

A RESTLESS WANDERER

Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." But the Lord said to him:

"Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over."

Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. Gen 4:13-16

When I started working on this project I wasn't quite sure why the Lord pointed to the beginning, to Genesis. Truth be told, reading the first seven chapters reveals how desperately evil works to kill, steal and destroy the beauty of God's creations. Also, when we make our identities about work and achievement we too become like this restless wanderer.

I write so Truth can be known. Truth that flows from God's Word to reveal the Way abundant (comfortable, enough, fruitful) Life can be received. It's important to remember our origins. That God created us in His own image, and when He saw all that He had made – it was very good.

When we allow our identities to become rooted in God's Word, Christ Jesus, we become like that person Psalm 1 speaks of who is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither – whatever they do prospers (vs. 3).



God blessed that first couple and said:

“Be fruitful (productive, bountiful, proficient) and increase (build up, enhance, complement) in number; fill (comply with, follow through, achieve) on the earth and subdue (conquer, overcome, stifle) it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Gen. 1:27-28

God blessed man giving him authority and power and dominion on the earth; unfortunately, their faith and trust was erroneously placed. This should cause us to ponder. Though the world may be given to us, when Truth and Understanding of its Creator are sought, the faith and trust and hope that we unearth strengthens, supports and sustains us like a mighty oak.

Change (difference, distortion, displacement) occurs when fear and doubt and disbelief are able to worm their way into hearts, giving evil time and opportunity to control and manipulate our thoughts and feelings.

No one can claim to fully understand, because we only know in part (1 Cor. 13:12). It's a shame we can't go back and rectify our mistakes. The same mistake may not be made, but a different one surely would. For doubt and disbelief and fear cause many to think and feel it would be a mistake to believe in what can be unearthed (dug up, brought to the Light, made known publicly). For surely Satan knows a change (conversion, reform, transformation) may occur.

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I think it's an amazing realization God walked into that garden looking for His friends only to discover betrayal. God is Omniscient, all knowing. Yet, He asked:

“Who said you were naked?”

Maybe He knew, probably He did, but we know He made them confess what they had done.

How amazing to know that garden is now our heart. And the fruit (the effect, the product) of the Light and the Spirit (consists) in every form of kindly goodness, uprightness of heart and trueness of life (Eph. 5:9 AMP).

God knows how betrayal (unfaithfulness, duplicity, deception) has marred this vital organ. Filling mouths with curses and bitterness; causing feet to be swift to shed blood (Rom. 3:8 AMP); to dwell in the land of Nod (to waver and wander, to flee, mourn and be sorry).

For destruction dashes so many to pieces, and misery marks their ways. How very sad, there is no experience of the Way of Peace when there is no reverential fear of God before our eyes (Rom. 3:9 AMP).

How very costly, when willingness to seek God's face is not present, for many souls will discover evil is all that's left to be known.



Surely, the end of all things is drawing near (1 Peter 4:17). So God set His Word of Truth before our eyes to do away with sin by the sacrifice of His Christ, His Anointed One. For all humanity is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.

Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people. He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him (Heb. 9:26-28). To those who worship God in Spirit and in Truth with Psalms and prayers and songs:

BUILD MY LIFE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z32HiCoFzIU>

Worthy of every song we could ever sing
Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring
Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe
We live for You, oh, we live for You

Jesus, the Name above every other name
Jesus, the only One who could ever save
Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe
We live for You, we live for You

Holy, there is no one like You
There is none beside You
Open up my eyes in wonder
And show me Who You are
And fill me with Your heart
And lead me in Your love to those around me

Jesus, the Name above every other name
Jesus, the only One who could ever save
Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe
We live for You, oh, we live for You

Holy, there is no one like You
There is none beside You
Open up my eyes in wonder
And show me who You are
And fill me with Your heart
And lead me in Your love to those around me

And I will build my life upon Your love

It is a firm foundation

And I will put my trust in You alone

And I will not be shaken

And I will build my life upon Your love

It is a firm foundation

And I will put my trust in You alone

And I will not be shaken

Holy, there is no one like You

There is none beside You

Open up my eyes in wonder

And show me who You are

And fill me with Your heart

And lead me in Your love to those around me

I will build my life upon You

Lead me in Your love

Song by Pat Barrett Featuring Chris Tomlin

Because we have sinned against God, against His Word of Truth, to accept and approve the counterfeit, the deception, we are destined to bear God's wrath. How awe inspiring to know, Jesus pleads our case

and establishes our right standing. He will bring those who place their heart into His loving care out into the light to see His righteousness (Micah 7:9).



Yes, God unites us as in wedlock (to love, honor, respect, value and obey), His Word, Christ Jesus. He is always thinking about our welfare. So please don't partake of evil for it makes a person fruitless (foolish, unreasonable, queer).

