

SHORT SERMONS

By

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All verses unless otherwise quoted are drawn from the International Standard Version (ISV) and New King James Version (NKJV).

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Forgiveness

A forgiving heart is a heart that is always willing to forgive.

To be willing to forgive means you choose not to repay evil with evil, but welcome reconciliation. As Christians, we must always be willing and ready to forgive no matter the level of offence. The Lord Jesus is willing and ready to forgive anyone who comes to him in repentance (Luke 24.47). We must follow in his footsteps.

To be willing to forgive does not mean to forgive. To be willing to forgive simply means the offended is not going to repay evil/wrong, and he is ready for reconciliation.

To forgive means to discharge the offender of the debt he owes, and to work to restore the broken relationship. As Christians, we must always forgive our transgressors when they repent (Luke 17.3-4). The Lord Jesus forgives all those who repent and, receives them back in his sheepfold. He does not remember their sins. We must follow in his footsteps. To forgive means to forget the wrong and restore the relationship.

If a person wrongs you, be willing to forgive. If he repents, you must forgive him. No relationship can survive without repentance and forgiveness. We will always hurt others. There must always be repentance and forgiveness. Relationships fail primarily because:

People do not communicate their hurt to others

People do not like being told of their wrongdoings

People are not willing to forgive

People do not forgive

People do not repent

If someone hurts you, go to him, and with a forgiving heart (not with a dominating, critical, accusing heart), tell him his wrong or rebuke him. The offender must be careful to listen to the offended and seek to make amends either by apologizing and/or by taking corrective actions. If the offender repents, the offender must forgive him and restore the relationship.

What if you are willing to forgive and be reconciled but the offender refuses to repent?

If the offender is unrepentant after you have told him of his wrong, his debt remains. You should continue to love him, but you must not remain close to him. If you are bound to offender for life e.g. marriage, you cannot divorce him, but you must be careful not to keep intimacy with a serpent or wolf. Serpent and wolves always bite. Keeping intimacy with an unrepentant person would mean:

1. Nurturing a monster. The offender will continue and grow in his evil works. Sooner, it will become more difficult to redeem him or the relationship.
2. Willfully giving yourself to torture. God wants us to be in good health both in body and soul. Abuse (Verbal, emotional, physical) and all wickedness and selfishness are deadly to the human soul.

God is willing and ready to forgive the whole world (he does not want to punish anyone), but he forgives and reconciles to himself only those who repent. We must imitate him.

Can I love someone who has hurt me deeply?

Yes, you can. The repentant offender needs grace, unmerited favor, mercy. Show him unmerited favor and purposely set your heart on him/her again and gradually trust him as you see more changes in him. Love hopes for the best. Always remember that God did not only forgive your wrongs, but he also poured his love on you by receiving you back wholeheartedly. If you are unable to love like God, then you must pray earnestly for God to help you have a forgiving heart. When we forgive from the heart, painful

memories lose power. We must pray till we are able to forgive the offender from the heart (not from the head).

What if he apologizes all the time but keeps doing wrong?

If he apologizes, we must be quick to forgive (Mathew 18.21-35). Many are weak in character and do many wrong things. To love such people means to forgive them always as often as they apologize, while praying to God for them to have a change of character. However, we must be careful on the level of trust we put on them.

What is the purpose of forgiveness?

Forgiveness is love. Forgiveness is a kind of love that works primarily to build, strengthen and restore relationships. Parents, children, spouses, friends, brothers suffer from broken relationships. The world will be a better place to live in if everyone could forgive and repent.

Reconciliation is meant to bring the sinner to repentance and restore him to the path of righteousness. The person who repents is redeemed from the hands of sin and death. Always pray for the wicked that they would repent of their evil ways.

The Lord Jesus paid for the sin of the whole world. He is willing to forgive the whole mankind. He grants forgiveness only to those who repent of their sins. The sinner receives forgiveness only when he repents of his sins and turns back to God. Without repentance, a man cannot be reconciled to God even though God is willing and ready to forgive him in Christ Jesus.

Trust in the Shepherd's Protection

There was a time in my life I suffered intense emotional pain. The people close to me whom I trusted, hurt me deeply. In that season, I cried out to God for help. I did not ask God to free me from the pain and the abusive relationships, rather I asked him to help my heart to love and reject any evil seed of bitterness, unforgiveness and hatred. I wanted to overcome evil with good. I prayed continuously for my tormentors. I prayed for their wellbeing and repentance. God did strengthen me. I rose above evil. I suffered evil without becoming evil, rather, I was strengthened in love.

God answered my prayer. My tormentors repented of their evil ways. I forgave them. However, things were no longer the same as before. I did not notice that during the years of torture, I had built a wall of protection for myself. Out of fear, I worked to keep some of their sins in mind, to keep watch for any future possible abuse. "If I completely forget the bad things they did to me, how will I detect and protect myself from any similar forthcoming attack?" I would not let myself forget some events of the past.

I did not know how to trust the Lord.

I knew that I must forgive these people as Jesus has forgiven me. His forgiveness was thorough and complete and kept no memory of some of my bad deeds. But I reasoned, "If I forget their offences (especially the recurrent ones), how will I remember their evil behavior to keep watch over myself in the future?"

The Lord reminded me that "Love does not keep wrongs. It hopes all things, believes all things and bears all things". He also reminded me that he is the good Shepherd and the

giver of Wisdom. After meditating on these words, I destroyed the self-protection wall and emptied my mind of painful memories. I decided:

- 1) to entrust myself to the Chief and good Shepherd. To trust him to guard and protect my heart from any damaging experience or abuse. I learnt to trust in his rod (that chases away wolves) and his staff (that guides me). I remembered how His love kept me sane and happy even in hurt. There was a day I was hurt bad within, then, I felt someone (the LORD) give me a strong hug that sent warm feelings of love deep in my heart and nullified the pain.
- 2) to trust the Lord to give me wisdom to deal with all relationships. He sent us as sheep among wolves (Mathew 10.16). He commands us to be wise and innocent. In a wicked world, only the Lord Jesus can give us the kind of wisdom we need to deal with the wicked (James 1.5). I prayed to the Lord to give me wisdom each day.

Judging Others

To judge means to:

To examine right or wrong

To examine someone and if found guilty, demand repentance

To examine someone and if found guilty, punish

Examine an act as right or wrong

The Lord Jesus encourages sound judgement/discernment of right and wrong.

Right and wrong can be correctly discerned in God's laws. The human conscience can also discern right and wrong. However, the human conscience is no longer a reliable guide because it has been darkened by sin. Every human is in the first Adam, and in Adam, we all have knowledge of good and evil. However, because men love evil, they can easily call evil good and good evil. Those who are in the spirit of Christ can make sound judgments because they see clearly, and their minds are trained in right and wrong.

God's laws still stand as a perfect guide in determining evil and good. If we are to judge anyone, the laws by which the person is judged must be righteous. From God's laws or our human conscience, we discern that, cheating, stealing, unjust anger, sexual immorality, lies, falsehood, murder, greed etc., are all evil deeds.

Examine Someone and demand repentance

"If your brother sins against you, go and confront him while the two of you are alone. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. But if he doesn't listen, take one or two others with you so that 'every word may be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If, however, he ignores them, tell it to the congregation. If he also ignores the congregation, regard him as a gentile and a tax collector" (Mat 18.15-17).

The LORD demands that we confront our brother for his wrongdoing. Confronting a brother for his wrong deed is for correction, repentance, building up and restoration. It is not for condemnation or punishment. It is meant to bring the erring brethren back to righteousness from the hands of evil. The offended, though in pain, must remain in the spirit of correction, love, restoration.

If the offender does not listen to you, go tell the church. If he refuses to listen to the church, then he will be treated as an unbeliever. If the church decides that the brother is no longer part of the church, then that decision is binding even in heaven.

The role of the church is to bring the erring brother to repentance. The church cannot punish an unrepentant brother, but they can remove him from the Christian community lest he spoils the others.

The church must also judge the people of the earth to bring them to repentance. John the Baptist judged King Herod for the sin of adultery. He spelled out the sins of tax collectors, parents and even soldiers. The disciples spelled out the sins of the people and called them to repentance. The Lord rebuked the wrongdoings of the Pharisees. Christians are generally hated because they do not accept the evil deeds of sinners. The sinner does not like to be judged. John the Baptist was killed by Herod. Many times, the Pharisees attempted to kill the Lord because he rebuked them for their sins (John 8.37, 40). Apostle Paul was "stoned to death" for speaking against idolatry. The world hates Christians for their choice of good over evil. The world throws insults at them for speaking the truth.

We have a duty to judge one another unto repentance. We must all love the loving judgement that comes from our brother or neighbor. If we resist our brother's judgement, we remain in sin. If we remain in sin, we will be judged by God unto punishment on that last day.

Examine Someone and punish

1. Condemnation

But the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery. After setting her before them, they told him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the very act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women to death. What do you say? They said this to test him, so that they might have a charge against him. But Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. When they persisted in questioning him, he straightened up and told them, "Let the person among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her. Then he bent down again and continued writing on the ground. When they heard this, they went away one by one, beginning with the oldest, and he was left alone with the woman standing there. Then Jesus stood up and asked her, "Dear lady, where are your accusers? Hasn't anyone condemned you?" No one, sir," she replied. Then Jesus said, "I don't condemn you, either. Go home, and from now on do not sin any more." John 8.3-11

The Pharisees examined the adulterous woman and condemned her to death, but Jesus examined her and demanded of her, repentance.

The Lord Jesus does not permit anyone or authority to condemn another. None is without sin. As such, none should condemn his brother to death. No one, no authority, body or government, has the right to condemn anyone to death. Life was given by God and only Him can take it away. Let the man who is without sin be the first to shoot, stone, knife, or hang his brother to death. Who are you to condemn your brother when you are also guilty of sin? All of us need mercy, so we should give mercy to others.

