved eternally by God through the work of Jesus Christ being

elect by sovereign choice, innocent of willful sin, rebellion and unbelief by which works they would be justly condemned to eternal punishment. " John MacArthur

What happens to babies who die in the womb? What about infants and young children who die; do they go to Heaven? What is the age of accountability? These are important questions that many people have asked themselves as they or others they know have struggled with the loss of a child. Got to gotquestions.org for answers to these tough questions... "What happens to babies and young children when they die?", "Where do I find the age of accountability in the Bible?", "Do mentally ill people go to heaven?", "What does the Bible say about household salvation?", "What does the Bible say about infant baptism?"

I have not found a pastor or teacher who has addressed the issue with such biblical depth and breadth as John MacArthur. His book, *Safe in the Arms of God*, answers the below questions: "Where is my child?", "What can we say with certainty to those with empty arms?", "How does God regard children?", "What if my child is not among the elect?", "Will I see my child again?", "What is my child's life like in heaven?", "Why did my child have to die?", "How shall we minister to those who are grieving?" Here are two sermons in which John MacArthur exposites the relevant biblical passages and also addresses many of the same questions as in his book.

- The Salvation of Babies Who Die - Part 1 (<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/80-242>)
- The Salvation of Babies Who Die - Part 2 (<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/80-243>)
- Also, an article: The Age of Accountability (<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Articles/4836>)

2 Samuel 12:21-23 "His servants asked him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!" 22 He answered,

JONATHANCARL

"While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' 23 But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SUFFERING, WORRY, DEATH, LIFE & HEAVEN?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-suffering-worry-death-life-and-heaven

PSALMS TO READ AND USE TO GUIDE YOUR PRAYER

Psalm 6, 13, 18, 22, 23, 40, 68, 90, 102, 107, 116, 121, 130, 138, 142

SUFFERING

- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
- Romans 8:17-18 Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
- 2 Timothy 2:10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.
- Hebrews 10:34 You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you

- knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.
- Revelation 2:10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.
 - 2 Timothy 4:6-8 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.
 - Job 1:21-22 And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.
 - Job 2:10 "Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.
 - Job 8:9 for we were born only yesterday and know nothing, and our days on earth are but a shadow.
 - Job 9:25 My days are swifter than a runner; they fly away without a glimpse of joy.
 - Job 14:2 He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure.
 - Isaiah 38:12 Like a shepherd's tent my house has been pulled down and taken from me. Like a weaver I have rolled up my life, & he has cut me off from the loom; day & night you made an end of me.
 - James 4:14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."
 - 1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world-the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does-comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

- 2 Chronicles 32:24 In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. He prayed to the LORD, who answered him and gave him a miraculous sign.
- Psalm 23:4 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 your staff, they comfort me.
- Psalm 44:22 Yet for your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.
- Psalm 68:20 Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign LORD comes escape from death.
- Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

WORRY

- Philippians 4:6-8 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things.
- Matthew 6:27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?
- Matthew 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

DEATH

- Psalm 23:4 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 your staff, they comfort me.
- Isaiah 25:8 he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.

- Philippians 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
- Job 14:5 Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.
- Psalm 39:5 You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath. Selah
- Psalm 89:47-48 Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have created all men! What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave? Selah
- Psalm 90:9 All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan.
- Psalm 102:3 For my days vanish like smoke; my bones burn like glowing embers.
- Psalm 102:11 My days are like the evening shadow; I wither away like grass.
- Psalm 102:23-24 In the course of my life he broke my strength; he cut short my days. So I said: "Do not take me away, O my God, in the midst of my days; your years go on through all generations.
- Ecclesiastes 6:12 For who knows what is good for a man in life, during the few and meaningless days he passes through like a shadow? Who can tell him what will happen under the sun after he is gone?
- Ecclesiastes 8:8a No man has power over the wind to contain it; so no one has power over the day of his death.
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-2a There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die
- Ecclesiastes 7:1-2 A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of birth. It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart.
- Psalm 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.
- Romans 14:8 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.
- Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.
- Hebrews 9:27-28 Just as man is destined to die once, and after

- that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.
- Proverbs 14:32 When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down, but even in death the righteous have a refuge.
 - Deuteronomy 32:39 See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.
 - 1 Samuel 2:6 The LORD brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up.
 - 2 Samuel 22:5-6 The waves of death swirled about me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me
 - Psalm 89:48 What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave?
 - Isaiah 57:2 Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.
 - Philippians 1:20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.
 - Hebrews 2:15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death

LIFE

- 1 John 5:12-13 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.
- Romans 8:10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.
- Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

- Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.
- John 5:24 I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.
- John 8:51 I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." (speaking of spiritual death...i.e. will not enter into Hell but will have eternal life in Heaven)
- Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Romans 8:6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;
- 2 Corinthians 4:12 So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

HEAVEN

- Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.
- Matthew 6:20-21 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
- John 14:2-3 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.
- 2 Corinthians 5:1-9 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who

- has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.
- Revelation 21:3-4 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."
 - Revelation 7:9, 13-17 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ...Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes--who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."
 - Luke 20:36 and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.
 - Luke 23:43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."
 - John 14:2-3 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

- John 17:24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.
- Philippians 1:23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.
- Colossians 3:23-24 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.
- Daniel 12:13 "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."
- Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."
- 1 Corinthians 9:25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.
- Isaiah 25:8 he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.
- Revelation 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT DATING?

www.trustworthyword.com/dating

This outline is based on an AWESOME book, *The Ten Commandments of Dating* by Ben Young and Dr. Sam Adams. This book was helpful to me over twenty years ago and is still relevant and helpful today. I have added Bible verses and a few other notes to be as biblical as possible on the subject!

The Ten Commandments of Dating

By Ben Young & Dr. Samuel Adams

Biblical principles and practical wisdom for preparing for and handling the dating scene.

1. THOU SHALT GET A LIFE

"The Un-Life" – a life put on hold for a want of a dating relationship

- Mark 12:30 "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

2. THOU SHALT USE YOUR BRAIN

The key is using your head in the matters of the heart. Romantic love has little to do with real love.

- **Balance the head and the heart**
- **Refrain from physical intimacy**

- Analyze your past relationships
- Include others in the process
- Never neglect opportunities to evaluate along the way
- Jeremiah 17:9-10 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? ‘I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.’”

