

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE

Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain:

"Where is your brother Abel?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" The Lord said:

"What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood
Cries out to Me from the ground."

Gen 4:8-10

God's Word enlightens, edifies and imparts knowledge, understanding and wisdom so we cannot just know, but follow the Way of Love. So we can make every effort to live in peace, and work at getting along with one another and with God (Heb. 12:14). For what a blessing the pure in heart shall receive to see the face of God (Matt. 5:8).

Their prayers resounding to Him filled with faith, and His favor they have found. To know God's acceptance for their good standing that's been restored. How amazing for one's heart to fully know - with joy and peace and contentment - they are received by God (Job 33:26 NLT).



And you may ask, "What is faith?" Faith is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead. Many have been and are famous for their faith. By faith - by believing God - we know the world and the stars - in fact, all things - were made at God's command; and, they were all made from things that can't be seen.

By faith Abel obeyed God, and brought to Him a pleasing offering. God accepted Abel, and revealed His pleasure by accepting his gift; and though Abel is long dead, we can still learn a valuable lesson from him about placing our faith and trust in God (Heb. 11:1-4 TLB).



Aroused by faith Moses, when he had grown to maturity and became great, refused to be called the grandson of Pharaoh. He chose to share the oppression (suffer the hardships) and bear the shame of God's people rather than have the fleeting enjoyment of a sinful life.

Moses considered the contempt and abuse and shame borne for the Christ (the Messiah Who was to come) to be of greater wealth than all the treasures of Egypt. He looked forward to the reward to be received from God.

Motivated by faith Moses left Egypt behind him, being unawed and undismayed by the wrath of Pharaoh; he never flinched but held staunchly to his purpose and endured steadfastly as one who gazed on Him Who is invisible (Heb. 11:24-27 AMP).

Therefore, we too should make sure we each don't get left out of God's generosity. Missing the grace of God by allowing seeds (words, thoughts) of bitter discontent to become rooted and grow to cause trouble and defile many. How easy for weeds to overrun and ruin a garden when left unattended.

So be careful and stand diligently against the Esau syndrome: trading away God's lifelong gift in order to satisfy a short-term appetite. For surely it has become known Esau later regretted that impulsive act and wanted to inherit God's blessing only to be denied. Though he sought the blessings with tears, it was too late, he could bring about no change of mind (Heb. 12:14-24 Message).



"The way of the Lord is not fair and just," so God's people said. With eyes on all that could be seen, the heart of God could not be heard:

"Do you think I like to see wicked people die? Of course not! I want them to turn from their wicked ways and live. Am I the One not doing what is right, or is it you?"

"When a righteous person chooses to turn to do what they know to be wrong, they will die because of their sinful deeds. And, if people turn from their wickedness, obey the law, and do what is just and right, they will save their lives. They will live because they thought it over and decided to turn from sin."

“Yet, you say, ‘The Lord isn’t doing what is right!’ No, it is you who are not doing what is right, not I. So I will judge My people according to their actions.”

“Repent, and turn from your sins. Don’t let them destroy you!”

“Put all your rebellion behind you, and find yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die? I don’t want you to die! Turn back and live.”

Ezek. 18:23-32



Moses led God’s people to a mountain that couldn’t be touched. A mountain burning with fire with darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast and a voice speaking words they begged not to hear. For the command they could not bear:

“If even an animal touches the mountain,
It must be stoned.”

The sight was so terrifying Moses even said, “I am trembling with fear.”

By faith we come to God, the judge of all men. Through Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant, whose sprinkled blood speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. We come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. We come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.

Those like Abel, like Moses who earned a good reputation because of their faith, yet none of them received all that God had promised. There were those who were tortured, refusing to turn from God in order to be set free. They placed their hope in a better life after the resurrection.

Some were jeered at, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in prisons. Some died by stoning, some were sawed in half, and others were killed with the sword. Some went about wearing skins of sheep and goats, destitute and oppressed and mistreated. They were too good for this world, wandering

over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.

They didn't receive all that God had promised because He had something better in mind for us, so that they would not reach perfection without us. **Jesus**: the Author and Perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

So let us fix our eyes on the Lord, considering how He endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you would not grow weary and lose heart.

Know in your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood. Don't forget this word of encouragement for God addresses you as son:

“My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't lose heart when He rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those He loves, and punishes everyone He accepts as a son.”



What son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined, then you are illegitimate and not true sons. We have respected our fathers for disciplining us. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!

Of course, no discipline seems pleasant at the time, in fact painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who are trained by it.

God desires to treat you as sons so your feeble arms and weak knees can be strengthened. So your feet can walk on level paths. So the lame would be healed and not disabled. So endure hardship as discipline. And remember we have a Kingdom nothing can destroy.

Be determined not to just listen, but obey Him Who is speaking to you. Keep in mind the people of Israel did not escape when they refused to listen to Moses, the earthly messenger, how terrible our danger if we refuse to listen to God Who speaks to us from heaven! When He spoke from Mount Sinai His voice shook the earth, BUT, He said:

“Next time, I will not only shake the earth
But the heavens too.”

God will sift out everything without solid foundations so that only unshakable things will be left. So let us remember to please God by serving Him with thankful hearts and with holy fear and awe, for our God is a consuming fire (Heb. 11:35-12:29).



I pray that you hear God’s heart for He has given us a Kingdom that cannot be moved; a Kingdom nothing can destroy; a Kingdom that is unshakeable! (Heb. 12:28). Yes, in His great mercy God has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.