Condemn not and you shall not be condemned. Be merciful and you shall obtain mercy. The measure you use on others, that same measure will be used on you.

If you killed others for their evil deed, you too will be killed for your evil deed no matter how small.

2. Evil for Evil, Eye for Eye

"Stop judging, so that you won't be judged, because the way that you judge others will be the way that you will be judged, and you will be evaluated by the standard with which you evaluate others.

Evil for evil or eye for eye is when a person receives in the same or reasonable measure the damage, he inflicted on another. We must be careful not to cause others harm simply because they did harm. Such judgement of vengeance should be left in the hands of God. On that day, He will repay each person as he deeds demands. Vengeance belongs to God (Rom 12.19). He will grant justice to all those who are crying to him night and day (Luke 18.2-8).

3. Discipline

If we must judge, then we must judge righteously (*John 7.24*).

"Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye but fail to notice the beam in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when the beam is in your own eye? You hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye, and then you will see clearly enough to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Mathew 7.1-5).

We can judge right, if we see right. The laws of the state or the family by which people are judged must be godly. The people in authority must be careful not to judge when they themselves are guilty of the very offence. Government authorities sanitize the society by disciplining the evil doers. Parents build up a godly character in their children when they discipline them. Discipline, whether imprisonment or use of rod should not cause undue damage but should bring the sinner to repentance. Discipline should cease once there is repentance and change of conduct.

Husband & Wife

A man and a woman become one flesh by the bond of marriage (Math 19.5-6). Once married, the man is the husband and the woman, the wife. Marriage must be between one man and one woman (Gen 2.20-25). Marriage must not be between people of the same blood (Lev 18). The marriage bed must not be defiled (Mat 5.27-28). The marriage must not be dissolved except for sexual immorality or illegitimate marriages (Mat 5.32). The primary purpose of marriage is raising a family unto the glory of God.

Submission and Love in Marriage

Christians, both man and woman, must submit to one another (1 Peter 5.5) and love one another (John 15.12). In the body of Christ, we are all brethren and we submit to Christ, the head.

In Christ, man and woman should submit to one another. In Christ, the man should submit to the woman even if they are married. The body of Christ (God's family) is bigger than the body of the man (man's family).

In Christ, man and woman should love one another. In Christ, the woman should love the man as Christ has loved us, even if they are married.

If we love and submit to one another, there will be no need for more laws. Love fulfils the law, even the laws of marriage. Love submits to and serves another. Love respects another. Love shows affection. Love is not selfish.

Due to the weakness of the human nature (little ability to love), emphasis must be made in the key areas of marriage:

As for you, let each one love his wife as himself, and let the wife respect her husband” (Ephesian 5.33).

The husband, because he is head, must be obeyed by the members of his household. The respect of obedience or submission is gained by one’s position, not by his deeds. Even bad husbands must be obeyed. A bad king must always be obeyed as king even if he is bad. In marriage, the wife submits to (obeys) the husband (Eph 5.22).

The husband, because he is the head, must love the members of his household. The elder serves the younger. He who is the greatest is the servant of all (Mat 23.11). Respect can be obedience or admiration. Obedience is earned by one’s position, but admiration is earned by love (sacrificial and affectionate love). The man wins the admiration of his household by love.

A couple that obeys the law of Christ, will satisfy the law of marriage. Both submits to one another as commanded by Christ and both love one another as commanded by Christ. Humility and selflessness is the garment of all Christians whether man or woman. The wife will always feel loved and respected and the husband too will feel respected and loved. The law of Christ is meant to bring all men (whether man or woman) to the complete image of Christ.

In the flesh, the woman is more inclined to receive love and the man more inclined to receive respect. However, our bond in Christ is higher than all fleshly bonds and we should let ourselves to be ruled by the bond we have in Christ. The life of the spirit should prevail above the flesh.

The Lord Jesus submits to the Father in all things. The church submits to the Lord in all things. The brethren in church (both man and woman) submits to one another in all things. In marriage, the wife should be quicker to submit to the husband because he is the head of the body. The entire church should submit to earthly authorities in all matters that do not contradict the will of God.

The Heavenly Father loves the son; the son loves his bride (church), the church must love another as Christ has loved us. In marriage, the husband should be quicker to love to his wife. The entire church should love their unbelieving neighbors.

The Curse of Adam and Eve in marriage

God punished Adam and Eve for their sin of disobedience in the garden of Eden. Adam would toil to get bread for his family. Eve would suffer birth pangs when bringing forth her children and she would still desire her husband. Do these curses affect our marriages? If they do, can we be set free?

Adam's curse:

Before the fall, the earth tilled and watered itself to bring forth food for man but after the fall, it stopped. Man began toil to get food. Man is the breadwinner of his home. He must till the soil and bring out food for his family. The curse was true and binding until the coming of the Lord Jesus, the last Adam. All who are in Christ are free from the curse.

It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep (Psalm 127.2).

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you (Mat 6.33).

Though the earth no longer tills itself, the LORD blesses the handwork of his children. They do not have to toil as much as the sinners do to get food.

If we pursue obedience and faith in God, he will meet our daily needs.

Eve's Curse:

Eve was cursed with pain in childbearing. Can a woman be free from this pain?

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth (Mat 9.23).

All things are possible to those who believe in the Son of God. You can have a pain free delivery if you believe without doubting in your heart.

Self-Control of the pleasures of Manhood

The church of Corinth faced carnal issues on sex and self-control. Apostle Paul gave his opinion (not God's commandment) on how to tackle their problems (1 Corinth 7). He said;

1. Since the people have strong desire (lust)for sex
2. Since sexual immorality is rampant among them
3. Since they lack self-control

They should:

1. Marry than burn
2. They should not refuse one another in bed
3. They should not stay away apart from each other for a long time except for prayers.

They should do these so that the devil will not tempt them to sin because of their lack of self-control. Still, he would wish that all believers will remain unmarried as he were so that they can give themselves entirely to the Lord.

Paul's advice was directed to a carnal church. The church of God is not supposed to be carnal. There is no other word that can be given to a carnal church except that they stop being carnal. As the church, they must do away with their strong sexual desire and lack of self-control.

Apostle Paul's counsel is an opinion, not based on God's word and thus, it is not the standard for the church to follow. The word of God on the matter was for them to stop being carnal. If they crucify their flesh, they will no longer be tempted by it. They should deal away with the lust and lack of self-control in their hearts. Marriage, frequent sex, not refusing your spouse in bed, as Paul suggested, will not treat the lust in their heart. People must not marry for sexual gratification, nor must they give themselves to sex nor burden their spouses with it. Unrestraint bodily desire is not a fruit of the spirit of Christ but of the flesh. The fruit of the spirit of Christ is self-control and selflessness. The life of the spirit of Christ can strengthen us to control our sexual desires.

God created air, food, water, sex, etc. for survival of humanity. He did not create only these things, but he also created human appetite for them. The primary purpose of the appetite was not for enjoyment but to enable us to do them. It is not easy to eat, drink or sex if you do not have the desire or appetite.

To the best of my knowledge, female animals, including the woman, go on heat during ovulation. Ovulation is a natural time where a female desires sex for pregnancy. During ovulation, the woman desires sex without any stimulation from the man. The female animal does not accept a male animal no matter the extent of his appeal except when she is on heat. Women were not created as sex objects to satisfy the men. They are created to bear forth children to the glory of God.

The man's sexual desire is usually stronger than that of the women because he is by nature created to ensure continuity of his lineage. However, both men and women should exercise self-control over all bodily appetites and watch against self-indulgence, lest we become slaves to our own human desires.

We cannot put a thumb rule on how many times sex is appropriate, but we can say that we must keep in mind the purpose why God created sex and regulate ourselves accordingly.

He who loves the world makes himself an enemy of God (James 4.4). The things of the world (1 John 2.16) are:

The desires of the eyes

The desires of the flesh (the human nature)

The pride of life

It is a sin to live to self-pleasure rather than to live for God. Do not set your mind on enjoying sex, rather set your mind on things of heaven.

If you are in a marriage that is not very sexual, instead of working to increase the sexual satisfaction, drive your energy towards self-control, love for your spouse and the things of the Spirit of Christ.

If you are in a marriage that is not at all sexual, and your spouse will not respond to you, you must not think of divorce, but run to Christ for grace to deny self and to stay

married. You are in a difficult marriage, and you are more vulnerable to temptation. The Lord Jesus can strengthen us to deny self and win over the flesh.

Self-control of the pleasures of Womanhood

We must watch over our hearts not to be overtaken by the pleasures or cares of womanhood (Luke 21.34). Women, by nature, desire attention, affection, romance, love & emotional intimacy from the male spouse. While we are aware of these natural tendencies, we must remember that we are to live after the spirit of Christ and not after the human nature. We must be careful not to live for these natural or carnal desires, rather pursue God's desire. Women must be careful not to make their husbands slaves to their desires. In Christ, we are all free. A woman who pursues much intimacy with her husband will scarcely have her mind on God. We can enjoy these things, but we must be careful not to run after them. Our happiness must not depend on them. A true disciple of the Lord is one who carries a cross of self-denial. The woman should by the power of the spirit of Christ, bring her natural tendencies to control.

If you are in a marriage where your spouse does not give you time or attention, do not think of leaving the marriage. If your marriage is emotionally unsatisfactory, and your spouse will not repent, you cannot divorce, rather run to Christ, for the grace to deny self. The solution will not necessarily be for your spouse to spend more time with/on you, rather, you should deny self and redirect your heart to God. If much of your heart and mind is set on your marriage, you will never be available for God. By the power of the spirit, if you want, you can be an eunuch for the kingdom of God.

Servanthood

The Holy Spirit enables us to serve in the kingdom of God. In spiritual matters, he enables us to work miracles, heal, prophesy, to preach the good news of the kingdom and teach the word of God. In physical matters, he enables us to serve one another in love, to carry each other's earthly burdens. The Holy Spirit helps to become servants just the LORD Jesus Christ is. The greatest in the kingdom of Heaven is the servant (Mathew 23.11).