3. THOU SHALT BE EQUALLY YOKED

Spiritual Connection – **Date only Christians**, no exceptions.

- 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?”

4. THOU SHALT TAKE IT SLOW

THREE reasons to take it slow!

You do not get to know a person in a short period of time

You need time to bond

You protect yourself from getting attached too quickly

SEVEN SLOW MOTION DATING STRATEGIES

1. Make the two-year commitment
2. Make your first date short and casual
3. Don't volunteer too much information up front
4. Delay physical affection

Men are looking for a CAR

- Challenge – long term relationship vs. short term fling
- Attraction – more to do with personality and character
- Respect – they respect a woman with boundaries and standards
- 5. Stay connected with your friends
- 6. Do not pray together
- 7. Don't mention the M word

5. THOU SHALT SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

A healthy relationship requires good, solid, and well-defined relational boundaries

How to stop people from running over you:

Your body belongs to ~~you~~:CHRIST 1 Cor 6:19-20 Your emotions belong to ~~you~~:CHRIST

Your thoughts belong to ~~you~~:CHRIST Mk 12:30 Your actions belong to ~~you~~:CHRIST 1Thess4:3-6

6. THOU SHALT NOT PLAY HOUSE

Excuses people give: Love, Finances, Practice, & Engagement

The Truth??? Fear, Sex, Manipulation, Immaturity

- Couples that live together before marriage have an 80% higher chance of getting a divorce
- Women who cohabitate are TWICE AS LIKELY to be victims of domestic violence
- Women who cohabitate are FOUR TIMES to experience depression than married women & 71% of women wouldn't cohabitate again

7. THOU SHALT SAVE SEX FOR LATER

Seven BLUNDERS of the Sexual World

- All you need is a condom - *What about disease and pregnancy?*
 - You've got to have it - *Is sex your master or is Christ your master?*
 - Sex equals intimacy – NO, NO, NO!!! Real Intimacy take hard work, time, self-sacrifice, honesty & commitment.
- “Couples who have been married for many years record the highest levels for intimacy, happiness, and dynamic sex”
- If you are in love, it's ok - True love requires a lifelong commitment. Sex outside of marriage is never ok.
 - You must sample the goods – A big mistake that will diminish the excitement within marriage.
 - It's just a physical thing – Sex is primarily a SOUL thing.
 - Everybody is doing it – Look at the damage to marriage and relationships it has done.

How to Save Sex for Later

- Celebrate Wholeness – say no to instant gratification and yes to delayed gratification
- Receive Forgiveness – and recommit yourself to purity until you marry
- Set Clear Boundaries – plan how to keep yourself out of danger
- Stay Accountable – keep friends involved in your life

1 Cor 6:12-20 – READ, BELIEVE, & LIVE IT

8. THOU SHALT FIGHT FAIRLY

Top Four Harmful Responses to Conflict:

- Peace at all costs (Avoidance)
- Win/Lose (Defensiveness)
- You Don't Count (Invalidation)
- All-Out War (Intensification)

Fair Fighting Techniques

1. Dial Down (20 minutes or more of cool-down time)
2. Set the Tone (be careful how you start the conversation)
3. Shut up and listen (shut up and listen)
4. Use "I" Statements ("I feel ___ when ___" – prevents criticism, labeling, accusing, & attacking)
5. Negotiate and Compromise
5. James 1:19-20 ¹⁹My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."

9. THOU SHALT NOT IGNORE THE WARNING SIGNS

SEVEN DEADLY SIGNS (Get out quick!!)

1. Abuse – physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual – there is no excuse for abuse, ever.
2. Addictions – alcohol, drugs, pornography, self-injury, gambling (watch out for 'coaddicts')
3. Infidelity – no trust = little relationship
4. Irresponsibility and Immaturity – responsibility IS important

5. No physical/sexual attraction – what???
6. Emotional baggage – aware of their problems? see how it effects relationships? Getting help?
7. Denial – when you recognize signs but try to rationalize what you are doing

Don't go into a relationship thinking you can FIX or HELP someone. Find someone who already has their act together.

10. THOU SHALT CHOOSE WISELY

Are you making poor choices?

First-available syndrome, Fooled by the externals, Blinded by sex, Going too fast

Discerning Character – what is character?

Faithful, Honest, Committed, Forgiving, Giving

Helpful hints....

- Crisis reveals someone's true character
- Character is who you are when no one is looking
- Friends are a good window into a person's character
- Look back on prior relationships to determine patterns of behavior
- Give it lots of TIME!!!

11. TAKE ACTION!!!!

1. Take a look at yourself
2. Take responsibility for your relationships
3. Take back what you lost
4. Take a look around you
5. Take time out
6. Take these guidelines seriously

- 1 Corinthians 15:33 "Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.'"
- Romans 5:3-5 "Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God

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has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”

- Proverbs 12:4 “A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.”

INTERNET RESOURCES

- www.gotquestions.org - The most comprehensive and biblical resource for short answers to tough questions
- www.focusonthefamily.com - An amazing collection of biblical answers on many questions in life.
- www.familylife.org - A great resource to prepare for marriage and to understand God's relational truths!

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT MARRIAGE ROLES?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-marriage-roles

What is the wife's role in marriage?

- Helpmate (Gen 2:18)
- Loving and gracious submission to the leadership of her husband (Eph 5:22, Col 3:18)
- Not strive/resist the leadership of her husband (Gen 3:16, 1 Pet 3:1)
- Respect her husband (Eph 5:33)
- Diligent worker, whether at home or in the workplace (Pro 31)
- Hospitable towards others and generous towards poor (Pro 31)
- Cares for children and household (Prov 31)
- Meet sexual needs of husband (1 Cor 7)
- Be beautiful on the inside (1 Pet 3:4)

What is the husband's role in marriage?