An inheritance kept in heaven for those, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in these last days. So in this we can greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while we may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

These trials come so that our faith, which is of greater worth than gold that perishes, even though refined by fire, may be proved genuine. That our faith may result in praise, glory and honor when Christ Jesus is revealed. And though we may not have seen Him, through faith we believe in Him and come to love Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for we are receiving the goal of our faith, the salvation of our soul (1 Peter 1:3-9).



Yes, faith is crucial for God's Word reveals great and unsearchable things we do not know, when we call to Him (Jer.33:3). Why? Because God has plans to prosper and not to harm us, plans to give us hope and a future (Jer. 29:11). He makes an everlasting covenant with us, ordered in all things, and sure (2 Sam. 23:5 AMP).

For God Himself is faithful (reliable, trustworthy, and therefore ever true to His promise, and He can be depended on); by Him we are called into companionship and participation with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior (1 Cor. 1:9 AMP). And, as many

as the promises of God, they all find their Yes (answer) in Him (Christ Jesus) (2 Cor. 1:20 AMP).



God wants us to have the confidence (the assurance, the privilege of boldness) in Him: that if we ask anything (make any request) according to His will (in agreement with His own plan), He listens and hears us (1 John 5:14 AMP).

Yes, this Good News of great joy is for all people (Luke 2:10), and so weighted with knowledge and revelation of the plan, the purpose and the heart of God, Who placed everything of meaning into Jesus. Therefore, when encounters with God's Word of Truth occur, our view of an ordinary life can be miraculously transformed from BC (before Christ) to AD (in the year of the Lord) if and when God's view of Life is understood, for then Christ can be birthed within us.



Moses continues to speak to those who choose to arise, and be led into the land of promise. The time is now to go in and possess it (Deut. 10:11). For Jesus said,

“Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, we honor Your holy name. We ask that Your kingdom come now, Your will be done here on earth, just as it is in heaven.”

Matt. 6L9-10 TLB

For this reason we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding; that you may live a life worthy of the Lord, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in knowledge of God.

That you may be strengthened with all power according to God’s glorious might, to have great endurance and patience, while giving thanks joyfully to the Father.

God has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the Kingdom of Light. He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the Kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1”9-14).



Yes, when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law as slaves working to receive what they earned. God sent Jesus to redeem us so we can receive what could never be earned because of sin, our full rights as sons of God (Gal. 4:4-5).

Those who seek a change in their appearance may decide to try a new diet. However, though a diet may work for a while is it not considered a fad. What a person really needs are healthier choices that would bring about a new lifestyle a whole new way of living and eating.

On his website *Becoming Minimalist*, Joshua Becker wrote this article, 'What We Consume (always) Determines The Lives We Live,' We can see this, most easily, with the food that we eat. But this is a principle with further reaching application than the food we eat. This is a truth that rings true with almost everything we choose to consume: books, music, television, websites, just to name a few.

Think about it. If you choose to read books and listen to podcasts primarily about business and productivity, your mind is going to

sharpen its focus on those things. You will begin to see the world in this way and act accordingly.

<https://www.becomingminimalist.com/what-consumes-us/>

Jesus instructed us to be minimalists when it came to the use of our words He said:

“Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.”

Matt. 5:37

Or as the Message Bible states, “Just say ‘yes’ and ‘no.’ When you manipulate words to get your own way, you go wrong (Matt. 5:36).



There can be no dispute, our souls, our eternal beings were impeded when the Knowledge of Good and Evil were consumed and so too our relationship with God. Our knowledge became fragmentary (incomplete and imperfect) (1 Cor. 13:9a AMP).

Dishonor and weakness were sown within our natural bodies, which are destined to perish (1 Cor.15: 42-44). However, when the complete and perfect comes (1 Cor.13:10a) at the resurrection of the dead, our spiritual bodies will be raised imperishable, in glory and in power (1 Cor.15:42-43).

A new lifestyle is necessary because we have allowed negativity to consume our lives for far too long. A different life journey that shines Light and speaks Truth so the substance of Christ Jesus (Col. 2:17 Message) can become as tangible as the doubts and disbeliefs and fears that we cling to.

It is Jesus Who sets us free from the spiritual powers of this world (Col. 2:20 NLT): fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of change, fear of people who condemn, judge and criticize.



The god of this age blinds the minds of unbelievers so the Light of the Gospel, the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God can't be seen (2 Cor. 4:4). It was God's will that Jesus gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age (Gal. 1:3-4).

God sends the Spirit of His Son into our heart, Who calls out:

“Abba Father!”

So we can be certain we have been fully adopted as God’s own children. Doesn’t this privilege of intimate conversation with God make it plain that we are not as slaves any more, working to earn love and respect; instead, we are a child of God receiving **His love** with no conditions attached (Gal. 4:4-7 Message).

Yes, there are conditions that must be carried out for **the work God requires**. A different kind of work He asks of you: to believe in the One Whom He has sent (that you cleave to, trust, rely on and have faith in His Messenger) (John 6:28-29 AMP).



No matter where our life journey has taken us an open mind makes it possible for the impossible to be realized because with God all things are possible (Mark 10:27 NKJV). Mistakes are often made, and trouble follows because the Scriptures are not known, nor is the power of God (Mark 12:24).

To be opened minded requires a willingness to listen and search for Truth so we don't remain gullible accepting feelings and core beliefs as facts. This term "gaslighting" is one I have just recently come across. "Gaslighting" is the act of someone trying to convince you of something that has no basis for existence.

Though this term originates from a 1938 play, Satan set this principle into practice. Jesus was speaking to Peter, but God's Word speaks to every heart:

"Listen! Satan asks repeatedly that you be given up to him (out of the power and keeping of God), that he might sift you like grain. I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail. When you yourself have turned again, strengthen and establish your brethren."

Luke 22:31-32 AMP

The Message Bible states it like this:

"Satan has tried his best to separate all of you
From Me, like chaff from wheat."