All the children of God are called to serve one another and carry one another's burdens. Every child of God is called to serve in spiritual matters. Every child of God is called to serve in all spiritual matters, but not everyone can serve in all spiritual matters because not everyone is fully grown to maturity. Each person serves in his capacity, according to the grace he has received from God. Physical and spiritual service is valuable and very precious in the house of God. It is by loving and serving one another that we are known as the Lord's disciples.

The greatest among the children of God are those who serve.

If anyone wants to be first he must be last of all and servant of all (Mar 9.35).

The person who is greatest among you must be your servant (Mat.23:11).

But he told them, "The kings of the gentiles lord it over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors. But you are not to do so. On the contrary, the greatest among you should become like the youngest, and the one who leads should become like the one who serves. Because who is greater, the one who sits at

the table, or the one who serves? It is the one at the table, isn't it? But I am among you as one who serves (Luke 22.25-26).

Serving the word of God

A minister or servant of the word of God feeds God's people with his words for spiritual growth unto the image of Christ. He serves the people with fresh bread from heaven. He receives the words in his heart and release them to the people as God gives him utterance. The written text cannot penetrate deep into the human spirit to cause a change from within, but words which are spirit goes deep into the human spirit. Words released from the heart in faith become spirit and they go deep dividing the soul and the spirit, and bone and marrow (Heb 4.12). The words of Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost cut deep into the heart of the people, causing them to cry out for salvation.

Wash One Another's Feet

To serve or carry the earthly burden of your brother means to, "wash your brother's feet". The servant is always ready in all humility and cheerfulness, to lovingly serve his brother in their areas of need. It could be to cook food for them as Martha was doing, or care for a sick brother, or show hospitality, or clean a brother's house, or wash his feet if this is the sign of welcome in your locality. In the days of the Lord, only slaves washed their master's feet. This was one of the lowest duties of the slave. To wash one another's feet means to make yourselves slaves to one another. It means to do the lowest tasks for them. It is the deepest expression of love and humility. The Lord Jesus, though Lord and Master, washed his disciples' feet and commanded them to do same to one another.

When Jesus had washed their feet and put on his outer robe, he sat down again and told them, "Do you realize what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right because that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you must also wash one another's feet. I have set an example for you, so that you may do as I have done to you. Truly, I say to you with certainty, a servant is not

greater than his master, and a messenger is not greater than the one who sent him. If you understand these things, how blessed you are if you put them into practice!

(John 13.3-17)

The children of God face diverse kinds of hardships and challenges on the earth. A helping hand eases the weight of their burdens and this pleases the LORD. Some suffer loneliness, others sickness, poverty, work overload, imprisonment, persecution, etc. Whatever the kind of burden, we must readily help one another in all possible ways that we can. Of what good it is to bless your brother and tell him to stay well but you do nothing to help him, when he is sick, hungry or is in prison. We should pray earnestly for the Lord to help us to rightly discern the needs of our brethren and, enable us to be of assistance to them. It is the will of the Heavenly father that you live selflessly. We must not always look at what others have not done for us, rather we should look at what we have done for others. It is by serving one another that we truly belong to one another. It is by serving one another that we become one. We must give ourselves to another in all humility in all things that benefits the other. We must refuse pride which comes in the way of love and unity. We must be one as the Lord Jesus and the Father are one.

A believer who is a mother should assume the position of a servant and serve her husband and children in all possible ways. Do the cooking, the cleaning, dishes, without any remorse or grumbling but with all cheerfulness of heart. A believer who is a husband should serve his household in all possible ways too. He should work not for himself (to fulfill a career or earn big money), rather he should work to earn bread for his household. He should do so humbly and cheerfully, cherishing his wife and children. They should perform all other roles with humble and cheerful hearts. In church, the children of God should copy the example of Stephen. They should serve in all administrative roles that can keep the church running. In all relationships, we must identify the other party as our master and serve him. We must identify those whom God has put under our care and serve them.

The spirit of the Servant

A slave does not complain or grumble when he serves his master. The slave accepts his slavery. Christians are a slave to nothing or no one except to love God and man (Rom 13.8).

A slave serves to satisfy his master. He seeks the joy of his lord. We should seek the joy of our brethren. Our brethren may never repay our service, but God will repay us (Luke 6.35).

The slave does not own himself, but he belongs to his master. He does not live to please himself but to please his master. Christians belong to one another (Eph 4.25).

We must be servants in our hearts. We must serve one another without expecting pay. We must consider the need of our fellow brother. We must serve one another without complaining or grumbling. Help one another in all possible ways without expecting any reward. We must serve one another even if our fellow brother is the least person we think deserves our service. The Lord Jesus washed the feet of the disciple he knew was going to hand him to death (Judas Iscariot).

When you have done everything you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless servants. We have done only what we ought to have done'" (Luke 17.10).

Serving in the Strength of the Lord

All things must be done in the Lord and for the Lord. We can do all things through Christ (Phil 4.13). Do not trust in physical strength. Any work done in human strength will always glorify self.

Whoever speaks must speak God's words. Whoever serves must serve with the strength that God supplies, so that in every way God may be glorified through Jesus, the Messiah. Glory and power belong to him forever and ever! Amen (1 Peter 4.11).

The power of the Lord is released only when we see our weaknesses and acknowledge his strength.

but he has told me, "My grace is all you need, because my power is perfected in weakness." Therefore, I will most happily boast about my weaknesses, so that the Messiah's power may rest on me (2Co 12.9).

We must refuse the power of natural life before we can tap into the power of the life of Christ. In Christ, we have overcome the world. In him, we are strong. The journey is for the weak and not the strong. The weak will run in the power of Christ and win but the strong will run in the power of their natural life and fail. Apart from him, we can do nothing.

If you serve your household or your brethren or the church, or the community, you must do it in the strength that the Lord provides. You must live the life of the spirit. We must be careful not to do anything from our natural lives but from the life of Christ, the overcoming life, so that in all things, all glory will be given to the Lord of glory.

The Chief Servant

But I am among you as one who serves (Luke 22.25-26).

The LORD, even though he is master came not to be served but to serve. His life was poured out as a ransom for many. He went about doing good deeds and finally died on the cross. He showed us the example of servanthood. When the chief servant (the Lord Jesus) comes back, he will serve us again.

How blessed are those servants whom the master finds watching for him when he comes! I tell you with certainty, he himself will put on an apron, make them sit down at the table, and go around and serve them (Luk 12.37).

The Lazy Servant (Luke 12.45-48, 19.11-27)

The Lord shows his servants the works that they are expected to do before his return. His very earthly life and ministry was an example of the kind of works his servants are supposed to do. The servant who knows the will of the master but does not work, is the wicked and lazy servant.

The Lord wants all his servants to work and bear fruit for his kingdom. The servant who does not know what he wants to be done, should enquire of the Lord. All his servants are expected to work and bear fruit. When the Lord returns, he will reward each of his servants according to their works.

The servant who does not do anything for the Lord will be given many lashes of the Cane. The servants who works for the Lord will be given great positions of authority in the Lord's coming kingdom.

God's Love

Can God's love be measured?

Does everyone receive the same measure of God's love?

God's love can be measured. Everyone does not receive the same measure of God's love. His love can be in full measure or half measure. Everyone receives some measure of God's love but only God's children receive the full measure of His love.

Is God's love perfect?

Is God's love unconditional?

The love of God is perfect in nature. His love can be unconditional and conditional. The full measure of his love is conditional, but the half measure of his love is unconditional.

His perfect, and unconditional love for mankind

God's perfect and unconditional love is evidenced in that while we yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5.8). For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3.6).

God is love. It is his nature to love. We do nothing to earn God's unconditional love. His love for us saves us while we are lost. His love calls us to himself even while we do not know him (Romans 9.25). He is ready to reconcile all sinners back to himself, so that none will perish.

His Perfect, full measure but Conditional Love for His children

The full measure of God's love is poured out on his children. This measure of love is poured out if we live a life of total obedience to Him. This is the kind of love the Lord Jesus had for his disciples (John 13.1, John 20.2, 1 John 4.12, 1 John 3.1). This is the kind of love that Jesus had for Martha, her sister and Lazarus (John 11.5). This is the kind of love the Heavenly Father had for the Lord Jesus (John 10.17) and his disciples (John 16.27)

The Father loved the son because the son always did what pleased the father. The Father loves his children because they always obey him and do his will.

Just as the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. So abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love (John 15.9-10)

God pours out the full measure of His love when we obey his commandments. We fall out of his full love when we do not continue to keep his commandments. We remain in his love when we continue in obedience.

The full measure of God's love is this: he gives his obedient children anything they ask Him.

You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you. I have appointed you to go and produce fruit that will last, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you (John 15.16)

If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you can ask for anything you want, and you will receive it (John 15.7).

The full measure of his love is this: He reveals himself to his obedient children and makes his home in them.

Whoever keeps my commandments is the one who loves me. If he loves me, he will also be loved by my Father; I too shall love him and show myself clearly to him....Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him; and we will come to him and make a room in his home (John 14.21-25).

God's Household

How do I become a Child of God?

To become a child of God, a person needs;

- 1) To break with sin i.e. repent of his evil ways (1 John 1.8-10; 1 John 2.1-2)
- 2) To keep his commandments i.e. believe in the Lord Jesus and love others (1 John 2.3-11, 1 John 3.23)
- 3) To detach from the world i.e. renew his heart and mind from the world to Christ (1 John 2.12-18; John 15.18-22; John 17.6; John 17.14-19).
- 4) To keep watch against the antichrist i.e. not allow himself to be deceived by false teachers (1 John 2.18-20). They will deceive you to believe that you are saved whereas you are not.

It is only when you do these things that you will become a child of God.

Because your Heavenly Father is kind to the Ungrateful and the Wicked

Why should I love my enemy?