- Spiritual leader (1 Cor 11:3) towards glorifying God and unity with each other (one flesh)
- Not dictatorial or harsh (Col 3:19)
- Leading in a sacrificial way the way Christ loves the church (Eph 5:23)

- Provide - feed and care (Eph 5:29, Gen 3:17-19)
- Protect - love their wives as themselves (Eph 5:28, 1 Pet 3:7)
- Praise your wife (Prov 31:28)
- Meet sexual needs of wife (1 Cor 7)
- Be considerate & respect your wife (1Pet 3:7)

To solve marriage conflict, we must not:

- Be proud against each other – (1 Cor 4:6)
- Judge one another – (Romans 12:16)
- Lie to one another – (Colossians 3:9)
- Be partial with one another – (1 Tim 5:21)
- Provoke or envy one another – (Gal 5:26)
- Lust after one another – (Romans 1:27)
- Hate one another - Titus 3:3
- Take one another to court – (1 Cor 6:1-7)
- Use each other - Galatians 5:15

To solve marriage conflict, we must:

- Be at peace with one another - Mark 9:50
- Love one another - John 13:34; Rom 12:10; 1 Pet 4:8; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12
- Build up one another - Rom 14:19; Eph 4:12; 1Thess 5:11
- Be of the same mind toward one another - Romans 12:16
- Give preference to one another - Romans 12:10
- Greet one another - Romans 16:16
- Esteem others as better than yourself - Philippians 2:3
- Serve one another - Galatians 5:13
- Receive one another - Romans 15:7
- Be devoted to one another - Romans 12:10
- Rejoice or weep with one another - Romans 12:15
- Admonish one another - Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16
- Care for one another - 1 Corinthians 12:25
- Show tolerance to one another - Rom15:1-5; Eph4:2; Col 3:13
- Be kind and forgiving to one another - Ephesians 4:32; Col 3:13
- Submit to one another - Romans 12:10; Ephesians 5:21; 1 Pet 5:5
- Comfort one another - 1 Thessalonians 4:18
- Encourage one another - 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13
- Be compassionate with one another - 1 Peter 3:8
- Pray for one another - James 5:16
- Confess your faults to one another - James 5:16
- Accept one another - Romans 14:1; 15:7

PASSAGES ON MARRIAGE

(Ephesians 5:22-33) *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. [24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. [25] Husbands, love your wives, as Christ 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] so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. [28] In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29] For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, [30] because we are members of his body. [31] “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” [32] This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. [33] However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

(1 Corinthians 11:2-16) *Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. [3] But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. [4] Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, [5] but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head,*

since it is the same as if her head were shaven. [6] For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. [7] For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. [8] For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. [9] Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. [10] That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. [11] Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; [12] for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. [13] Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? [14] Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, [15] but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. [16] If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.

(1 Peter 3:1-7) *[Wives and Husbands] Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, [2] when they see your respectful and pure conduct. [3] Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—[4] but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. [5] For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, [6] as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.[7] Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.*

(Colossians 3:18-25) *Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in*

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the Lord. [19] Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. [20] Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. [21] Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

30 DAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR MARRIAGE

www.trustworthyword.com/30days-improve-marriage

The 30-Day Covenant Love Challenge

Appreciate Your Mate!

What Is It? A 30-Day challenge to love your spouse without condition for 30 focused minutes each day.

Why?

Covenant Love: Have fun serving God together!

Throughout Scripture, God's people regularly committed to serve God together in covenant. Some Old Testament examples of covenants are seen under the leadership of Moses the prophet (Exodus 24:7-11), the servant-leader Joshua (Joshua 24:14-18), Jehoiada the priest (2 Kings 11:7), Josiah the King (2 Kings 23:1-3), Asa the King (2 Chronicles 15:2), Ezra (Ezra 10:2-5), and Nehemiah the Governor (Nehemiah 9:38, 10:28-29). New Testament examples are seen in Baptism (1 Peter 3:21, 1 Timothy 6:12), the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:24; Matt 26:28), and church membership (Matt 18:15-17, 2 Cor 3:6, Eph 5:23, 1 Cor 15:1-11). Covenants have been part of church history (Pliny the Elder, AD 112 "binding themselves by a solemn oath", Baptist history (see Charles Deweese, Baptist Church Covenants).

In marriage, you have covenanted to serve God together for life!

MARRIAGE IS: God-authored · God-witnessed · God-

Accountable · Glorious Gospel Purpose
 “the LORD was witness between you and
 the wife of your youth . . .
 she is your companion and your wife by
 covenant.” (Malachi 2:14 ESV)

Give Authority Over Your Body to Your Spouse

“The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. [4] For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. [5] Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” (1 Corinthians 7:1-5 ESV)

Act in Humble Imitation of Christ

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:3-4)

How? The Ground Rules

- **Give Your Spouse** Permission to Exercise Authority Over Your Body, Time, Attention & Energy for **30 minutes a day for 30 consecutive days**. Give them the unqualified choice of how you can best love them biblically.
- **Your spouse picks** the category and specifics of the assignment.
- **No whining**, bartering, compromising, negotiating, complaining, huffing, eye-rolling, excuse-making, arguing, or sleeping on the job. Just do it without conditions.
- **Go 110%** all out for your mate. Work hard at loving them. Appreciate Your Mate.
- **Pay Attention** to Your Mate. Study them to Do Better. Extend Your Commitment.
- If you know others participating in this... **pray for and encourage them**, but DO NOT ASK for details, their covenant commitments may be personal and private!

*Here are some categories and ideas to best
 understand how to love your spouse!*

from the “Five Love Languages” by Gary Chapman

Quality Time: Date Your Mate Ideas

Neighborhood Walk & Talk · Mall Strolling · Cabin Retreat ·
 City Action · Coffee & Donuts · Lattes & Beignets · Breakfast in
 Bed · Scenic Picnic · Star Gazing · Hayride · Art Show · Bonfire
 Roast · Bike Ride · Sports Game · Outdoors Hiking · Carnivals,
 Fairs, or Festivals · Movie on the Couch Night · Movie Theater
 Night · Fondue Feast · Dinner on a Train · Countryside Drive ·
 Fireside Reading · Bake Something Sweet · Orchard or Pumpkin
 Patch Excursion · Beachside Strolls · Searching for Seashells ·
 Sunrise or Sunset Quiet Time · Couples Extreme Selfie Contest
 · www.DateCrates.co · Soup Kitchen Service · Buffet Night ·
 Bowling Night · Fancy Dinner · Fast Food Fun · Golfing & Golf