Luke 22:31



A process known as threshing; the grain was winnowed by being thrown up against the wind, and afterwards tossed with wooden scoops. The refuse of straw and chaff was burned. The grain freed from impurities was then stored.

God knows in this world, terrible things happen that toss us about and set us on emotional roller coaster rides. Why? With the help of Holy Spirit we will be able to better understand, for this was a question King David at one time had posed: 'Why are the nations shouting? Why are the people planning such useless things? The kings of the earth prepare themselves to fight, and the rulers all come together against the Lord and against His Christ,' Acts 4:25-26 ERV.

God's Word of Truth explains:

"They argue with useless words, with speeches that have no value. What are they trusting in to help them? I tell you, they are trusting in power and great battle plans, and that is useless. Those are nothing but empty

words. Now I ask you, who do you trust so much that you are willing to rebel against Me?"

Job 15:3, Isa. 36:4-5 ERV



Jude spoke out for Christians everywhere: Beloved of God and chosen by Him. May you be given more and more of God's kindness, peace and love. Dearly loved friends, I had been planning to write you some thoughts about the salvation God has given us, but now I find I must write of something else instead, urging you to stoutly defend the Word of Truth that God gave once for all to His people without change through the years.

I say this because some godless teachers have wormed their way in among you, speaking useless, deceptive words by saying that after we become Christians we can do just as we like without fear of God's punishment. The fate of such people was written long ago, for they have turned against our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ (Jude 1-4 TLB).



Paul wrote so we would always remember that Jesus Christ, a descendant of King David, was raised from the dead. This is the Good News he preached. And because He preached this Good News, he suffered and was chained like a criminal. But, the Word of God cannot be chained. So Paul was willing to endure anything if it would bring salvation and eternal glory in Christ Jesus to those God has chosen. This is a trustworthy saying:

If we die with the Lord,
We will also live with Him.

If we endure hardship,
We will reign with Him.

If we deny Him,
He will deny us.

If we are faithful,
He remains faithful,

For He cannot deny Who He is

Remind everyone about these things, and command them in God's presence to stop fighting over words. Such arguments are useless, and they can ruin those who hear them.

Remind everyone to work diligently so they can present themselves to God and receive His approval. Be a good worker (2 Tim. 2:8-15a NLT), always doing the work God requires believing and trusting in Christ Jesus, Who dwells in you, and continues with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that His being with you, your joy in God's loving-kindness will overflow on account of what Jesus has done for you.

Therefore, be one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the Word of Truth. Avoid worthless, foolish talk and thinking that only leads to more godless behavior. This kind of talk spreads like cancer (2 Tim. 2:15b-17 NLT).



However, those who have heard God's Word have come to know how dearly loved they are for believing God, Who publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders and signs through Him.

God knew what would happen to His Son. Yet, His prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed, nailed to the cross and killed. BUT GOD, He released Jesus from the horrors of death

and raised Him back to life, for death could not keep Him in its grip.

God separates (sets apart) and keeps safe by Christ Jesus those who repent and turn to Him in faith. The Word of God ensures we are made confident in God's love and faithfulness as King David was:

“I see the Lord is always with Me. I will not be shaken, for He is right beside Me. No wonder My heart is glad, and My tongue shouts His praises! My body rests in hope. For You will not leave My soul among the dead or allow Your holy One to rot in the grave.”

Our heavenly Father has shown us the Way of Life, and He will fill us with the joy of His presence.” David surely wasn't referring to himself, because he died and was buried. David was prophesying about the resurrection of the One of promise. He wrote of his own descendant Who would sit on his throne forever:

The Lord said to my Lord:

“Sit in the place of honor at My right hand until I humble Your enemies, making them a footstool under Your feet.”

God raised Jesus from the dead and exalted Him to the place of highest honor in heaven, at His right hand; and as He promised, gave Holy Spirit to us. So we can be certain God has made Jesus, Who was crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:21-37) so His mercy, peace and love may be ours in abundance.



We can do as God’s Word says:

“Relax and believe! Everything’s going to be all right; you can rest trusting everything’s coming together.” Jude 2

For we’ve shown by repenting of our sins and turning to God and being baptized in the name of Christ Jesus that we’ve received forgiveness of our sins. The choice to be saved from this crooked and corrupt world is ours (Acts 2:38-40).

Our hearts can remain as open receptacles ensuring every drop of God’s goodness and love might be received. We can fight with

everything we have in us to guard and cherish this faith entrusted to us as a gift. So we would stoutly defend the Truth that God gave once for all to His people kept without change through the years.

For there are godless individuals, who work against God's Word to change His grace into a license for immorality, which means doing away with Jesus our Sovereign Lord and Savior (Jude 1-4 NIV/Message).



Why? Personal agendas, beliefs and opinions are given more prominence and importance than the things that come from God. They are simply not understood. The unspiritual self, just as it is by nature, (being out of the power and keeping of God) can't receive the thoughts of God because they seem like so much silliness. They can't understand God's Word, which Holy Spirit reveals (1 Cor. 2:14).

“This plan of God's is not what you would work out, neither are His thoughts the same as yours! Just as the

heavens are higher than the earth so are God's ways
and His thoughts higher than yours."

Isa. 55:8-9

Though they may sound foolish, it is God Who makes you
spiritually alive through Jesus, Who places Holy Spirit within you
so insight and discernment can be received (1 Cor. 2:14-15), and
you can rightly distinguish between Good and Evil (Heb. 5:14).

This is why for so long our ways seemed innocent in our own
eyes. Yes, in the eyes of our unspiritual self our thoughts,
opinions and beliefs seem right, but the Lord weighs our motives
(Prov. 16:2). He knows mankind to the core, and just how
changeable human nature is (John 2:24 TLB).