Why should I do good to those who hate me?

Why should I pray for those who spitefully use me and mistreat me?

Why should I not fight the wicked?

Why should I give and lend to all without expecting in return?

...Because I am a child of the Most High God

God's children are like him. He is kind to the wicked and the ungrateful. If we are his children, then we must imitate him. Anyone who wants to be his child must behave like him.

Unlike the rich and "good" people, the poor and the wicked will never be able to repay us for our good deeds to them. God will repay all our good deeds, especially those done to the wicked, so we must not do good only to "good" people. If we get rewarded by men, we forfeit the Heavenly Father's reward. If we do good, we will reap bountiful righteousness and God's reward. We should never grow weary in well-doing but repay evil with good. The contract is not between you and men but between you and God.

How do I Love God

"The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these"(Mar 12:29-31).

He who loves God fulfills the first commandment.

We must love God with our whole being (heart, soul and strength).

Our love for God must not only be sentimental but it should be deep reverence in our heart that is expressed by holy fear, faith and obedience. To love God is to love him more than we love any human being. To love him is to refuse to love money, job, property, self, etc. Many people live for academic certificates, career, fame, political power. Others are more dedicated to family and marriages than to God. Such people do not love God.

Our hearts must burn with the desire to obey and please Him. We must seek wholeheartedly to know Him and do His will. No amount of effort or time is too much to be spent on God. Just like Mary Magdalene, we must "broke the alabaster of costly oil" and "waste" it on the Lord. Those who know and obey Him are truly those who truly

believe and love him (1 John 2.3). We must put on the mind of Christ to correctly discern the will of God in all things.

To love God means to;

Believe and obey him (John 14.15).

Love people as ourselves

Love God more than people

Not to love the things of the world (money, career, job, fame, possessions, power, fame, marriage, childbearing, etc.). We can make use of some of the things in the world, but we should not love them.

What Pleases the Heavenly the Most?

The greatest thing that pleases the Heavenly father's heart is the obedience of his children. He wants his children to completely obedient even in the face of death. In this present world, obeying God often results in huge loses. His children must be ready to suffer the loses/pain that comes from obeying God. His commandments should not be compromised for anything but obeyed perseveringly. Those who obey him are those who truly love him. Sentimental love alone is no love. We must purify ourselves of every filth in the fear of the Lord. Total Obedience is the kind of reverence that glorifies the Heavenly Father.

And this is his commandment: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus the Messiah, and to love one another as he commanded us (1Jn.3.23).

The Kingdom of God has two laws: the law of love and the law of faith. Total faith in the Lord Jesus and love for one another. Believers must strive to be perfect in faith and love.

Those who obey the word of God perseveringly are:

His disciples

The good soil

His friends

The Voice of God

God speaks to humans. God is spirit. He communicates to our spirits. We hear him with our heart. The level of communication (how much he speaks and how much we hear) between us and God depends on the depth of our relationship with him.

To the carnal fallen man, God speaks through the man's conscience

To His own Children, God speaks through His Spirit in them

Indirectly, man can hear God's words through written texts (Bible and other Christian literature) and through the voice of his children.

Through His Spirit: The voice of God in our hearts is quiet and wordless, but the message is understood by the hearer. His children get to know him easily because they hear and see him. The ears and eyes of their hearts have been opened to receive. Revelational knowledge comes without rigorous bible study. With a single scripture, comes a string of understanding and knowledge that seems like an overflow. The mind is illuminated to understand and know. We receive intuitively. Intuition is quick and direct insight or the ability of attaining to direct knowledge without evident rational thought and inference. This intuitive ability comes when the ears and eyes of our spirit are opened by Christ Jesus.

Through the conscience: Every man has a conscience because every man is in the first Adam. The first Adam ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Every man has the ability to know good and evil. This tree of knowledge is the spirit of God and it is God's voice. However, in sinfulness, the conscience can lose its guide or be dulled. All mankind will be judged by their deeds, because all knew right from wrong.

God's Written Word and voice of His children: From written words and the voice of his children, we can only hear God's word indirectly (not his direct voice). God's word is profitable because it will show us the way to him. God uses his written words to illuminate our minds when he speaks to our spirit.

The Flesh & Sin

The Flesh

The flesh is not just the body. It is both spirit and body. It is the human nature. It is everything of the first Adam. The flesh is the desires (heart and body) of the fallen man. Fleshly desires are often contrary to the will of God. Human nature means natural or carnal elements of man. They may seem okay, but they oppose God's will.

The spiritual desires of the natural man are pride, covetousness, greed, self-defense, self-righteousness, self-pleasing, selfish ambitions, lawlessness, laziness, worldly mindedness, untruthfulness etc.

The bodily desires of the natural man are ungodly talks and excess appetite for food, drinks and sex, etc.

These desires or attitudes comes easily in man. Man does not need to exercise any effort to do these things, but he needs to exercise much restrain not to do these things. These natural desires oppose God's will.

The new man in Christ is one who has denied the flesh and have put on the righteous character of God.

The spiritual desires or character of a new man in Christ are humility, contentment, love, gentleness, self-control, kingdom mindfulness, self-denial, trust in God, obedience, etc. The bodily desires of the body of a new man in Christ are godly talks, normal and controlled appetite for food, drinks, and sex, etc.

Those who belong to Christ are those who have died to their fallen human nature (the flesh) and have put on the nature of Christ. If you say that you belong to Christ but still live after the flesh, then you lie.

Freedom from the Power of the Flesh

The flesh is the cause of falling to all mankind. Remove the flesh and no one will fall. Our enemy is not only the devil. The flesh is a strong enemy. Its desires enslave us, and we live seeking to satisfy it. In the flesh of man, dwells no good thing. The devil rules us because we let the flesh rule us. All the devil needs to do is to tempt and entice our flesh, and we fall into sin. The flesh and the tempter are the enemies of mankind. If we subdue the flesh, the tempter will lose his power because there will be nothing to tempt.

The death and resurrection of the Lord won for us eternal victory over the world and over sin and death. By his death and resurrection, he made available for man two things that secures his salvation:

- 1) His blood that washed away sin that continues to corrupt the soul.
- 2) His Holy Spirit that empowers us to subdue the flesh and sin no more

Without Christ, it is impossible to live sin free. But he who Christ sets free is free indeed (John 8.34-36). If you repent of your sins and believe with your heart that Jesus Christ is the savior of the world, his blood will wash away sin, but not the flesh. A repentant believer will need a deeper commitment to Christ to experience total victory over the flesh. Victory over the flesh is guaranteed in Christ but a deeper commitment to Christ is needed to realize this victory. To be perfect, a believer must become a disciple of Christ. The Holy Spirit is God's power over the flesh (Romans 8.13). The fullness of the Holy Spirit is given only to the disciples of Christ. He who is filled with the spirit of Christ is strengthened to subdue the flesh. It is by a process of continuance obedience to God and denying the flesh that the flesh is subdued (Romans 6.13-14). The Christian eventually dies to the flesh and becomes fully alive to God.

Those who have subdued (crucified) the flesh are the true sons of God.

Sin

Sin is any action or desire that is contrary to the commandments of God. Sin is breaking or disobeying God's commandments.

The sin of the world was the first act of disobedience. Adam disobeyed God's command not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This first sin paved way for many other sins, until man became enslaved to it. Because of Adam, all became sinners. Even though man ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, his judgement of right and wrong became dulled because of sinfulness.

God wanted a holy people. Israel's obedience to the commandments would have satisfied this purpose but God could find none who was perfect by the law. So, God sent his son, Jesus Christ, and established a new covenant based on faith in his son. The new covenant has a new commandment:

And this is his commandment: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus the Messiah, and to love one another as he commanded us (1Jn.3.23).

Any action or desire against this commandment is sin. The sin of unbelief is to refuse to believe in Jesus as the Son of God. The sin of selfishness is any act or desire that is not love. Unloving actions are stealing, hatred, revenge, unjustified anger, evil talks, slander, stinginess, murder, adultery, greed, pride, impatience, lack of endurance, lack of self-control, witchcraft, hypocrisy, etc.

The commandments of God are holy, and they express God's righteous character. All his holy people become holy by keeping his commandment. They are able to keep his commandment, not by self-effort but by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Freedom from the Power of Sin

The Lord Jesus saved the whole world from sin, but not all men experience this freedom. Those who believe in Christ experience this freedom at different levels. But he who is born of God (born of water and spirit) does not sin. Those who are completely made new in spirit, do not sin anymore. They are made new by their steadfast obedience to God through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

Sin grows powerful when a man continues to sin. Sin loses its grip on man only when man stops sinning. Man can stop sinning by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6.13-14). In Christ Jesus, there is remission of sins, and, strength to stop sinning and grow in holiness.

Jesus is the person who grants forgiveness from sin and the strength to obey God. To receive power to stop sinning, man must be filled with the spirit of Jesus Christ. Those who are filled with the spirit of Christ are mindful only of heavenly things. Those who walk after the spirit of Christ, do not satisfy carnal desires nor do they have the tendency to sin. In them, is the righteous demands of the law of Christ fulfilled. Be willing to carry the cross of obedience and pay its price. Many people suffer huge loses for their obedience to God, but the cross will save your soul.

Even though, Christ saved us from sin, sin still wants to rule us. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we must claim dominion over sin by surrendering every part of our being (soul and body) as slaves or instruments of righteousness. Then, sin will lose its grip on us (Rom 6.13-14).

The Cost of Discipleship

A disciple of Christ is a learner and a follower of Christ. All disciples are repentant believers but not all believers are disciples. He who truly believes in Him, submits to Him in discipleship.

To be a disciple, a person must repent of his sin and then give up his all.