Carting · Amusement Park · Lakeside Lovers · Rent a Boat · Home Spa · Get-Away Spa · Sushi Night · Experimental Eating Evening · Board Game Night · Arcade Fun · Discover Dancing (Ballroom, Salsa, Club, Square, Line) · Museum Musing · Exercise & Workout Together · Race a 5k, Color Run, or Mud Run · Birdwatching · Hunting · Fishing · River Float (Canoeing, Kayaking or Tubing) · Cave Exploring · Improv or Comedy Show · Zoo Time · Bookstore Wandering · Restaurant Romance · Drive-In Night · Skype/Facetime Dates (when apart) · Gourmet Grocery Store Shopping · Pizza Night · Rent a Hotel Room Nearby · Attend a Ballet, Musical, Concert, Opera or Play · Spring Shopping for Plants or Flowers Mini-Road Trip · Linger at a Local Landmark · Make a Matinee · Find a Splash Park · Make & Take Gifts to a Nursing Home · Camping Weekend · Play in a Pet Store · Park & Talk Somewhere Remote · See What You Can Find at a Flea Market · Fondue Night · Watch a Mobile Movie (on a Laptop or Mobile Device) Somewhere Unique · Scavenger Hunt · Ice Skating · Go Karts · Laser Tag · Paintball · View Funny YouTube Videos · Water Ballon/Gun Fight · Volunteer Together · Make a Family Scrapbook · Movie Marathon · Dessert-Only Dinner · Putt-Putt Golf · Play Pool · High School Sports Night · Geo-Caching Treasure Hunt · Public Park Stroll · Arrange and Schedule for a Late-Morning Sleep-In · Write a Letter or Song · Go Car Shopping · Climb a Tree · People Watch at an Airport · Go Rock Skipping · Babysit Someone Else's Kids · Horseback Riding · Water Ski · Plant a Garden · Go Sailing · Find a Ferry to Ride · Ski or Sled · Skydiving · Make a Snowman · Tennis · Croquet · Water Park · BBQ Night · Homemade Ice Cream · Garage Sale Rampage · Swing and Slide · Feed Ducks, Geese or Fish · Circus · Observatory

Words Of Affirmation

Note Writing · Encouragement & Compliment · Text Messages · Love Letters · Song · Poem

Gifts

Surprises · Themed · Delicious Treats · Flowers · Frivolous or Practical · Creative · Personal

Acts Of Service

Household Chores · Kid Tasks · Swapping Regular Responsibilities

Physical Touch

Sexual Intimacy · Massage · Cuddling · Hand-Holding

End Of The Month Assignment

Write a note or have a conversation, thanking your spouse for sacrificially loving & yielding to you. Be specific with how it impacted you, how it strengthened you, how it energized and encouraged you, and how it motivated you to love God, love your spouse, and love others better.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT VOTING AND POLITICS?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-voting-and-politics

Why is this issue important? Regardless of our political party persuasion, we must consider the issues and character behind the often emotional and misleading political process. How we conduct ourselves through the political season is just as important as the ballots we cast on Election Day.

What does the Bible teach?

Ignore Human Opinions about Government. Don't be swayed by appearances or opinion in politics. We must put aside our tradition and political upbringing, and ensure that our identity is more rooted in Christ than it is in our political party. Our loyalty must be higher to Christ's way, purpose, and truth so that we are not swayed by mere human opinion.

(Mark 12:14) "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God."

Understand God's Purpose in Government. God's "kingdom rules over all" (Psalm 103:19) so we must be not lose hope

in the midst of the ups and downs of political life. One day, "every knee will bow...every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:10-11), but until that day, God has instituted government as a form of common grace to both believers and unbelievers. Along with the family, it is a form of societal organization. Government is designed to restrain and deter evil, but also is designed to be a proponent of good (Romans 13:4). Even when governmental authority acts evil, it is still ultimately under God's authority.

(Romans 13:1) "For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God."

John MacArthur - "In whatever of the many forms it exists, civil authority derives directly from God ... No matter what form it takes, no human government at any time in history, at any place on earth, among any people on earth, at any level of society, has ever existed or will ever exist apart from the sovereign authority of God"

- No exceptions. Hitler, Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Middle Ages, Tribes led by Shamans

Know God's Role in Government.

(Hosea 8:4) They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not.

When governments fear, follow, serve, and obey the Lord "it will be well" (1 Samuel 12:14). When governments disobey and rebel against God's good plans, "the hand of the Lord will be against you and your king" (1 Samuel 12:15).

Biblical Examples of Political Rule.

- Old Testament Law – Moral, Ceremonial, Governmental
 - Theocracy – God rules through the prophets
 - (in a Democracy the people rule)
- Moses – setting up judges over the tribes
- Joshua 24 – elders, heads, officers, judges

- Joshua v.15 “choose this day whom you will serve”
- v.15 “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”
- people v.24 “The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey.”
- Kings – people rebelled against God’s plan
- Nation of Israel – conquered Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome
 - “hand of the Lord will be against you and your king”
- King Nebuchadnezzar

(Daniel 5:18, 21) O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. ... He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will.

- King Belshazzar – Babylon - hand writing on the wall – brought down

(Daniel 5:23-26) but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored. Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN. This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end;

- King Cyrus – Persia – used by God to release the people of Israel

2 Chronicles 36:22-23, Ezra 1 – King Cyrus - Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up.’”

The Politician’s Role in Government.

(Romans 13:3) For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.

- (Isaiah 5:20 ESV) [20] Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!
- (Romans 13:4) he is God's servant for your good.
- Joseph in Egypt, Daniel in Babylon, Esther in Persia
- (Romans 13:6) For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.
- President = God’s servant, a minister of God
- Regardless of his policies, regardless of his faith or lack thereof

Our Role in Government.

(Romans 13:1) Let every person be subject to the governing authorities

- v.6 To avoid God’s wrath – for the sake of conscience
- Attempt to influence government to be more in line with God’s timeless truths and principles
- Our battle is a spiritual, unseen battle, not merely a battle with flesh and blood
- Fixing governments is not evangelism or discipleship, yet it is a loving action to seek the good of your neighbor, the

defenseless, and where you live.

(1 Corinthians 10:24) Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.

(Proverbs 31:8) Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute.

(Jeremiah 29:7) But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Pay Your Taxes, Register to Vote, & Inform Yourself. No matter how our taxes are spent, we have an obligation to diligently pay our taxes. When equipped with the ability to influence one's government by voting, one should make the effort to register and be informed as to the facts. Prayer should be the underlying and foundational approach to seeking a God-honoring government (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

(Mark 12: 17) "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's."