Though Truth may not be easy to receive, our heart is the most
deceitful thing there is and desperately wicked. No one can really
know how bad it is! Only the Lord knows! He searches all hearts
and examines our deepest motives so He can give each person
their right reward, according to their deeds-how they lived (Jer.
17:9-10 TLB).

Since the Garden of Eden, Satan has been continually working to get us to believe his deceptions; even when the facts don't support his message.

We know God blessed Adam and Eve with every good thing. There was only one single "don't" that applied, and that was for their own good. The serpent birthed the techniques for "gaslighting," he lied, blamed, projected, deflected and confused all an elaborate evil ruse designed to cause questioning and doubts to arise.



False information repeatedly and continuously repeated. Though brainwashing is defined as a forcible indoctrination to induce someone to give up basic beliefs and attitudes and to accept contrasting regimented ideas, the force of evil uses cunning (craftiness, trickery, scheming) to convince so the misinformation that's given would be considered valid.

You may ask the purpose of this behavior? Ultimately it is to gain power, which is exactly what happened and continues to occur.

Why? Gaslighting! We believe what isn't true as though it is.

Satan has been successfully gaining the power and control to alter our perceptions and influence our belief structure, thereby being able to manipulate our behavior. The best way to counteract this practice is to educate yourself. Some of this information was taken from the website: Center for Trauma, Stress and Anxiety <https://www.ctsatherapy.com/beliefs-are-not-facts/>



This is why I share God's Word of Truth. Joshua told the people, "You are not to do as we do here today, everyone as they see fit," Deut. 12:8. And yet, humans are satisfied with whatever looks good; BUT God, probes for what is good (Prov. 16:2 Message).

Sadly, we have all encountered circumstances that cause us to struggle with issues of anxiety, anger, fear, unforgiveness, addiction....no one is exempt. Darkness has touched our lives in some form, some fashion.

There are always words enough to “prove” that we are right or justified, but is the Lord convinced (Prov. 16:2 TLB)? So many silly reasons and excuses have been given for our misjudgments and bad behavior, even as lame as “the devil made me do it.” From the very first act of defiance shifting blame has become a normal practice.

This journey of renewal and recovery sets us on a course of new beginnings. When Truth can't be denied or averted for there's a way of life that looks harmless enough; look again – it leads away from Truth and straight to the gates of hell (Prov. 14:12 Message).



The skeptic, agnostic and even the atheist have love in their lives. How is this possible when God is love? How amazing to know this is Love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (1 John 4:8-10). Sin no longer has to have power or control over us.

How horrific it will be for those who will face Truth only to discover God's love, His Word, His promise of forgiveness was not enough for them. If only time was taken to look into and

consider the Message of the Gospel (concerning the attainment of salvation through Christ Jesus). For there is no eternal doom awaiting those who trust the Lord to save them (John 3:18 TLB)!

Peter told us, "God is acquainted with and understands the heart, and gives His Holy Spirit. He makes no distinction regarding who should receive because hearts are cleansed by faith (Acts 15:6-9 AMP).



How essential to become acquainted with God's Word of Truth. For Jesus is the only Way for us to come to know the Father (John 14:6). I can assure you it is the greatest privilege and blessing to know God as our Father. God's Word tells us the spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual (1 Cor. 15:46). As a parent I think what could my children do to cause me not to love them?

Jesus told Pontius Pilate, who would soon condemn Him:

"I was born and entered the world so that I could witness to the Truth. Everyone who cares for Truth,

who has any feeling for the Truth of God, recognizes
My voice.”

John 18:37 Message

How sad for those who will never come to recognize the voice of God unable to hear His call. To know how dearly loved they are by God their heavenly Father Who knows they have missed the mark and sinned, but says:

“Let My love and Truth define you,
Not your mistaken judgments.”



I tell my grandchildren we are designed to make mistakes so our need for a Savior would hopefully become apparent. So we would want to get to know the Lord Jesus, the Word of God, Who dares us to hope and remember:

“The faithful love of the Lord our God never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is His faithfulness. His mercies begin afresh each morning.”

So remind yourself by saying, 'The Lord is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in Him!' Who is good to those who depend on Him, to those who search for Him. Remind yourself, it is good to wait patiently for salvation from the Lord, and to submit to His discipline and training (Lam. 3:21-27 NLT).

For surely it is obvious the design of "Selfness" has as many flaws as there are people leaning and relying on one another. All of which causes upset and confusion, doubt and disbelief when so many "Whys" are left unanswered. To better understand ourselves and the Father's love, we need to be willing to think a little differently trusting the One Who can provide us with insight and revelation.



In this world innocence is stolen. We come to the Father guilty of having done so many things wrong. However, He receives us as His children, declaring us innocent made perfect by the blood Jesus shed. Moses said to the people, "This is the blood of the covenant God has established with you." (Heb. 9:22a Message). The life of the flesh is in the blood, it is the blood that makes atonement because it is the life (Lev. 17:11 TLB).

Almost everything in a will hinges on the fact that someone died. That's why blood, the evidence of death, is used so much (Heb. 9:22 Message). Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Heb. 9:22b TLB). In fact, without the shedding of blood there is neither release from sin and its guilt nor the remission of the due and merited punishment for sins (Heb. (9:22 AMP)).



God has always made His love apparent; however, without knowledge of His Word the Way, the Truth and the Life of Christ Jesus, Who offers redemption, renewal, recovery and restoration God's love for us cannot truly be understood.

Yet, there is always a ray of hope, for God's compassion never ends. It is only the Lord's mercies that have kept us from complete destruction. Great is His faithfulness. His loving-kindness begins afresh each and every morning (Lam. 3:21-23 TLB).