"Look!" Peter replied. "We have left everything and followed you. So, what will we get?"(Mat 19.27)

Give up your property & possessions: Embrace the life of simplicity. Simplicity means be content or cheerful with the basic things of life. Simplicity does not mean poverty. Being poor is not God's will. It is God's will to meet your basic needs. Basic needs are shelter, food, water, clothing etc. Basic needs are not a fancy house, expensive food, designers clothing, private jet or luxurious cars etc. To become a disciple of Christ, you must sell your riches and give the money to the poor and settle on the basic things of life. The word of Christ to the rich young ruler is the same for all who want to follow him. Jesus told him:

If you want to be perfect, go and sell what you own and give the money to the destitute, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come back and follow me (Mat 19.21)

Until you give away your earthly riches, you cannot follow the LORD. The rich do not follow him. It is very difficult for them to follow him or enter the kingdom of God.

Human Relationships must be secondary: You must love the Lord God more than you love any human being. If a repentant person wants to be a disciple, he must

wholeheartedly seek to please God more than anyone in his family. For the sake of God, he must be ready to reject his family if need arises.

The one who loves his father or mother more than me isn't worthy of me, and the one who loves a son or daughter more than me isn't worthy of me. The one who doesn't take up his cross and follow me isn't worthy of me (Mat 10.37-38)

Total Submission: You must become a child. Except you become a child, you cannot enter the kingdom of God. Only children follow the Lord. Only children can learn from the Lord. Self-confidence, self-reliance, self-righteousness must be completely dealt away with. There should be no element of self-reliance in your heart. Be a sheep (they always follow the shepherd) and not a goat (they always go their own way). Every sheep listens to and obeys his master. Do not give up your possessions, only to go on the journey alone, without the Lord as your Shepherd, Master and teacher. It will be wasted effort. Pray that the Lord will enable you have child-like heart of humility. The race is not for the strong but the weak. The race is not for the "wise" but the humble. The humble and the weak receive divine strength to walk the hard road.

When Jesus saw this, he became furious and told them, "Let the little children come to me, and stop keeping them away, because the kingdom of God belongs to people like these. I tell you with certainty, whoever doesn't receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it. Then after he had hugged the children, he tenderly blessed them as he laid his hands on them (Mar 10.14-16).

Deny yourself: You must deny yourself. Your dreams, pleasures, comforts, careers and even your life must be laid down at the altar. You must be ready to give up your life in the face of persecution. You must stop living to satisfy your natural desires and begin to satisfy God.

If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow me continually. Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it, because what profit will a person have if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what can a person give in exchange for his life? (Mat 16.24-26)

A disciple is a cross carrier. He carries a cross of self-denial. The yoke of self-denial is less weighty than the yoke of sin.

Calculate the Cost:

Every disciple carries a cross; the cross of total renunciation. Before you become of disciple, you must calculate the cost, and assess if you will be able to reach the end.

Now large crowds were traveling with Jesus. He turned and told them.

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, and sisters, as well as his own life, he can't be my disciple. Whoever doesn't carry his cross and follow me can't be my disciple.

*"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. He will first sit down and **estimate the cost** to see whether he has enough money to finish it, won't he? Otherwise, if he lays a foundation and can't finish the building, everyone who watches will begin to ridicule him and say, 'This person started a building but couldn't finish it. Or suppose a king is going to war against another king. He will first sit down and consider whether with 10,000 men he can fight the one coming against him with 20,000 men, won't he? If he can't, he will send a delegation to ask for terms of peace while the other king is still far away.*

In the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions" (Luk 14.25-33)

The call to discipleship is for all repentant believers (*Mat 28.18-20*).

Weapons of Spiritual Warfare

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints (Ephesians 6.14-18)

But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation (1 Thess. 5.8).

Faith

Faith is confidence in God that he will do whatever we ask him in the name of the Lord Jesus.

To believe in God is a choice. We do not need signs before we can choose to believe or put our faith in Him. Only a wicked and perverse people demand for signs to believe God. People should seek the truth and not signs. The LORD is God. His words and promises are enough for us to believe him. We should believe in him no matter the:
dry ground
surrounding contradictory circumstances
length of time'
customs of men

If we pray according to his will, we should know that he has heard us. If he has heard us, then he will surely answer us. All prayers heard by God are answered. If a prayer is not heard, then it will not be answered. If we are obedient children and we pray according to his will, then we should know that he hears us no matter how we feel.

Abraham believed God and hoped against hope for the promise of a seed even after Sarah had passed child bearing age. He believed, and Sarah gave birth to a son. Joshua believed God and the sun and moon stood still.

The heartfelt continuous prayer of the righteous avails much.

Do I lack faith if I pray incessantly for a request?

Praying incessantly for a thing is not lack of faith if we pray incessantly with confidence that God will answer us. We must be persevering and thankful in our prayers.

Then he told them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, let me borrow three loaves of bread. A friend of mine on a trip has dropped in on me, and I don't have anything to serve him. Suppose he answers from inside, 'Stop bothering me! The door is already locked, and my children are here with us in the bedroom. I can't get up and give you anything! I tell you, even though that man doesn't want to get up and give him anything because he is his friend, he will get up and give him whatever he needs because of his persistence.

So I say to you: Keep asking, and it will be given you. Keep searching, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened for you, because everyone who keeps asking will receive, and the person who keeps searching will find, and the person who keeps knocking will have the door opened (Luke 11.5-10)

What size of faith do we need for God to hear us?

If we have zero faith, God will not hear us. If we have little faith, God will surely answer us. Even though God is pleased with big faith, he does not demand big faith from us. He answers all prayers of little faith.

Then the apostles told the Lord, "Give us more faith!" The Lord replied, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you! (Luke 17.5-6).

The apostles asked Jesus to increase their faith, but the Lord told them that even small faith can work wonders. They really did not need any increase of faith. Faith as small as a mustard seed can move a mountain.

Lack of faith or zero faith produces no results

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" He told them, "Because of your lack of faith. I tell you with certainty, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you. (Mat 17.14-20)

All things are possible to him who believes (Mark 9.23). The Lord will do all things for those who believe Him. The Lord Jesus healed many people because of their faith (Matthew 8.10; 9.2, 29; 15.28; Mark 5.34; 10.52). The Lord did not do many signs in his hometown due to their lack of faith (Matthew 13.58).

How Do I get Faith?

Faith comes by hearing the word of God. This is purely spiritual. Some hear and hear but they listen not. Some see and see but they perceive not. We hear God in our heart with the ears of our heart. The ears and eyes of some people are closed. They may read the scriptures but never get to hear God speak. When we hear God's word in our heart, faith comes, and doubt goes away. It is not the written word that produces faith, it is the living and spiritual word that gives faith. Those who have His Spirit hear him with their hearts.

Love

The battle between good and evil is fierce. The heart of men is the battlefield. In this battle, those who fight for the Good Lord must not seek to satisfy self in any way. The

Good One (the Lord) and His army (his disciples) use love to win the hearts of men to the path of righteousness.

The Lord's disciples walk in love. By the way of love, they are perfected in holiness. Love covers a multitude of sins. When we walk in love, we do not commit many sins.

The children of God must quickly forgive and forget any hurt. They must stop evil by doing good. They will be tortured by the evil one (the devil), but they must brace themselves with love and perseverance to withstand evil. They must face their hurt and pain courageously.

The people of God use enduring love to build the kingdom of God in the hearts of men. The evil one uses hurt, pain and torture to sow and reap evil in the hearts of men. Pain and every kind of torture is meted out on souls to grow evil in the world. Hatred and selfishness are the tools of the evil one.

As fighters for the Good Lord, we must be selfless and loving. We must always be sensitive to the needs of others. We must forget all past hurts and refuse to relive them again in our minds so that the devil will not gain grounds in our hearts. We must not let the evil one to keep us bound through his own evil works perpetrated through others. Repay evil with good.

Righteousness

Do not tolerate sin. Do not be familiar with sin. Do not let sin have its way at any time. Do not relax or be ok with sin, rather resist the temptation of the devil to sin. Resist the devil with the sword of the Spirit (the word of God) in the power of the Holy Spirit. Hate sin. Accept the sufferings, loss, and discomforts for rejecting sin. Even though you may suffer for a while, you will eventually bear the fruit of holiness which is precious in the eyes of God (Heb. 11).

Fear God, submit to him, and he will give you the strength to resist the devil in the hour of temptation. Sternly and faithfully obey the Lord's commandments. Make yourself a slave of righteousness (do not give yourself the choice of not doing the right thing). Do not let any part of your being serve sin or be used as an instrument of evil.

On the cross, the Lord Jesus destroyed the power of sin. Sin no longer has power over those who are in Christ, those who walk after the Spirit of Christ and not after the human nature. The power of the Holy Spirit enables us to resist sin and live holy. We must acknowledge our weakness and constantly approach the throne of Grace to receive help. Only those who truly acknowledge their weakness and helplessness, receive divine strength to obey.

We must not be lazy to resist sin. We must not accept sin as our nature, nor accept the demands of the human nature but strive to put on the holy nature of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer

Prayer is making a heartfelt petition to God in the name of the Lord Jesus. For any prayer to be heard by God, it must be a true prayer.

A prayer is true when:

The petition is in accordance to the will of God: Prayer is praying the will of God (Eph. 8.26-27). We must know the will of God regarding all things and align our will to his will. Praying for our carnal desire is not the will of God. God does not hear such prayer (James 4.2-3). The spiritual conditions or maturity of every Christian can be known by their prayer. The matured saints know the will of God and they know the right thing to pray for.

It must be done from the heart (spirit): God always hear a heartfelt prayer made according to his will. God is not interested in many words or fine recited prayer which do not stem from the heart (Mathew 6.5-8).

The prayer is made by the righteous: God hears the prayer of his obedient children. He gives all that they ask of him because they obey him (John 15.7). He turns his face from the sinner and the wicked.

The prayer must be made with thanksgiving (Philippians 4.6).

The prayer must be made in faith: If we ask in doubt, we will receive nothing from the Lord (James 1.6-7). If we pray according to God's will, we must believe that the Lord is willing and able to do what we want (Mathew 9.28; Mark 11.22; Acts 3.16).