(1 Timothy 2:1-2) "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way."

Obey the Authorities. Do you find yourself complaining more or praying more for your leaders? We are reminded of the influence of honor, obedience and submission to even secular and oppressive authorities (Titus 3:1, 1 Peter 2:13-17) so "that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people" (1 Peter 2:15).

The only allowance for governmental disobedience is when governmental law directly opposes the worship and obedience of God (i.e., Jewish midwives in Egypt refusing to murder newly born male babies, Exodus 1:17; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refusing to worship idols, Daniel 3; Daniel's steadfast

praying to God, Daniel 6; Peter & John's refusal to stop preaching the Gospel, Acts 4:18-20).

(Romans 13:2,5) "Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment... Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience."

Vote Wisely. When voting, be sure to avoid decisions based on tradition, stereotypes, emotions, or pride. Instead embrace God's truth and wisdom and make decisions that value the kingdom of God more than the kingdom of man. Realize that neither moralizing society nor politicizing the church is the solution to the world's problems.

The world does not change from the outside in, but from the inside out – through the Gospel (Mark 12:17) "Render...to God the things that are God's."

- Do you spend more effort, time, passion, energy, money, and devotion to convincing others to follow your political persuasion...or to follow your Christ?
- Do you get more worked up watching a debate between politicians...than watching a neighbor, coworker, friend, or family member rebel against God and run full throttle for hell?
- Do you place more hope in America? Or in Christ?

(Matthew 6:33-34) "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN VOTE?

Don't you wish God made it more clear how you should vote? Here are some biblical principles to consider before, during, and after you cast your ballot for Governor, President, or any politician.

Prayerfully. Pray more, politick less. Our nation and state are divided greatly with polarizing views between political parties. What is a Christian to do? Pray first. Pray continually. Pray consistently. Pray equally for those leaders you agree with and also for those with whom you disagree.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way." (ESV)

Biblically. The Bible has a lot to say about Biblical issues. God cares about the poor, immigrants, marriage, dignity of life at all stages (including unborn babies, terminally ill, and elderly), racial equity, religious liberty, sexual ethics, war, economics, international relations, women's rights, children's rights, education, housing, and criminal justice.

Which politicians, if any, model a genuine trust in Jesus? Which party's policies and platforms are most in line with God's plan for humanity? These questions are important in clarifying how to vote in complicated and contentious times. Know what God says before you vote.

1 Samuel 12:14-15 "If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well. But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king."

Privately. Why advertise your vote? Is pride tied to your partisan politics? Do you honestly think that your social media posts make people change their votes? Would you change your vote or position because of someone else's yard sign, t-shirt, bumper-sticker, hat, or social media post?

Many Christians have done great damage to their Christian witness through political bias, pride, snarkiness, mockery, and endorsement of ungodly characters. Go private with your political persuasions during this polarized season.

Proverbs 10:19 "When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent."

Wisely. Are you willing to reconsider your vote? Would you reevaluate your opinions? Have you listened closely and considered the positions of all sides? Do you understand the perspectives of those with a different political persuasion? Do your homework before you cast your ballot and don't just trust the sound bites and media moments.

Proverbs 11:14 "Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety."

Selflessly. Do you vote only for what is in your best interest and agenda? Or are you voting in the best interest of the common good? Vote in a way that benefits and prioritizes others more than yourself.

Philippians 2:3-4 "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit,

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but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Humbly & Respectfully. Your vote is important, but what changes a nation ultimately is the Gospel. Are you more passionate and public about your politics or about your Jesus? Do you put more hope in the next election cycle than you do in Jesus’ return?

Godly Christians often feel led to vote in different ways. Some may vote Republican. Others feel led to vote Democrat. Still others choose to vote for a third-party candidate that might never win. Others Christians may feel called not to vote at all. You may be right in the choice you make, but then again, you could be wrong. Be humble.

People will view issues differently than you. Be kind. Friends, family, coworkers and neighbors will vote differently than you. That’s their prerogative, stay calm. Don’t let discussions devolve into arguments. Know where you stand but be respectful towards others.

Romans 14:1 “As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.”

May these truths and principles guide us into, through, and beyond our election seasons.

A PRAYER FOR YOUR NATION

I wrote this on the occasion of visiting the White House, the United States Capitol, and the Supreme Court. Regardless of the nation in which you live, may this prayer be a help to guide you to prayer for your leaders, government, and nation.

Have you ever thought about how you would pray over our nation’s leaders if you had the opportunity? How you would lead them into the presence of our Creator and pray on their behalf?

Here is an idea of how I might pray in the White House, Capitol, or Supreme Court if I had the chance:

“As we prepare to converse with our Creator, I invite you, if you are physically able, to join me on our knees in speaking to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Father God, Lord Jesus, Holy Spirit. You are amazing. You are wonderful. You are powerful. There is no-one like you God.

Thank you for who you are and for the privilege of another day of life. Thank you for the ability to even have access to you right now through prayer.

You have told us that...

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

their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14 ESV)

So here we are now before you. Humbled in hearts. On our knees.

Please forgive us. So much wickedness has passed through our minds, hearts, lips, and our lives. We are guilty. As individuals. As leaders. As a nation. Forgive us.

We need you. We love you. We want you. We trust you. Jesus, lead us into your presence. Give us your wisdom for the daily decisions that we encounter today and everyday as your servants and representatives.

God, heal us as only You can. Our nation is hurting. Our people are divided. Our world is in chaos. Thank you for sending your Son to save us from Satan, sin, and Hell. Help us to “be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.” Help us to “shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15 ESV).

Jesus, I lift up these leaders to you. Thank you for giving them to our nation. Protect their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. If any have not received and submitted to you as Lord and Savior, I pray for you to save their souls. Guard their minds from Satanic and worldly deception and focus their minds on your truth. Keep their hearts from the Evil One and guide their affections to your throne-room. Encourage and strengthen their marriages and families with the love you have for us. Use these men and women greatly for the welfare of their hometown communities and states. Unite them together under your commands for the sake of our nation.

In the name of the Jesus we pray, amen.”