God extends to us a “Mulligan” a “Do-Over” every single morning. We don’t have to beat ourselves up for our mistaken judgments. What He doesn’t want is for us to continue doing the same things over and over and over again expecting a different outcome. How is that not insanity?



The Father Who gives to all intelligence, creativity and talents so everything good can be enjoyed. God doesn’t want us to behave as the prodigal refusing His companionship? Seeking what the Father holds in His hands instead of what is in His heart.

God doesn’t want us to go out into a world that takes us away from Him simply so fleeting desires can be gratified; a world that takes so greed can be satisfied; a world that takes so assurance in self-interest can be accrued. All of this is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life – these do not come from the Father.

Know the world will pass away and disappear, and so too its forbidden cravings (1 John 2:16-17); but sadly, for those individuals who think their heavenly Father is not needed,

autonomy and riches cannot prevent their failing and missing the true end and scope of Life, which is in Christ Jesus (Matt. 1:21 AMP).



The parable Jesus shared about the prodigal spoke of two sons who were both guilty of self-absorption. Instead of understanding contentment and privilege (birthright, exemption, immunity) are found in knowing and receiving Love, they were taken (consented to, acquiesced to, succumbed to) enmity (bitterness, alienation, estrangement). One son was physically estranged from the Father, while the other became emotionally distanced by comparison, disrespectful judgments, jealousy, anger...

Though our landscapes and lifestyles may be varied and quite numerous, there are only two courses we travel. The road of enmity (animosity, acidity, vehemence) such corrosive substances eating through the moral fibers of society, while spreading like a malignancy (mean-spiritedness, hatred, cruelty) spawned by hearts that have evil intentions.

So many irresponsible (inconsiderate, disrespectful, thoughtless) choices are made. As the one self-serving prodigal who was dishonorably motivated by the advantages and profits of being free-spirited (nonconforming, rebellious, scoffer). Or as the other seemingly responsible son who allowed self-indulgence (pompous, self-partiality, smugness) to weigh him down with anger, resentment and grievance.



What causes us to be the evil in this world – our heart. Jesus explained:

“Out of the good treasure of a person’s heart good is brought forth; out of the evil treasure of one’s heart evil is brought forth. Why bother calling me Lord, Lord, when you don’t do what I say?”

“Those who come to Me, who hear My words, and acts upon them are like someone building a house, who digs deep and lays a foundation upon the rock; when a flood rises, the torrent will burst against that house, but

it could not shake it because the house was so well built.”

“Those who hear My words, and do not act accordingly, are like the individual who built a house upon the ground without any foundation; when the torrent burst against it that house would immediately collapse, and the ruin is great.”

Luke 6:45-49 NASB



Or as it is written in the Message Bible:

“You must begin with your own life-giving lives. It’s who you are, not what you say and do that counts. Why are you polite with Me saying ‘Yes, Sir’ but never doing a thing I tell you? These words I speak to you are not mere additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They are foundation words; words to build a life on.”

“If you work My words into your life, you are like a wise carpenter who digs deep and lays the foundation of his house on bedrock. Nothing can shake it because this house was built to last. However, If you just use My words in Bible studies and don’t work them into your life, you are like an unwise carpenter who builds a house but skips the foundation. All will be a total loss.”

Luke 6:44-49



My desire is for you to know the grace that God has freely given, which comes to us through Jesus. How full of love and kindness our Lord is: though He was so very rich, yet for our sakes, so He could help us, He became poor, so that by being poor He could make us rich.

Rich in faith, rich in speech, rich in knowledge, rich in complete earnestness and rich in love (respect, appreciation, honor) (2 Cor. 8:7-9).

Respect means that you accept somebody for who they are, even when they’re different from you or you don’t agree with them. Respect in

your relationships builds feelings of trust, safety and wellbeing. Respect doesn't have to come naturally – it is something you learn.

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/all-about-respect>

I don't think we realize how much of an impact appreciation has on us. Sometimes in the pursuit of our goals and dreams of where we are headed, we forget to appreciate the present.

Appreciation impacts our relationships and how we feel about ourselves. However, the sense of feeling valued enables people to remain at workplaces and feel fulfilled. Appreciation is felt when people pour into each other. Mike Robbins espouses that it is not about recognizing results and performance. Recognition is limited and based on performance whereas appreciation is about recognizing the value of people.

<https://growcounseling.com/the-power-of-appreciation/>



What, then, is honor? The biblical words often translated as “honor” can have a number of shades of meaning. As a baseline definition, to honor means to esteem and treat another with respect because of who they are or what they have done. Honor has the sense of value, price,

or quality. That which is valued and esteemed is “honored.” The biblical use sometimes also means to seek to enhance the reputation of someone.

<https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2019/02/what-is-honor/>

Even the extremely poor can be rich in generosity, rich in overflowing joy even in the most severe trials. Giving of themselves first to the Lord and then to others, which is in keeping with God’s will.

The sincerity and earnestness (decisiveness, determination, intent) of our love is often tested. Do we give out of duty and obligation only, or do we have the desire to do so? If you are really eager to give, then it isn’t important how much you have to give. God wants you to give what you have, not what you haven’t (2 Cor. 8:2-5 & 8-12).



God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if you have the ability to prophesy (helping others to grow strong in the Lord, encouraging and comforting them, 1 Cor. 14:3), speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If you have a

gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. Love (respect, appreciate, honor) others with genuine affection. Serve the Lord enthusiastically, while delighting in honoring Him, yourself and others (Rom. 12:6-10).