What should we do when our prayers are not quickly answered?

1. Be patient. The human nature is impatient. Our timing does always correspond with that of the Lord. We must learn to wait on the Lord. If we are righteous and if we have asked according to his will, then we must not give up on the Lord nor seek solutions of our own. We must wait on God to answer us. Patience is God's divine nature and His children must imitate him. Impatience is the nature of the children of the evil one. Impatience is a root cause of rebellion and disobedience.
 2. Remember God's faithful love. We must know the loving nature of the Heavenly Father. He loves us. He will never shut us out nor does he consider our prayers to be burdensome or irrelevant. He will never tell us to handle our problems by ourselves.
 3. Remember that God answers prayers. He hears us the very first time that we pray. If he heard us, then he will surely answer us.
 4. We must know that he delights in giving us good things. He will give all things that are good for us.
 5. We must know that he is a merciful God. God does not follow a rule book. Faith is crucial, but mercy rules every law. Out of compassion, the Lord Jesus raised the widow's son to life (Luke 7.12-15). Out of compassion the Lord fed the multitude (Mat 15.32-37). None of them had faith, but the merciful Lord attended to their needs. The Lord performed many works out of compassion (Mat 14.14, Mat 30.24, Mark 1.41).
- The believer must pray without ceasing till he receives the answer to his prayer. The Heavenly Father is not disturbed by our continuous requests. We should not be discouraged by the number of prayers we have made.

The Truth (The word of God)

The word of God needs to be stored in our hearts for the day of temptation and trial. The Lord used the scriptures to resist the devil's temptation in the desert. The truth sets free (John 8.32). We need to know the truth to walk in the dominion of Christ. We do not live the complete salvation of Christ because the mind has not yet been renewed to the mind of Christ. The mind is renewed only in the word of God. When the word of God is received in our hearts, we are transformed in our spirits to the image of Christ.

Self-Indulgence Vs Self-Control

Self-Indulgence

Self-indulgence means pursuit of pleasure and luxury. It also means self-gratification, lack of self-restraint or licentiousness. Self-indulgence is allowing yourself to have or do anything that you enjoy very much. A life of self-indulgence leads to death. A life of self-indulgence is against the life of the Spirit of Christ. The children of God reject and guard against self-indulgence.

Many people live to enjoy the things of the earth: good food, a mansion, designers clothing, sports cars and jets, beautiful spouse, fine looking kids, good sex, tasty wine, fame, recognition, praise, power etc. Many people live to satisfy themselves with these things. Some of these things are good (food, clothing, bath, marriage, kids), only if we do not set our hearts on them. God commandment is for us to love Him and to love our neighbor. We must not love things. Men must not live just to enjoy earthly things but live to please God. Parents choose luxury cars to helping poor members of the family. A friend betrays his friend for some financial gain. Others love sex but hate the commitment and responsibilities of marriage. A lazy man enjoys idleness while his wife struggles to meet the needs of the family. If we care too much for self, how can we love our neighbor?

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent,

*fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, **lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God** (2 Ti 3.1-4)*

Those who live to please self can never please God and they will never inherit the kingdom of God. Food and body will perish. This world will pass away but only those who do God's will abide forever. Anyone who wants to be a disciple of Jesus Christ must first deny self. God's children do not live by the dictates of the human nature nor do they live to satisfy it. God's children have crucified their flesh and live to the Spirit of Christ.

Anyone who wants to enter God's kingdom must consecrate himself to the Lord in body, soul and Spirit. Our desires, wills and mind must be changed to that of Christ. God's commandments are righteous and are a delight to those who walk in them.

Self-Control

We must exercise self-control over our natural appetites and bodily parts.

Self-Control over natural appetites

God gave food and water for human sustenance. He created sex to ensure the continuity of humanity. He gave man appetite for these needful things so that they will not be burdensome to do and thereby ensure sustainability of creation. God could have created these things and give us no appetite for them. With no appetite, people will not eat or drink nor have sex in marriage. The world may have stopped functioning. God created these things and gave appetite, for sustainability of creation and not for enjoyment. We must be careful not to live to satisfy ourselves with these things but live to obtain salvation. We must be careful not to give ourselves to these things nor allow them to make us its slave. We must not lust after them. We must control our appetites over these things. Man does not live on bread alone but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God.

Self-Control over our Bodily Parts

We must exercise control over our bodily parts: the eyes, the tongue, ears, hands and legs.

We must put away every form of dirty speech. Hurtful, careless, evil words must be avoided. Be slow to speak. Better to stay quiet than sin in many words. Avoid idle and unprofitable talks. Every idle word uttered during the earthly life will be accounted for on the day of judgement (Mat 12.36). By our words, we shall be vindicated and by our words, we shall be condemned. Use words to build and encourage.

We must keep our eyes from beholding unclean things. The eyes are the windows of the soul. We must not look at filthy pictures, videos, or naked bodies, etc. Seeds of wrong desires are sown in our hearts when we behold wrong things.

We must avoid listening to filthy talk, gossip, music and all ungodly words.

We should use our hands for productive work and not for evil. Let our hands be used to praise God, work, and help others. Our hands should not be used for physical abuse, theft or murder.

We must not be rude. A gentle spirit is not rude. The Lord Jesus is gentle (Mathew 11.29). A gentle spirit stays calm even when dealing with stubborn, wild people, defensive and ignorant men. It is not easily provoked or angered. It is not rash, nor does it force to prove itself. It does not give insults nor yells out in frustration. It stays peaceful and loving.

We must dominate our natural inclinations through the power of the Holy Spirit. We are to be strong in the Spirit of Christ and exercise total control over our human elements.

Worldly Minded Christian

*A farmer went out to sow. As he was sowing, some seeds fell along the path, and birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on stony ground, where they did not have a lot of soil. They sprouted at once because the soil wasn't deep. But when the sun came up, they were scorched. Since they did not have any roots, they dried up. Other seeds fell **among thorn bushes, and the thorn bushes grew higher and choked them out.** But other seeds fell on good soil and produced a crop, some 100, some 60, and some 30 times what was sown (Mat 13.3-8).*

Listen, then, to the parable about the farmer.

*When anyone hears the word about the kingdom yet doesn't understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on the stony ground, this is the person who hears the word and accepts it joyfully at once, but since he doesn't have any root in himself, he lasts for only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes along because of the word, he immediately falls away. **As for what was sown among the thorn bushes, this is the person who hears the word, but the worries of life and the deceitful pleasures of wealth choke the word so that it can't produce a crop.** But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the person who hears the word, understands it, and produces a crop that yields 100, 60, or 30 times what was sown (Mat 13.18-23)*

“The path” are people who hear the gospel but refuse to believe. “The stony ground” are people who hear the gospel and quickly believe but denounce the faith when they face persecution or any hardship. “The bushes” are people who hear the gospel and believe,

but do not obey it because of their desire for earthly riches and pleasures of life. These thorns choke the word of God in the heart of the believer such that it does not bear any fruit. Care for the things of the world and the desire for riches prevents them from bearing fruit.

The worldly-minded believer is preoccupied by many earthly concerns: self-image, “success”, reputation, property, money, social status, political power, marriage, kids, etc. The care for such things chokes the word of life. A worldly-minded Christian cannot bear fruit for God. The fruitless branch is burnt (Luke 13.6-9; John 15.1-2).

The Israelites in the deserts cried for the flesh pots of Egypt, the cucumbers and garlic which they could no longer find in the wilderness. Because of their carnality, they perished. Though we are in the world, our hearts should not be of the world. Christians should store up treasures in heaven so that their hearts can be in heaven. We get purses in heaven when we sell our earthly riches (Mat 19.21, Luke 12.33).

When the children of God left Egypt, they did not leave everything behind. They carried with them images, and memories of the “good” old days. This baggage made it difficult for them to withstand the trials in the wilderness. They grumbled and tested God in unbelief. As a result, their corpses fell in the desert. No adult of arm bearing age in the generation that left Egypt entered the Promised Land except Caleb and Joshua.

When Moses initially left Egypt, he left everything behind. He considered the suffering of his brethren worthier than all the pleasures of Egypt. Without any regrets, he left his earthly princely glory, to qualify for a better spiritual one.

Christ Jesus hid his title, of Christ Messiah, accepting only its spiritual role than political. He revealed himself only to his disciples and the woman at the well.

Not all believers completely leave the world behind as they “journey to heaven”. They go on this spiritual journey, carrying with them the images and memories of the “good” old days of the world. They continue to have the mind and desires of the world. They want to fit God in their own ways rather than fit themselves in God’s ways.

To reach the promised land, we must lay aside all our worldly thoughts and put on the mind of Christ. Acknowledge the futility in our former way of thinking and humble

ourselves before God to renew our mind. Do not let the cares of the Egypt (world) to cause you to create idolatrous images. The man who lays his hand on the plough and keeps looking back is not fit for the kingdom of God.

You do not come to Jesus so that you can enjoy the things of Egypt: job, wealth, promotion, political power, wife or husband or child, good house and good food etc. You come to Jesus for salvation from sin, sickness, death, the devil and nature. The Lord will daily meet our needs and no excess (wants). The Israelites were required to pick manna as they needed for each day and no more. Any excess got rotten. In the Lord's prayer, we are to pray to the father for our **daily** bread.

The Dreadful Wilderness

There is a wilderness season of lack, dryness, scorpions and snakes, hunger and thirst. The Israelites went through the wilderness. The Lord Jesus went through this wilderness. Why did all of them pass through this wilderness? Why do all the Lord's disciples go through this wilderness?

Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way these 40 years in the desert, to humble and test you in order to make known what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.

He humbled you, causing you to be hungry, yet he fed you with manna that neither you nor your ancestors had known, in order to teach you that human beings are not to live by food alone—instead human beings are to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

The clothes you wore did not wear out, nor did your feet blister during these 40 years (Deut. 8.2-4)

After this, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

After fasting for 40 days and 40 nights, he finally became hungry.