1 Timothy 2:1–5 “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we

may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (ESV)

12 RULES OF POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT FOR CHRISTIANS

- 1. God First** - God's truth is always above man's opinions. Reevaluate your political positions with the Bible in hand.
- 2. Others Second** - We must put the needs of others before our own agendas. We can better love our neighbors with tangible actions rather than just trusting in our cast ballot.
- 3. Self Less** - We need humility in all our communications and attitudes. Before we post or speak we should consider the tone and approach we choose. Our daily decisions should demonstrate a care for those different than us.
- 4. Default to Non-Partisan** - Unless our profession requires it, most Christians should strongly consider the wisdom of being publicly nonpartisan. In these divisive times it may be best to stay away from partisan political posts, rallies, posters, yard signs, and headgear.
- 5. Your Vote Is Important** - You have the responsibility and privilege to be politically informed and go to the polls whenever you have the opportunity.
- 6. Private Persuasion Is Often Better** - Some issues deserve

our public discussion and commentary. More may be gained through private, personal conversations without the rhetoric found in many public forums.

7. Humble & Respectful Disagreement - We are all created in the image of God. We ought to speak kindly to all with the reminder that no-one is beyond the life-changing hope of Christ. We must love our political "enemies."

8. Avoid Absolutes - Recognize our temptation towards sound bites and the demonization of others. Avoid over-simplifying situations and categorizing groups with stereotypes.

9. Pray More than You Speak - We often fall into the trap of believing that our voices to mankind make a bigger difference than our prayers to the Creator of the Universe. Prayer is our primary political calling.

10. Share the Gospel More than Your Political Persuasions - Elections and governments come and go. True and lasting hope is only found in the Kingdom of God through Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Live and speak in light of these priorities. Be more passionate about winning souls than winning arguments or elections.

11. Resist as a Last Resort - Rare biblical and historical examples exist to show and prepare us for times where courageous rebellion is called for in order to remain faithful to God. The broad biblical guidance is to honor and submit to the authorities whenever possible.

12. The 1% Exception - Although 99-ish% of us should probably be nonpartisan monarchists (prioritizing the Kingdom of God), 1% of us may be called by God into service within a partisan political sphere. If that is you, please stay faithful to God's truths in your policies and platforms no matter the personal cost. Speak to the good, without flattery or partiality, in both parties. Confront the bad, with love and humility, in both

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parties. Practice the fruits of the Holy Spirit at all times towards your political opponents talking with “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22).

Christians, we can do better. Let’s love on and pray for those we disagree with.

1 Timothy 2:1–2 “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.”

Helpful Perspectives on the Topic

- “How Do Christians Fit Into the Two-Party System? They Don’t” by Tim Keller
- “The Non-Partisan Politics of Jesus” by Scott Sauls
- “The Church, Politics, & Bonhoeffer’s Way Forward” by Steve Bezner (Part 1)
- “Faith and Healthy Democracy” by Paul D. Miller
- “How Christians Can Prepare for the 2020 Election” by Daniel Bennett
- *A Prophet with Honor: The Billy Graham Story* by William Martin

TOP 5 BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES AND VERSES ON PROSPERITY

- **Be Content With What You Have** – 1 Timothy 6:6-8 "But godliness with contentment is great gain, 7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content." *Are you pursuing more stuff? Are you content now?*
- **The Love of Money = Roots Of All Kinds of Evil** – 1 Timothy 6:9-10 "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." *Do you love money? Are you tempted for more? What consumes your thoughts & wants?*
- **Loving & Trusting In Wealth = Impossible to Enter Into God’s Kingdom** – Mark 10:17-31 "And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!'" *Do you see wealth as dangerous or desirable?*

- **Store Up Treasures in Heaven** – Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." *What do you treasure and value? How would you respond if you lost all your possessions?*
- **Riches Never Satisfy** – Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. 11 When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes?" *What makes you happy? How do you find satisfaction in life?*

two close runners up...

- **Don't Associate with Greedy People who Claim to be Christians** (1 Corinthians 5:11)
- **An Entitlement Attitude is a Deadly Attitude** - Achan (Joshua 7:10-26)

TOP 5 QUOTES ON MONEY & PROSPERITY

- "The most obvious lesson in Christ's teaching is that there is no happiness in having or getting anything, but only in giving." Henry Drummond
- "Nothing I am sure has such a tendency to quench the fire of religion as the possession of money." J.C. Ryle
- "God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving." Randy Alcorn
- "It is prosperity that we cannot endure." Martin Luther
- "Few are made better by prosperity, whom afflictions make worse." William Gurnall

TOP 5 BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES AND VERSES ON FINANCES

- 1. It Is His Money: It All Belongs to God.** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)
- 2. Budget & Be Responsible.** For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' (Luke 14:28-30)
- 3. Spend Less than You Earn: Pay Your Bills.** But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:8). So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)
- 4. Work Hard To Live.** Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. ...10For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. 11 For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at

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work, but busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. (2 Thessalonians 3:6,10-12)

5. Work Hard to Give. In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:35)

The bottom line? Anyone considering MLMs needs to know the facts about their chances of actually realizing a profit for their time/effort and consider the truthfulness of MLM and Network marketing claims and the ethical concerns with MLM methodology and business practices. *Christians need to consider the reputation of the companies they associate with and consider the implications and effects such participation may have on their Christian witness among the friends they solicit and in their community.*

HELPFUL RESOURCES

www.desiringgod.org/sermons/magnifying-god-with-money
www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-booby-trap-in-the-christian-budget

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jeremiah 17:9 ESV)

God's description of idolatry?

*"The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play."
(Exodus 32:6, 1 Corinthians 10:7)
Don't waste your life!*

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT MONEY?