For when you give, it will be given to you. Your gift will return to you in full and overflowing, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more and running over. Whatever measure you use to give, it will be used to measure what is given back to you (Luke 6:38 TLB). The Message Bible puts it this way, "Give away your life; you'll find Life given back, but not merely given back – given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way. Generosity begets generosity," Luke. 6:38.



What credit is it to you if expectations are attached? Love (respect, appreciate, honor) those who seem unlovable to you. Do good to them. Lend without expecting anything in return. Your reward will be great because God is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be sons of the Most High and be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (God doesn't want unrealistic or false or disrespectful expectations to weigh you down.)

If you don't want to be judged, then don't judge. If you don't want to be condemned, don't condemn. If you want to be forgiven, forgive. How can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A student is not above their teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher (Luke 6:34-40).



Understanding is a fountain of life to those who have it: however, it is folly (foolishness, absurdity, irrationality) that brings punishment to fools (Prov. 16:22). With faith God's Word will become a lamp to our feet, and a light for our path (Ps. 119:105). For it is the Lord Who keeps our lamp burning; our God Who turns our darkness into light (Ps. 18:28).

Those who are blinded by darkness lack knowledge; they are all mute dogs that cannot bark to warn off and protect; they love sleep, lying around and dreaming. Like dogs with mighty appetites, they never have enough. Shepherds who lack understanding, they turn to their own way, each seeking their own gain (Isa. 56:10-11).

The wise have eyes to see, believing Wisdom is better than their folly, just as Light is better than darkness, while the fool walks in the darkness (Eccl. 2:13-14). Sadly, as a dog returns to its vomit, or a sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud (2 Peter 2:22), such are the behaviors of a foolish heart.



However, God so loved the world (John 3:26), He wants everyone to know His rich and glorious secret inside and out, regardless of our background, regardless of our religious standing. The mystery in a nutshell is just this: When Christ is in us, we can look forward to sharing in God's glory. It's that simple. That is the substance of His Message (Col. 1:27 Message).

Yes, we are going to make mistakes. However, when we come to God as children trusting in Him, we are willing to receive His guidance and correction believing, as we ask our own children to believe, it is the behavior, the attitude or decision that is unacceptable, we are definitely accepted by God. Who loves us and is pleased even overjoyed to call us His children, it's our behavior that doesn't always please Him.

And so God calls us into works of service that not only has us thinking of others, but also experiencing a change of heart. Knowing the Lord rewards everyone for whatever good they do (Eph. 6:7). So whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as if you were serving the Lord, not for people (Col. 3:23).

So you too can be as convinced as I am that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, not our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow – not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. Nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:31-39 NLT).



God loves you. Jesus came to reveal the depths of God's love for you. And warn you not to allow your heart to be dulled by carousing (distraction, spree, gambol) and drunkenness (depravity, corruption, addiction), and by the worries (aggravations, troubles, discomforts) of this life (Luke 21:34). If all your worries can't accomplish a little thing like adding a single moment to your life, what's the use of worrying over bigger things (Luke 12:25-26)?

In His kindness God called you to share in His eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So do as He instructs, give all your worries and care to God, for He cares about you (1 Peter 5:10&7 NLT). Humble yourself under the mighty power of God and you will come to know:

- Being humble means recognizing we are not on earth to see how important we can become, but to see how much difference we can make in the lives of others - Gordon B. Hinckley
- True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it's thinking of yourself less - C. S. Lewis
- There is no respect for others without humility in one's self - Henri Frederic Amiel
- Being humble is to be felt, it's not something that you show off
- Humility isn't denying your strengths; it's being honest about your weaknesses - Rick Warren
- Humility is the surest sign of strength - Thomas Merton
- Pride is concerned with who is right; Humility is concerned with what is right - Ezra T. Benson

- There's a thin line between confidence and arrogance - It's called Humility. Confidence Smiles. Arrogance Smirks
- It was Pride that changed angels into demons; it is Humility that makes men into angels - Saint Augustine
- Humility is best learned when Pride is at its peak



Proverbs 16:18 tells us Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. But, the God of all grace, Who called us to His eternal glory by Jesus, knows you too will suffer a while. But God, is working good in and through all things (1) to perfect us:

- Consider the troubles you suffer as being light and momentary for they are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. Faith in God helps us to fix our eyes on what is unseen, not on what is seen; for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal (2 Cor. 4:17-18)
- Remember the glory, majesty, power and authority of the only God our Savior Who through Jesus is able to keep you from

falling and present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy (Jude 24-25)

The Word of God is working (2) to establish us:

- The Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, Who loves us and by His grace gives us eternal encouragement and good hope, encouraging our hearts and strengthening us in every good deed and word (2 Thess. 2:16-17)
- So just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, you can continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you are being taught, and overflowing with thankfulness (Col. 2:6-7)

The Word of Truth is working (3) to strengthen us:

- For not everyone has faith; BUT, the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. So you can have confidence in the Lord to do and continue doing what He asks of you. For the Word works to direct your heart into God's love and Christ's perseverance (2 Thess. 3:2-5)

- For we all were alienated from God and were enemies in our minds as evidenced by our bad behaviors. BUT GOD, He reconciles us by Christ's physical body through death to present us holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation. When we continue in our faith, being established and made firm by God's Word so we won't be moved from the hope held out to us in the Gospel of God's love for us (Col. 1:22)

The Word of Life is working (4) to settle us:

- So we can learn the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. So we can know and rely on Jesus Who gives us strength to do everything (Phil. 4:12-13)
- So we can use whatever gift we receive from God to serve others by faithfully administering His grace. If anyone speaks, they should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Christ Jesus (1 Peter 4:10-11).