Then the tempter came. "Since you are the Son of God," he said, "tell these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One must not live on bread alone, but on every word coming out of the mouth of God (Mat 4.1-4)

The desert test is to examine our hearts, if we are obedient. Will we still obey God in hardship, hunger, lack, and hurt? The fruit of the test is purification of the heart for those who yield to God.

The Israelites never passed the desert test. While in the wilderness, they grumbled against God and broke the covenant. Their hearts were never circumcised. God gave them the promised land, not because of their righteousness, but because of His Holy name and the oath he had sworn to their ancestors.

The Lord Jesus passed the desert test. Even when he was tempted by the evil One in the dreadful conditions of the wilderness, he did not fall. He did not test God neither did he worship another god as the Israelites did. Unlike the Israelites, he had learnt that man does not live on bread alone but on every word of God.

Due to the uncircumcised hearts of the Israelites, 40 days turned to 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. Due to their failure to adhere to discipline, things did not go well with them in the promised land. Though they entered the promised land, they never really entered God's rest. The Canaanites who had inhabited the land were thorns in their flesh. They were eventually exiled to Babylon and other nations.

The Lord Jesus obeyed God in sufferings and finished his work, even the work of death on the cross. And when he finished his work, he sat down at the Father's right hand.

The reason the Lord Jesus leads us into the wilderness is for testing unto purification. The trial of our faith is meant to purify our spirits and produce in us God's divine nature to make us fit for our homeland. We learn contentment, trust and obedience in hardship. We will not learn these virtues except we go through the wilderness. The snake (the tester) will be present to torture us and see us fail but those who lean on the Lord will receive strength to overcome and be purified.

The Lord's disciples are pilgrims on the earth, heading towards the Heavenly Kingdom. They must brace themselves with the spirit of perseverance and obedience as they pass through the dreadful wilderness. Their faith more precious than gold must be tried in the fiery furnace of the wilderness. They will be humbled by hunger, thirst, dryness, emotional pain, and lack, so that their spirits will be purged from pride, greed, unbelief and rebellion. Even though they will go through this wilderness, the Lord will not abandon them. He will sustain them. Their shoes will not wear out neither will their cloths tear. All those who are to inherit God's kingdom pass through the trials of the wilderness. They must learn to obey and trust the Lord always in the fear of the Lord

lest they become cast away. They must hang onto the Lord and hold steadfastly to his words. The fear of the Lord must be greater than the fear of the pain and torture of the wilderness, lest their departure from Egypt (the world) be in vain. They must remember all that they have given up for the cause of following the Lord and run the race till finish despising the shame of the cross and the pain of the wilderness. We must not run in vain like the Israelites who left Egypt, but never made it to the end. We must circumcise our hearts in the fear of the Lord. We must hold fast to our helper, the Holy Spirit. We must make constant heartfelt supplication to the Lord to help us. Without his help, we will fail. The first Adam fell because of disobedience. The Israelites were rejected by God because of disobedience. The Lord Jesus was highly exalted above all because of his enduring obedience to the heavenly Father. We must begin and finish the race by a thorough, total and stern obedience to the words of the Lord Jesus.

The Need of the Needy

I was meditating on the word of God about the good deeds every true child of God should do. I felt a strong desire to help the poor, the blind, the crippled, the orphan and all the handicaps. I meditated on their needs:

The poor need food, shelter, and clothing

The blind need to see

The crippled need to walk

The orphan needs a home.

Then, I questioned;

“If I give the poor man provision, the blind sight, the crippled legs and the orphan a home, will I have really helped them? If I were them, will these things satisfy me?”

I answered, “these things will help me, but they will never satisfy me”. I can do without these things for one day, but I cannot do without God for a single day. He satisfies my soul. Food or shelter or any other thing can never satisfy my soul. Without him, there is no me.”

Food, shelter, eyes, legs, clothing are the needs of the body, but Christ Jesus is the only need of the soul. The need of the soul is greater than the body. The lost (the unreconciled) do not know how much they need Christ Jesus, the living bread from heaven. Food, shelter, clothing sustain life for a season, but Jesus, the living bread sustains life forever. It is better to enter life crippled, blind, deaf, or poor, than to have your whole body thrown into hell.

God gave us all we need in Christ Jesus. There is healing, deliverance, provision, life, righteousness in Jesus to all who believe.

Man does not live on bread alone but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God. The Lord Jesus did not spend all his days multiplying food for the crowd rather he spent all his days teaching them about the kingdom of God. He did not spend all his days providing food for his disciples rather he spent all his time training them.

I concluded:

The needy need Jesus Christ.

One Spirit

He who unites himself to the Lord is one Spirit with him (1 Cor. 6.17). All the followers of the Lord Jesus have united themselves with him. The disciple is in the Lord and the Lord is in him because he has eaten the Lord's flesh and drank his blood.

They are one spirit dwelling in one body. The body of the believer is the temple of the Lord (2 Cor. 6.16). His body becomes that of the Lord.

He who gives a disciple, a glass of water, is giving it to the Lord (Mat 25.34-40).

When Saul persecuted the church, he was persecuting the Lord.

He dropped to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9.4).

The Lord, and not just the church, was suffering the persecutions. When a believer (one who has the spirit of Christ) is suffering any pain in the body or heart, the Lord does not try to feel or understand the pain, rather the Lord is also suffering directly from the pain.

Every time we pray, we must always remember that we are not alone. We must never think that he does not care or listen. He is with us and he knows our problems. He is strong and wise, we must always pull strength and wisdom from him to deal with problems.

God Is Glorified in All His Creation

God is glorified even in the smallest creatures. All creation reveals God's glory. To be glorified means to be seen in your true worth or value. The devil wants to confuse the order of things. In rebellion, he tries to paint the work of the Creator as not being good enough. He tempts the human flesh into all sorts of atrocities: homosexuality, pornography, forbidding marriage, objectification of women etc.

When God created the earth, he beheld his work and said: "it is very good". Everything created by God is very good and it is not otherwise. In him, we move and have our being. Every little thing we do was designed by him: child bearing, eating, stooing, sleeping, dressing, talking, laughing, walking etc. All the different kinds of animals, plants, the heavens, mountains, seas, rain, land, the sun, the moon, and the other things of nature are all God's creative design. . Job had a glimpse of his wondrous works (Job 39; 40.6-14). He made the Heavens and all that it contains. He made the earth and all that it contains. He made the seas and all that it contains (Rev 10.6). His works are great and marvelous. The entire creation feeds on his loving kindness and mercies. We must praise him for his wondrous works. He beautifies our lives with the gift of children.

Do All Things to the Glory of God

The creation of God is his glory. We are born of God to live fruitful lives for Him. The creature can never find any fulfillment until it meets the purpose for which it was created. The creature must align itself with the creator rather than seek to satisfy

another purpose. God made us to worship and serve only him. We cannot find any satisfaction except we align ourselves with this. We have been made this way and we can never change that. We can struggle and search everywhere to find a meaning to our existence, but we will never find one except we ask the Creator. A thing will always be useless until it finds its purpose of creation.

The manufacturer of a PC combines many small things to make a unified whole. He is glorified when he sees the PC working accordingly. God will always be glorified in his creation. The creation should live to glorify him. We live to glorify him when we live according to the purpose of our creation. Anything contrary is spoiling the good works of God. Whatever we do, we must do it to the glory of the Creator. Why we do it and how we do it, will determine if we glorify him. Why and how we do it must align to God's original design and purpose. If we eat, braid our hair, dress up, drink, sleep or talk, we should do it to the glory of God by aligning to its purpose. We eat to live, so we must not become gluttons. We dress to cover our bodies, so we must not be under or over-dressed. We glorify God when we drink, not unto drunkenness. Moderate drinking glorifies God, but drunkenness does not. If we sleep, we should sleep with the purpose of resting our bodies, so we should neither over work our bodies nor oversleep. If we marry, we must do it for the glory of God. We must keep the marriage bed undefiled, raise the kids with love, and accept our responsibilities to each other. If we marry, we must remain married for life. If we choose to stay unmarried, we should not indulge in marital acts but honor God as eunuchs. If we speak, our words must be for edification of one another and praising God. Foolish, ungodly talks, cursing, or words that kill your brother and all evil talks do not glorify him. We should do all things according to how God wants them to be done and not according to our disordered natural inclinations.

Positive changes in our behavior must stem from a repentant heart and not from a heart of self-pride or self-righteousness or a heart that seeks to redeem self-reputation.

If you work, you must work to sustain not just yourself but others as well. The child of the kingdom of God does not live for himself. He has given up all that he owns so that he may be the Lord's disciple. Anything that the Lord may eventually place in his hands are not even his, they belong to the Lord. His life, his time, and everything else belongs

to the Lord. He works with his hands to meet his needs (to not be a burden to others) and to meet the needs of others. We are created to care for one another.

Through selflessness, we are set free from the grip of self. The early church walked the path of selflessness. They sold their possessions and distributed among themselves as each needed. They worked with the purpose of having something to share with the brethren. Priscilia and Aquilla were renowned for their good works. Apostle Paul was eager to share his proceeds with the poor. The poor must not be forgotten.

A sinful man will work just for himself, but the disciple of Christ will work both for himself and others. Love your neighbor as you love yourself.

In fact, none of us lives for himself, nor dies for himself. If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord. Either in life or in death, we belong to the Lord (Romans 14.7-8).

The True Bread and Vine

The true bread is the flesh of the Lord which he gave for the whole world (John 6.51). Jesus is the daily bread of the soul. God is giver of our daily bread. The Lord Jesus is the health and life to the body for all who believe. Healing is the children's bread (Mat 15.26). The Lord Jesus is life, peace and joy to our soul. He is the bread from heaven that gives life to all men. He is the vine of life from which all his branches (followers) receive life.