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-money

1. **Everything Belongs to God** – Genesis 1:1, Psalm 24:1, Haggai 2:8, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
2. **God Makes It Possible for You to Earn Money** – Deuteronomy 8:18
3. **An Entitlement Attitude is a Deadly Attitude** - Achan (Joshua 7:10-26)
4. **Prioritize God and Give to Him Before Anyone Else** - Proverbs 3:9-10
5. **God Blesses Those Financially Who Honor Him Financially** – Proverbs 3:9-10
6. **Don't Work Hard to Get Rich** – Proverbs 23:4-5
7. **Desire Only Your Daily Needs** – Proverbs 30:8-9
8. **Riches Never Satisfy** – Ecclesiastes 5:10-11
9. **Not Giving to God = Robbing From God** - Malachi 3:8
10. **Stealing A Little Leads Towards Stealing A Lot** - Judas (John 12:6, Matthew 26:15)
11. **Do Not Give to Receive Praises of Men** – Matthew 6:1-4
12. **Store Up Treasures in Heaven** – Matthew 6:19-20
13. **Can't Serve God and Money** - Matthew 6:24
14. **Pay Your Bills, As You Expect To Be Paid** – Matthew 7:12

15. **You Must Be Willing To Abandon Everything to Follow Jesus** - Matthew 19:6-19, Mark 10:21
16. **Investing In God Reaps Immense Dividends** – Matthew 19:27-29
17. **Faithfulness With Little Will Result In Being Entrusted With Much** – Matthew 25:21
18. **Impossible for Money-Lovers to Enter Into God's Kingdom** – Mark 10:25
19. **Lavish Giving Out of Poverty – Poor Widow** - Mark 12:43-44
20. **Giving and Blessing Are Connected** - Luke 6:38
21. **Be Rich Toward God** – Luke 12:19-21
22. **Don't Financially Commit to Something You Can't Financially Finish** — Luke 14:28-30
23. **Must Give Up Rights Over Everything to Follow Jesus** – Luke 14:33
24. **Heart Change Results In Giving Change – Zacchaeus** – Luke 19:8
25. **What You Treasure, Reflects Your Heart's Health** – Luke 6:45, 12:34
26. **The Early Church Shared Everything they Possessed** – Acts 4:32, 2:44
27. **Work Hard Because It Is More Blessed to Give than to Receive** – Acts 20:35
28. **Christians Ask and Contribute On Behalf of Other Christians and Missions Work** – Acts 11:29-30; 12:25; 20:3-4; 24:7, Galatians 2:10, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 8-9, Romans 15:25-33
29. **Ananias and Sapphira Die for False Giving** – Acts 5:1-11
30. **God Knows What We Give – Cornelius & Memorial Offering** – Acts 10:2-4
31. **We Will One Day Give An Account of Our Lives to God** - Romans 14:10, 12

32. **Don't Associate with Greedy People who Claim to be Christians** - 1 Corinthians 5:11
33. **God Commands the Support of Gospel Ministers** – 1 Corinthians 9:9,14
34. **Give When You Get Paid and In Proportion to What You Get Paid or Given** - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2
35. **Given Even When You Are Extremely Poor, Sacrificially Beyond Your Means** - 2 Corinthians 8:2-3
36. **Equal Sacrifices Among All Believers** – 2 Corinthians 8:7,13-14
37. **Sow Little, Reap Little; Sow a Lot, Harvest a Lot** – 2 Corinthians 9:6-9
38. **Give With A Cheerful Heart** - 2 Corinthians 9:7
39. **Lavish Giving Pleases God** - Philippians 4:18
40. **Giving Generously Reflects A Trust in God's Provision** – Philippians 4:19
41. **Stay Away from Lazy People** – 2 Thessalonians 3:6
42. **People Unwilling to Work Should Not Benefit (Eat) At Others' Expense** – 2 Thessalonians 3:10
43. **Work Hard & Quietly; Earn Your Own Living** – 2 Thessalonians 3:11-12
44. **Not Providing for Your Family & Household = A Denial of Faith** —1 Timothy 5:8
45. **Be Content With What You Have** – 1 Timothy 6:6-7
46. **Love of Money = Roots Of All Kinds of Evil** – 1 Timothy 6:9-10
47. **Rich Need to Be Humble and Generous** – 1 Timothy 6:17-19
48. **Everything Good You Have is From God** – James 1:17
49. **Lay Down Our Lives for Christ** – 1 John 3:16-19
50. **Not Giving to Meet Needs = Reason to Question One's Salvation** — 1 John 3:17

Questions on Money and Giving

How often do I need to give? As often as you are paid or receive money or income.

How much do I need to give? The tithe is a consistent biblical, joyous standard for giving, but the Christian should desire and seek to give offerings that go beyond it. Give proportionately to what you receive.

Do I tithe before (gross income) or after taxes (net income)? Scriptural giving always gives God the best, and gives to Him first. We should give proportionately to what we earn before taxes (gross income).

Is it ok to give to Christian charities instead of the church? Is it ok to designate my offering instead of giving to the "general fund"? Committed giving through the local church is the common theme of Scripture. This allows the church to prayerfully and corporately decide priorities and avenues of Gospel ministry through budgeting. Offerings beyond the tithe should be encouraged to go through designated offerings & charities.

I don't have enough money to give. Can I just wait to have enough? God consistently tells us to prioritize him first in our giving. Often times our issue is not money flow in, but the money we've overspent or over committed. We must live within our means and be both faithful to give to God and faithful to pay our debts.

Quotes on Money and Giving

"Never be afraid of giving up your best, and God will give you His better."

James Hinton

"The most obvious lesson in Christ's teaching is that there is no happiness

in having or getting anything, but only in giving."

Henry Drummond

"The cistern contains: The fountain overflows."

William Blake

"Get all you can, save all you can and give all you can."

John Wesley

"Give according to your income, lest God make your income according to your giving."

~Unknown

"You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving."

Amy Carmichael

"Feel for others – in your pocket."

Charles Spurgeon

"Nothing I am sure has such a tendency to quench the fire of religion as the possession of money."

J.C. Ryle

"It is prosperity that we cannot endure."

Martin Luther

"God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving."

Randy Alcorn

"When blessed with wealth, let them withdraw from the competition of vanity and be modest, retiring from ostentation, and not be the slaves of fashion."

William Wilberforce

"Few are made better by prosperity, whom afflictions make worse."

William Gurnall

SET FREE FROM ANGER

James 1 (ESV)

Be Honest, Do You Struggle with Anger?

Don't Minimize or Justify Your Anger

James 4:11 "Do not speak evil against one another"

Important Definitions:

- **Anger** - a strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility
- **Hate** - to feel intense or passionate dislike
- **Bitterness** - anger and disappointment at being treated unfairly; resentment
- **Resentment** - bitter indignation at having been treated unfairly

See the Seriousness of Anger: Know What God Says about Anger

- James 1:20 "for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God"
- James 1:26 "If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless."
- James 3:6 "And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell."
- James 3:8-10 "but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a

restless evil, full of deadly poison. [9] With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. [10] From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so."