~

I write to remind you of these things, even though you may know them so that you are more firmly established in the Truth (2 Peter 1:12) growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

Cain lacked the Humility that gave Abel the strength to honor God instead of wealth or his possessions. For this very reason the Lord cautions us to:

“Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.”

Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith for he is always looking for opportunities to kill, steal and destroy. And remember, believers and non-believers alike are going through the same kind of sufferings (1 Peter 5:6-9 NLT).



How blessed are those who God makes to stand firm in Christ (2 Cor. 1:21). Who have an anointing from the Holy One to know the Truth (1 John 2:20). To know God sets His seal of ownership on us, and puts His Spirit in our heart as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come

(2 Cor. 1:22). Why? A choice was made to live by faith in God's righteousness, and be done with the one whose life of evil has been destined to burn.

How blessed are those who humble themselves under God's mighty power which is at work within us. God's mighty power is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of – infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts or hopes (Eph. 3:20 TLB).

God has given us more than just His heart. He has given us His Word and His Holy Spirit. Not by pushing us around; instead, by working within us, His Spirit deeply and gently within us (Eph. 3:20 Message).

So we can grow in faith and hope and love for Jesus by believing every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, and for training in righteousness. So as sons of God we may BE complete and proficient, well-fitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17 AMP).

~

Without faith to do as God's Word instructs, we could never experience Good changing our hearts to love the Lord our God, so we can walk in His ways, and obey His commands. So we can hold fast to Him and to serve Him with all our heart and all our soul – in thoughts, words and deeds (Josh. 22:5).

So I pray you are READY to take new steps seeking a deeper relationship with God; Steps toward renewal and recovery. Steps to put into practice principles so you too can become more God-dependent instead of being Co-dependent.

- The first key is to maintain an honest view of reality not only considering particular circumstances and events as substantial, but recognizing the substance of Truth – the Life, the Alpha and Omega, the heart and the spirit as we work on taking steps of faith remembering:
 - God exists and I matter to Him – that God could and would if He were sought
 - Admitting I am powerless – If God is your co-pilot, switch seats
 - Acknowledging in certain areas my life became unmanageable – Sorrow shared is halved; Joy shared is doubled

- Believing God will restore me with Love, a Sound Mind and Power – Success means getting your BUT out of the way
- Believing God will help me stay committed to this decision to put all of who I am into His possession and safekeeping – There is no magic in this process of renewal and recovery only miracles
- Believing the Word of God will encourage, support and strengthen me as I make a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself – There is pain in this process. Misery is optional
- Because of God’s loving-kindness I have become willing to admit to God, to myself and another person the exact nature of my wrongs – The road to resentment is paved with expectation
- With Truth as my solid foundation I have become entirely ready to have God remove all my defects of character – Courage is faith that has said its prayers
- Having received faith and hope and love for the Surety God has given I humbly ask Him to remove my shortcomings – F.A.I.T.H. = Fantastic Adventure In Trusting Him
- Having gained knowledge and insight and understanding I have become willing to make a list of anyone I have harmed, and to make an amends to them all – Just for today I will try to

live through this day only, and not tackle my whole life problems at once

- Having gained confidence and trust in God's refuge I have become willing to step out with the mindset I am doing this with God and for His glory to make my amends whenever possible unless to do so would cause injury to others - Remembering nothing is going to happen today that you and God can't handle
- I embrace my covenant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by continuing to take a personal moral inventory, and when I am wrong being prompt to admit it - We are not human beings having spiritual experiences; we are spiritual beings having human experiences
- I invest in my relationship with God by communicating through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with Him seeking knowledge of His will and the power of grace to carry that out - If God seems far away, who moved?
- I seek Revival, Restoration and Reconciliation, a spiritual awakening, as a result of taking steps to carry God's message to others and to practice these principles in all my affairs - Worry is a conversation you have with yourself about things

you cannot change. Prayer is conversation you have with God about things He can change



ARE YOU READY?

- Taking this step admitting “We are entirely ready to have God remove all our defects of character”
- The purposes for taking this step
 - (1) To identify the defects of character you are now ready to see, and
 - (2) To become willing to live without them and learn a more mature way to live
- By taking these steps you begin to see yourself as having some problems

CARELESSNESS

SLOTHFULNESS

ARROGANCE

UNRELIABILITY

DISTRACTION
SHORTSIGHTEDNESS
IDLENESS
ANXIETY
SIMPLEMINDEDNESS
SELF-CENTEREDNESS
SELF-PITY
APATHY
SELF-INDULGENCE
SELFISHNESS
RASHNESS
DISCOURAGEMENT
CORRUPTION
ANGER
CALLOUSNESS
FEARFULNESS
WILLFULNESS
UNFAITHFULNESS
HYPOCRISY
REJECTION
PRESUMPTION
INCOMPLETENESS
RUDENESS
INDIFFERENCE
RESISTANCE

RESTLESSNESS
EXTRAVAGANCE
COVETOUSNESS
HARSHNESS
CONFUSION
PREJUDICE
STINGINESS
UNDERACHIEVEMENT
FOOLISHNESS
LONELINESS
DECEPTION
PROCRASTINATION
IMPURITY
CONTENTIOUSNESS
DISRESPECT
TARDINESS
UNTHANKFULNESS
INCONSISTENCY
WASTEFULNESS
FAINTHEARTEDNESS

- These problems are defects of character that come out of our experiences of powerlessness and the unmanageable consequences of core symptoms