For our benefit God made Jesus to be Wisdom itself. Christ makes us right with God; He makes us pure and holy, and He frees us from sin. Therefore, if you want to boast, boast only about the Lord Jesus. For God chooses the despised of the world, those counted as nothing at all. He uses them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. As a result, no one can ever boast in God's presence. (1 Cor. 1:28-31).

This is why no one can lay any foundation other than the One already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If worldly resources are used to build on this Foundation this work will be shown for what it is, for the Day will bring it to Light. It will be revealed with fire, which will test the quality of that person's work. If what they built survives, they will receive

their reward. However, if it burns up, loss will be suffered; they will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames (1 Cor. 3:11-15).



So I share the Gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage your heart with faith. For God wants no one to be unsettled by the trials we know quite well we are destined to face (1 Thess. 3:2-3). There may have been or now is a time when you too can commiserate with David for troubles without number surrounded him (Ps. 40:11).

Satan uses whatever evil and deceptive tactic to cause trouble, turmoil and trauma. Knowing when we become emotionally charged so too will our behavior. Why? To overwhelm (devastate, grind down, overrun) and depress (sadden, weigh down, oppress). How? Irrational (unsound, ill-advised, unexplainable) things are said and done.

We react to the unreliable, undependable and untrustworthy - feelings and core beliefs - that are altered as often as the “Whethers” (in any case, at any rate, whatever).

Circumstances cause our stance, our opinions and our perspectives to change depending on the “whether” – cloudy with a good chance of high winds and heavy rain or beautiful bright “SON” shine.



Unfortunately, “Whethers” quite often bring calamity about to overtake us like disaster so as to sweep over us like a whirlwind or a storm to distress and as trouble to overwhelm us (Prov. 1:27).

However, when the earth and all its people quake, it is God Who holds its pillars firm (Ps. 75:3). It is the Lord Who set the heavens in place, Who laid the foundations of the earth, and Who says to Zion:

“You are My people. I have put My words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of My hand. Awake! Awake! Rise up!”

“For I am going to stir up the spirit of a destroyer against (Babylon) that mountain of confusion who destroys the whole earth. I will stretch out My hand against him, roll him off the cliffs and make him a burnt-out mountain. No rock

will be taken from him for a cornerstone, nor any stone for a foundation, for he will be desolate forever.”

“Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One, I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever! I hold the keys of death and Hades. Christ Jesus - the same yesterday and today and forever! The foundation of My throne is righteousness and justice. Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim Me, who walk in the light of My presence.”

Isa. 51:16, Jer. 51:25-26, Rev. 1:17, Ps. 75:3, Ps. 89:14-15



Yes, blessed are those who do not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers. Blessed is that person whose delight is in the Lord and who meditates on God’s Word of Truth. For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked only leads to destruction (Ps. 1:2&6).

Blessed is everyone who believes what God has said:

“See, I lay a Stone in Zion, a chosen and precious Cornerstone, and the one who trusts in Jesus will never be put to shame. Those who rejoice in His name and exult in His righteousness; who believe the Lord is their glory and strength, and that by His favor they are exalted; lifted high by the One Who founded the world and all that is in it. Whose arm is endued with power, His hand so strong, His right-hand exalted.”

1 Peter 2:16, Ps. 89:11-17



Yes, the Lord reigns, He is robed in majesty and armed with strength. Who firmly established the world; it cannot be moved. He Who is from all eternity; His throne established long ago (Ps. 93:1-2). The Son Who is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful Word.

After He provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. He became as much superior to the angels as the name He has inherited is superior to theirs, JESUS (Heb. 1:3-4).

Yes, the Word full of grace and truth became flesh and made His dwelling among us (John 1:14). Who says:

“Even to your old age and gray hairs I am He Who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you. Listen you whom I have upheld since you were conceived, and have carried since your birth.”

“To whom will you compare Me or count Me equal? To whom will you liken Me that we may be compared? Some pour out gold, and weigh silver to have it made into a god they bow down to and worship. They lift it on their shoulders and carry it; they set it up in its place, and there it stands. From that spot it cannot move. Though one cries out to it, it does not answer; it cannot save them from their troubles.”

“Remember this, fix it in mind; take it to heart. I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand,

and I will do all that I please. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that I will do. Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are far from righteousness,”

“You know nothing, you understand nothing. You walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. I said, ‘You are “gods,” you are sons of the Most High.’ But you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler.”