Understand Anger: Why Do We Get Angry?

1. Immaturity - Poor Listening, Quick Speaking

- James 1:19-22 "let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger"

2. Impatience - with People & with God

- James 5:7 "Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord."

3. Forgetting God's Truths:

- James 1:21 "receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."

4. Self-Focus/Pride, Control:

- James 3:14-15 "if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. [15] This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic."
- James 4:6 "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

5. Worldly Focus:

- James 1:21 "put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness"
- James 4:1-2 "What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask."

Satan Uses Our Anger to Distance Us from God

- James 4:7 "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
- Ephesians 4:26-27 "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the

sun go down on your anger, [27] and give no opportunity to the devil.”

3 Steps to Freedom from Anger

1. Confess Your Failures

- James 4:8 “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded”
- James 5:16 “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

2. Renew Your Mind: Humble Love of God and Others

- *Watch Yourself:* James 4:10 “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”
- *Watch Jesus:* James 5:8–10 “You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. [9] Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. [10]
- *Watch Faithful Believers:* James 5:10-11 “As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. [11] Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. (ESV)

3. Memorize & Practice James 1:19-20

Quick to Hear
Slow to Speak
Slow to Anger

SET FREE FROM FEAR

Hebrews 13:6 (ESV)

Satan Uses Fear to Control & Manipulate

Hebrews 2:14–15 “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, [15] and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”

Other fears: fear of man (approval/rejection, belonging/loneliness), fear of self (identity, significance, failure), fear of suffering (fallen man, fallen world, fallen angels), fear of the future, fear of the demonic, fear (awe/respect) of God

2 Timothy 2:24–26 “the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will”

4 Unhealthy Ways We Deal with Our Fears

1. **Drown Them Out** (Coping)
2. **Ignore Them Away** (Avoidance)
3. **Self-Control** - Human Solutions (Self-Worship)
4. **Demonic-Control** - Man-Made Religious Solutions (Idolatry)

2 Timothy 1:7 “for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

We Only Find Freedom in Jesus

Galatians 5:1 “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

Remember Jesus’ Presence with You

Hebrews 13:5-6 “for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ [6] So we can confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?’”

1 John 4:18 “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.”

Are You Set Free? Now What!?!?

Live in Freedom: *You have been set free for a purpose!*

Listen to the Finish of Hebrews in Chapter 13

- v.1 Let brotherly love continue.
- v.2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.
- v.3 Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.
- v.4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.
- v.5 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have,
- v.7 Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.
- v.8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. [9] Do not be led away by diverse and strange

teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them.

- v.13 Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. [14] For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.
- v.15 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.
- v.16 Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.
- v.17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.
- v.18 Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.

SET FREE FROM DEATH

1 John 1 (ESV)

John 11:25–26 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (ESV)

Be Honest,

Do you struggle with a fear of death or dying?

When to be afraid of death:

1. Disregarding or Disobeying God’s Voice

- 1 John 1:6 “If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”
- 1 John 2:4 “Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him”
- 1 John 3:8 “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.”
- 1 John 4:6 “whoever is not from God does not listen to us.”

2. Unrepentant Hearts, Justifying Sin

- 1 John 1:8, 10 “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ... If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”
- 1 John 3:4 “Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also

practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.”

3. Presence of Hatred, Bitterness, Anger & Unforgiveness

- 1 John 2:9 “Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.”
- 1 John 2:11 “But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”
- 1 John 3:14 “Whoever does not love abides in death.”
- 1 John 4:8 “Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”
- 1 John 4:20 “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.”

4. Self-Love (Pride) and Worldly-Love (Pleasures)

- 1 John 2:15–16 “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.”
- 1 John 4:5 “They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them.”

5. Absence from the Body of Christ

- 1 John 2:19 “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.”
- 1 John 2:23 “No one who denies the Son has the Father.”

Evidences of Genuine Church Involvement:

- Heartfelt Worship and Adoration of God
- Continued Regular Physical Presence
- Connected Relationally and Emotionally
- Sacrificial Giving of Money and Time
- Biblical Transformation and Maturation

“What Does the Bible Say About Online Church?”

www.trustworthyword.com/online-church

Why to be Afraid of Death -> *The Reality of Hell for the Lost*

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-hell

“How to Become a Christian?”

www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian

“How to Be Sure I Am a Christian?”

www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian

When NOT to be afraid of death:

“for this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice” (John 18:37 ESV).

1) Listening to & Obeying God’s Voice

- 1 John 1:7 “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”
- 1 John 2:3 “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.”
- 1 John 3:24 “Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.”
- 1 John 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.”

2) Genuine Brokenness Over & Repentance from Sin

- 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
- 1 John 3:9 “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning,

because he has been born of God.”

3) Presence of God & His Love, Compassion, and Forgiveness

- 1 John 2:10, 1 John 3:14
- 1 John 4:21 “whoever loves God must also love his brother.”

4) Love of God & Trust in His Will

- 1 John 2:5–6 “but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”
- 1 John 2:17 “And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”
- 1 John 2:20–21 “But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.”

5) Genuine Presence in the Body of Christ

- 1 John 3:18 “let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth”
- 1 John 4:13 “By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.”
- 1 John 2:23 “Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.”
- 1 John 1:7 “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Why Not to be Afraid of Death -> *The Reality of Heaven for the Saved*

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-heaven

1 John 5:13 “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.”

- 2 Corinthians 5:8–9 “Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to

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please him.”

- Philippians 1:21 “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.
- Philippians 1:22–26 “If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. [23] I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. [24] But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. [25] Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, [26] so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.”
- Psalm 116:15 “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.”
- 2 Corinthians 6:9 “as dying, and behold, we live”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Jonathan Carl



Jonathan Carl grew up in the great state of Texas as the oldest of six kids. He graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point and served in the U.S. Army as a tanker with a combat tour in Iraq in the early 2000s. He had the joy of journeying to Kentucky where he met and married his wonderful wife, Brittney. Several years later he became the lead pastor at South Fork Baptist Church where he has served for over a decade. He enjoyed the opportunities to study and earn his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Evangelism & Missions from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Jonathan & Brittney have four daughters (Sophia, Lydia, Alia & Mia) with whom they enjoy

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spending every spare minute they can.



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In Christ, Jonathan Carl

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