1. Difficulty experiencing appropriate levels of self-esteem

2. Difficulty setting functional boundaries
 3. Difficulty owning your reality
 4. Difficulty acknowledging and meeting your needs and wants
 5. Difficulty experiencing and expressing your reality moderately
- Codependent character defects are attitudes, feelings and behaviors you hang on to that sabotage your happiness and relationships and keep you from taking responsibility for your own life, well-being and recovery
 - Once you have recognized these character defects, you can then make a decision that you are ready to have the Lord remove them
 - Recognizing how these character defects are sabotaging your life by affecting you and also the people in relationship with you is a painful process
 - It has been said that renewal and recovery is a pain-driven process
 - Until you get into enough pain, you are not motivated to do anything about genuine change

 - These steps “Separates an adult from a child”
 - What does it mean to be ready
 - We are ready to “Voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in our lives”

- Certain character defects we are very willing to have go away
- However some defects are hard to give up
- Like weeds in a garden, they develop roots
- We've formed our defects of character, our hang-ups, our habits over periods of ten, twenty or thirty years
- Together you and God are going after these defects - ALL of them

- This step begins the process of actual transformation as we work to identify our defects of character/our protective devices, because we become willing to let go of them, and ask God to heal us from
 - Our tight grasps on people
 - Controlling behaviors
 - Manipulation
 - Our need to control
 - Desperation
 - Fears
 - Old feelings that clog us up
 - Negative, limiting beliefs
 - Worry; anxiety
 - The need to blame our pain on others
 - Waiting to be happy
 - Minimizing

- While working this step, we let go of allowing others to control us, our lives, or our happiness
- We become ready to let go of our caretaking – our tendency to focus on the problems, issues, feelings, needs, chaos, and the lives of another
- We become ready to let go of the underlying belief, that we are responsible for others
- We become willing to be healed from the issues underlying caretaking:
 - Weak or inappropriate boundaries or limits
 - An unclear sense of self
 - Self-responsibility
 - The responsibilities of others
- We become willing to be healed from the belief that others or ourselves are incompetent, and cannot take care of us or themselves
- While working this step, we become READY to let go of:
 - Low self-esteem
 - Our self-neglect
 - The belief that we aren't responsible for ourselves, and cannot take care of ourselves

- Our desire to have others take care of, or be responsible for us
 - Self-rejection
 - Self-hatred
 - Lack of self-trust
 - Lack of trust in God, life and the process of renewal and recovery
 - Our trust issues with people – inappropriately placed trust, and not trusting when it is appropriate
 - Our addictions; guilt; shame – that pervading sense that who we are is not okay
-
- We become READY to let go of:
 - Our reluctance to feel, and deal with our feelings
 - Our difficulty dealing with and expressing anger
 - Our inability to experience joy and love
 - Our negativity, hopelessness, and despair
 - Our fear of joy and love
 - Our fear of commitment
 - A closed mind, or a closed heart
 - Our attraction to unavailable people and dysfunctional systems
 - Our need to be in dysfunctional relationships and systems
 - Our need to be perfect

- Our abuse from childhood
 - Our need to be victims
 - Our participation in our own victimization
 - Our fear of intimacy and closeness
 - Our relationship-sabotaging behaviors
 - Our problems and fears with sexuality
 - Our blocks and barriers to joy and love, even when we cannot name those blocks and barriers
 - Our “Don’t Deserves: don’t deserve love, happiness, success; to be heard, cared for, have fun or enjoy life; to buy a new hat, coat....
- While working this Step we ask God:
 - To take away everything that stands in the way of us having all we deserve in our lives
 - To show us the blocks or defects in our lives
 - To show us the blocks or defects we need to be willing to let go of
 - To help us become willing to let go of them all
- We become ready to be healed from our pasts, from unresolved feelings of guilt, anger, hurt, and grief over the many losses we’ve endure

- We are ready to let go of the negative beliefs that we latched onto as a result of our pasts: that we're unlovable, a disappointment, a burden, not good enough, stupid, unworthy, a problem and a bother
- While working this step, we become willing to let go of whatever we have become aware of during this process; whatever we don't like, don't want, can't stand, feel helpless about, and want to be done with
- We become willing to let go of anything that is no longer useful; any behavior or beliefs that get in our way – these are what we become ready to release, and the deeper we're willing to go, the deeper the healing we will receive
- While working this step, do not limit its use to character defects; this step works on feelings, and feelings are not defects
- During this step, if we get stuck in a particular feeling, especially fear, anger, resentment, grief, or sadness, we can become willing to let go of that – we are on a journey; we are not meant to carry heavy baggage; instead to travel lightly

Dear God, thank You for taking me this far in this renewal and recovery journey You have set me on. Now I pray for Your help in making me be entirely ready to change all my shortcomings. Give me the strength to deal with all of my character defects, which I have turned over to You. Allow me to accept all the changes that You want to make in me. Help me be the person that You want me to be. In Your Son's name I pray, Amen.

YOU SAY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slaT8Jl2zpI>

I keep fighting voices in my mind that say I'm not enough
Every single lie that tells me I will never measure up
Am I more than just the sum of every high and every low
Remind me once again just who I am because I need to know
Ooh-oh

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing
You say I am strong when I think I am weak
And you say I am held when I am falling short
And when I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours
And I believe (I)
Oh, I believe (I)

What You say of me (I)

I believe

The only thing that matters now is everything You think of me

In You I find my worth, in You I find my identity

Ooh-oh

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing

You say I am strong when I think I am weak

And you say I am held when I am falling short

When I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours

And I believe (I)

Oh, I believe (I)

What You say of me (I)

Oh, I believe

Taking all I have, and now I'm laying it at Your feet

You have every failure, God, You have every victory

Ooh-oh

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing

You say I am strong when I think I am weak

You say I am held when I am falling short

When I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours

And I believe (I)

Oh, I believe (I)
What You say of me (I)
I believe

Oh, I believe (I)
Yes, I believe (I)
What You say of me (I)
I believe

Song by Lauren Daigle