“Know this, I am bringing My righteousness near, it is not far away; and My salvation will not be delayed. I will grant salvation to Zion, My splendor to Israel,”

Isa. 46:3-12, Ps. 82:5-7, Isa. 46:13



In the Old Testament God invited people into His temple; however, there were only a chosen few who shared an intimate relationship with Him. Abraham received God’s promise he would be heir of the world through the Righteousness that comes by Faith (Rom. 4:13). 430 years

later, Moses received God's law to reveal the whole world's a prisoner of sin (Gal. 3:17 &22).

Sin entered the world through one man, and death came through sin. As a result, death came to all men because everyone has sinned. And though sin was in the world it was not taken into account when there was no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses (Rom. 5:12-14).



Yes, evil brought sin into our lives, and the consequence - death comes to all. Without God's law how could sin be known? How would we know that coveting was not in our best interest to do (Rom. 7:7)?

Sin tempts a heart to do what it thinks is good. However, when a heart doesn't discover how good God really is, it will surely come to know how bad evil really is when sin causes that soul to come and face death a second time - the lake of burning sulfur (Rev. 21:8).

God sent Jesus to die once so we could be made alive. Yes, we were dead in our sins when our old sinful nature was uncircumcised. In Jesus we are circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not

with a circumcision done by the hands of men; instead, done by Christ (Col. 2:11-13).

For the Lord your God is God of Gods and Lord of Lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving them food and clothing (Deut.10:17-18).



Like the forefathers of our faith, we are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God (1 Peter 2:9a). Moses told the people, “God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your mind and heart and with all your being, that you may live,” Deut. 30:6.

God sets our focus inwardly (with concern for our eternal spirit), and this circumcision of the heart is done by Holy Spirit, not by a written code (Rom. 2:29a). God pours out a continuous supply of oil, which is the Word of Life, for it is not by might, nor by power, but by God’s Holy Spirit (Zech. 4:6 AMP), of Whom the oil symbolizes.

How amazing God is for He makes us alive with Christ. He forgives us of all our sins. He cancels the written code, with its regulations the enemy holds against us and that stands opposed to us. God took it all away, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the powers and authorities making a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Col. 2:13).



Why should anyone be stiff-necked any longer, come to Jesus, He sets us free from our evil desires by a spiritual operation, the circumcision of our heart, the baptism of our souls. In baptism we see (discern, recognize, understand) our old, evil nature dies with Christ and is buried with Him; and then we too come up out of death with Him into a new life because we trusted the Word of the mighty God Who raised Jesus from the dead (Col. 2:11-12 TLB).

Moses said, "Fear the Lord your God and serve Him. Hold fast to Him. He is your praise; He is your God. With your eyes you saw the great and awesome wonders He performed to bring you out of Egypt where you were aliens," Deut. 10:20-22.

Many others like Moses were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. They admitted that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth desiring a better country – a heavenly one (Heb. 11:13-16 NKJV).



Now in the New Testament God has given every single person an opportunity to invite Jesus into their heart to share in a deeply meaningful, intimate relationship with Him and their heavenly Father.

By the power and virtue in the blood of Jesus we have full freedom and confidence to enter into the Holy of Holies. Jesus initiated and dedicated and opened the separating curtain, the veil of the Holy of Holies, for those who believe and trust in this message we receive from God. Jesus is the One Who has given us a fresh new and living way to God, through His flesh (Heb.10:19-20).

Now we too may declare the praises of Him Who called us out of darkness into His wonderful Light (2 Peter 2:9). The greatest of all miracles God has done for you and me, for the entire world.

However only those who see (consider, scrutinize, accept) - once we were not a people, but now we are the people of God; once we knew very little of God's kindness; now our very lives are changed by it (1 Peter 2:10 TLB). We are as those Moses said God defends - pilgrims in a different homeland.



Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law given by Moses, locked up until Faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by Faith. Now that Faith has come we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

We are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:23-26). Christ's love controls (reigns, keeps, directs) us. When we believe Jesus died for all, and we also believe that we have all died to our old life. Christ died for everyone so that those who receive His new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, Who died and was raised for them (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

For everyone who is baptized into Christ have clothed themselves with Christ, and are Abraham's seed. If you belong to Christ, He has made you an heir according to the promise (Gal. 3:27-29).

We join those like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, forerunners of Faith, in this pilgrimage with the same testimony, “My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers,” Gen. 47:9.



Many of us have wrestled with the Lord, and though we may not limp as Jacob we have been permanently marked. When the Word of Truth, the Good News that God saves us through Jesus is believed, we are marked with a seal. God identifies us as His own by giving us Holy Spirit, Whom He promised long ago. The Spirit is God’s guarantee that He will give us the inheritance He promised, and that He has purchased us to be His own people (Eph. 1:13-14 NLT).