"Give us today our daily bread", means, "Give us today Jesus" or "Give us today the word of God". It also means give us food, water, clothing, that our body needs today.

The communion meal is not the living bread, rather it is only a remembrance meal of the real living bread, Jesus. Jesus is the bread that came down from heaven and was given up as sacrifice for the life of the world. The communion bread symbolizes his flesh and the wine symbolizes his shed blood on the cross.

One eats of the flesh of Jesus and drinks his blood when he believes in him and surrenders his life totally to the Lord. The communion is sacred in that it brings a holy fear and revives our spirits when we remember the Lord's sacrifice on the cross. It is the Spirit of Christ that gives life.

Staying Faithful

Hypocrisy

Hypocrites are people of falsehood and pretense. They display their “righteousness” before men, but their hearts are far away from God (Mar 7.6). It is better to agree with the world than to pretend to obey God. Hypocrites will share the fate of the children of disobedience (Rev 22.15). Hypocrisy is a sin punishable by death. The hypocrites are cursed (Mathew 23.13-15). A truthful heart begins with a heart of repentance. True repentance is evidenced by its fruit.

Faithfulness

Job in his time of trial, trusted God. He did not lose faith in God. He prayed in earnest for God to help him, but God did not answer him quick. Yet, Job will rather die than curse God.

When things go wrong., many will ask, “where is that God of yours?”

We must choose to remain faithful to God even in the face of death. He will surely deliver us out of the affliction. Even If he chooses to keep us in that affliction, we must still trust him.

God searches the hearts to know the motive of our actions. He is pleased to find out that we are not with him just because he gives us all we need but because we love him. To love God is to believe and obey him faithfully.

The devil made God to test Job's faithfulness. In a single day, Job lost his wealth, his children, his health, and his friends. Why should he still worship God when God allowed this calamity to befall him? Job kept the faith and said,

"Though he slays me, even yet will I trust him".

The Lord Jesus, in pains at the cross, shouted, "Father, why have deserted me?" But he still accepted death.

The apostles died painful deaths because of the faith. They never shrunk back even in the face of death but prayed like their Lord for strength in their hour of trial.

We must pray that the Lord strengthens us in our hour of trial, so that we will not shrink back in cowardice but be faithful even in the face of death.

God rewarded Job double for his loss. The Lord, by dying on the cross, won a name that is far above all other names. God will reward his faithful martyrs with thrones and crowns.

The Enemies of a Christian

Mathew 10.34-36

The enemies of a Christian could be the members of his household. Christians should not have too much expectation of love from their families. Their faith in the Lord will always be a cause of dissension in their families. On the matter of faith in Jesus, we cannot expect peace in our families.

The Lord commanded us to keep loving our enemies. Our parents, sisters, brothers, spouse, children will not always agree with the faith in Jesus. Do not be surprised when they hate you, belittle you, dishonor you, neglect you, betray you and hurt you because of the Christian faith. Yet, we must love them. Even if we feel unhappy, we must love them anyway and treat them right. The Lord commands us to love them and pray for them.

Trust in God

Family Building and Protection: You need God's wisdom to build a home. You need the Protector (God) to watch over your home. God Is the builder and the protector.

Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain (Psalm 127.1).

Tomorrow: Are you afraid of tomorrow? Are you confident that your plans will be realized? Nobody knows tomorrow, and nobody can be ever-present in tomorrow except God. Plans may fail but God abides always. God holds tomorrow.

They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever (Psalm 125.1).

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof (Mathew 6.34)

Help: Humans will fail you if you lean on them for help. True help comes from the LORD God in heaven, maker of Heaven and earth.

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man (Psalm 118.8).

Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

Daily Bread: God is the provider. The strength of man will produce little, but God's power produces much.

It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep (Psalm 127.2).

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof (Mathew 6.31-34).

Neighborhood Security: The government or armed forces cannot protect a city from criminals, natural disasters, terrorists, accidents and murderers. Only God can keep a nation safe. Deadly war weapons or a ferocious and mighty army will not keep a nation safe.

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God (Psalms 20.7).

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes (Psalms 118.8).

God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God (Psalms 62.11).

Life Coaching: Every man needs God's leadership. Man cannot lead himself nor can a fellow man lead another man. The guidance of parents is not enough. Each child needs God.

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths (Prov. 3.5-6).

Health: Doctors and hospital do well but they will not treat every disease. God heals all incurable diseases and cures all oppressed by the devil.

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people (Mathew 4.23).

Character: Behavioral therapy can help but they do not produce lasting and effective results. Only God, through the power of his Holy Spirit, destroys bad destructive habits and builds good constructive habits.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live (Romans 8.13).

Sermon on the Mount

Mathew 5-7 & Luke 6

Jesus climbed on a mountain and taught the crowd.

The Blessed Ones

1. **The poor:** Unlike the rich, the poor (in material wealth) can easily enter God's kingdom (Mathew 19.23-24, James 2.5). The Lord wants us to be rich in spirit (Rev 3.18, Luke 12.33, Mat. 6.19-21)
2. **The sorrowful:** Those who mourn in this present world will be comforted in paradise.
3. **The humble:** The meek are blessed because they shall inherit the earth.
4. **The hungry souls:** Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled.
5. **The merciful:** Those who show mercy shall receive mercy.
6. **The pure in heart:** The pure in heart shall see God.
7. **The peacemakers:** They shall be called the children of God.
8. **The Persecuted:** Those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake shall inherit kingdom of heaven.
9. **The Despised:** Those who are being reviled and falsely accused by men for the sake of the Lord Jesus should rejoice and be glad, for great is their reward in heaven.

The Cursed Ones

The Rich, the Well-Fed, and the Well-Spoken off: Cursed are those who are wealthy in earthly goods. Cursed are those who are living comfortably and reputably. They would no more be comforted in the afterlife.

Salt and Light

The Christian is the salt and light of the earth. The believer must not lose his saltiness (his faith and obedience to God) but must let the light of his good deeds to shine before all men.

New Standards of Holiness

The whole law is summed up in love (Mathew 22.36-40). The old written laws could only address outward behaviors but never reached elements of the heart. The Law of Christ is written in our hearts. The law of the spirit brings its subjects to perfect holiness and accomplishes that which the old law could not do (Romans 8.2). The holiness of Christians must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Anger: Unjustifiable anger is murder.

Adultery: Desiring a woman in your heart is adultery (Mathew 5. 27-28).

Oaths: Words must be without oaths. They should flow from the truthfulness of the heart.

Revenge: Do not repay evil for evil rather repay evil with good.

Love: Give cheerfully to all (the lazy, the wicked, the unthankful, the proud, the unworthy, the bad, etc.) who ask. Your reward will not come from them. It is the heavenly Father who will reward you. Love your enemies. Lend to people without expecting repayment. Pray for those who mistreat you. Greet your enemies. All these must be done from the heart and not for any other selfish motive. Love others as you love yourself.

Secret Alms, Prayer and fasting:

Alms, prayer and fasting must be done in secret unto God and not for public admiration.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in Heaven: Prayer should be addressed to the Heavenly Father and not to the god of a denomination or human.

Hallowed is your name: His name is above all other names. His name must be honored.

Thy Kingdom come: The spiritual kingdom has already come and exists in the hearts of some men. We must pray for his kingdom to reach all hearts on the earth. We must pray that he will rule the whole earth as he rules the whole of heaven.

Thy will be done on earth as it done in heaven: We must pray that all men on the earth will obey the Lord as he is obeyed in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread: We must pray that the Heavenly Father should feed us each day with the living bread (his word) as he fed the Israelites in the wilderness with manna each day. We can also pray for our daily bodily needs as well. We should pray each day for each day's needs. We must not pray for tomorrow's bread today.

Forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors: We must forgive those who have done us wrong as thoroughly as we have been forgiven in Christ. We owe them the humble love of forgiveness. When we forgive, our Father in Heaven will also forgive us.

Heavenly Treasure

The Lord Jesus wants man to be rich in Heaven (spiritual riches). He does not want us to store up earthly wealth. A man rich in earthly goods cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven (the rich young ruler) except he gives up his riches. Earthly treasures fade away, but heavenly treasures is for eternity.

The Lesson of the Sparrow

The birds do not plant, gather nor store yet the Heavenly Father feeds them daily. We are of more worth than many sparrows (small birds). We must trust God daily to provide for us as he provides for the birds. We must not live for earthly things as sinners do but do all we can to obey God.

Judge Not

We are not to judge anyone unto condemnation or evil punishment, for the measure we use on others will be used on us.

We are required to judge unto repentance. Tell your brother his fault to bring him to repentance. Punishment should cease once the offender repents or changes his behavior.

Ask from God

We should ask God for anything that is in accordance to his will. We must not lose faith but keep asking, seeking and knocking until we receive answers from God.

The Golden rule

Do unto your fellow man what you will love to be done to you (Mathew 7.12).

The Narrow Way

The narrow gate is the hard road of self-renunciation and loss. The wide gate is the gate of self-indulgence, riches, and independence. The right path in life is not the path that leads to wealth and self-pleasure (the wide road). The right path in life is the path that leads to life (the narrow road).

Warning on False Teachers

False Prophets are known by their fruits and not by what they teach or the signs they perform. Believers must seek the truth (to know Jesus) and not follow signs. Greed, sexually immorality, sorcery is the fruit of a false teacher. Watch out for these signs.

True followers of Christ Jesus

A true follower of Christ Jesus is one has:

Has repented of sin

Has given up his earthly riches to the poor

Loves the Lord more than any other man

Denied himself to completely obey the Lord

Obedience, simplicity and the love of God is the fruit of a true disciple of Christ. Not all who call him Lord will enter the Kingdom of (Mathew 7.21-29).

Other Books by Author:

True Riches

The Truth against Errors

After the Earthly Life

The Books of Daniel & Revelation Unveiled

False Teachers in the Church of God

Life in the Spirit of Christ Jesus