Holy Spirit helps us to stop evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Jesus merely from a human point of view (as someone we heard of but who would not let us in their home). How differently we know Him now! (As friend, mentor, Savior, Lord and brethren) (2 Cor.5:16 NLT).

For we know the Word of Truth speaks to each heart:

“Do not be alarmed and afraid; go and tell My brethren to go into Galilee, and there they will see Me.”

Matt. 28:10 AMP

Galilee has a very special meaning:

1. Galilee: A valve of a folding door (as turning)

- Once our hearts could not understand because they were hardened; our eyes were closed and we couldn't see, nor could our ears hear. But when Truth was heard the valves of our heart were turned wide open to receive Christ Jesus and be healed (ministered to, renewed, revived). Our eyes were blessed because we see (perceive, regard, heed). Our ears are blessed because we hear (catch on to, encounter, attend).

Matt.13:15-17 NLT

2. Galilee: A ring

- God takes us as His personal servant and He sets us as a signet ring, the sign of His sovereign presence and authority, for He has chosen us to do His work (Zech. 1:1 Message). God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and

“Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness,” 2 Tim. 2:19

3. Galilee: As a special circuit (way, steps, pilgrimage)

- Jesus answered, “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you really knew Me, you would know My Father as well. From now on, you know Him and have seen Him,” John 14:6-7
- If the Lord delights in a person’s way, He makes their steps firm; though they stumble, they will not fall, for the Lord upholds them with His hand. Ps. 37:23-24
- Blessed are those whose strength is in the Lord, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage (Ps. 84:5). They have asked the way to Zion, and turned their faces toward it. They have come and bound themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten (Jer. 50:5). They will go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion (Ps. 64:7).



The mouth of the righteous person utters wisdom, and their tongue speaks what is just. The Word of God is in their heart, their feet do not

slip. They have turned from evil to do good, to dwell in the land forever. For the Lord loves the just and will not forsake His faithful ones. They will be protected forever.

So wait for the Lord and keep His way. He will exalt you to inherit the land, when the wicked are cut off, you will see it. The salvation of the righteous comes from the Lord; He is their stronghold in time of trouble. The Lord helps them and delivers them because they take refuge in Him (Ps. 37:27-39).



Yes, surely God is good to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked; they have no struggles; they are not plagued by human ills. Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. From their callous hearts comes iniquity; the evil conceits of their minds know no limits. They scoff and speak with malice; their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth.

This is what the wicked are like – always carefree, they increase in wealth. Surely, in vain have I kept my heart pure. When I tried to

understand all this, it was oppressive to me. Till I entered the sanctuary of God, then I understood their final destiny.

Surely, their wickedness has placed them on slippery ground, the Lord will cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, I was senseless and ignorant.

Yet Lord, I am always with You; You hold me by my right hand. You guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but You? And earth has nothing I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Those Lord who are far from you will perish. But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my Refuge. I will tell of all Your deeds, Love Asaph (Ps. 73:1-26).



So do not fret because of evil people or be envious of those who do wrong; for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they

will soon die away. Trust in the Lord and do good; delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and He will do this. He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their evil schemes.

Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret – it only leads to evil. And evil people will be cut off, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land. A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found; they will vanish - vanish like smoke (Ps. 37:1-10,20).



There was one “Don’t” God said to that first couple so good could be thoroughly enjoyed. Evil turned their gaze from God making it possible for sin to multiply and be quite fruitful. Yet there is one sin God asks us to refrain in fact to flee from - sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside their body, but those who sin sexually sin against their own bodies (1 Cor. 6:18).

God's request is made for our own good, not to restrict us, but that we may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord (1 Cor. 7:35). Those who commit sin are of the devil, for the devil sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of Satan (1 John 3:8).

Jesus died a horrendous death because of His love for the Father. So God could deal with Sin. God is not counting the world's sin against us. He forgives our sin so we can be reconciled to Him through Jesus (Luke 2:14 YLT).



And Jesus must reign until God puts all His enemies under the Lord's feet. The last enemy of God to be destroyed is Death. God has put everything under the feet of Christ (1 Cor. 15:25).

This little blurb I took off the internet explains: Biblical references to feet often signify whether life choices were made with sound contemplation and discernment. Proverbs 4:26-27 says, "Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways."

When asked where feet appear in the Bible, most people are likely to point to Psalm 119:105, “Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.” Following the principle that we usually go where our feet go the most common symbolic use for feet in the Bible is to represent our lives.

The psalmist repeatedly praised God because “He makes my feet like those of a deer and gives me sure footing on high places” (Ps. 18:33) and because He makes “a wide path for me to walk on so that my feet do not slip” (18:36).

When the apostle Paul wanted the Ephesian Christians to understand what God expects of them, he wrote, “I, a prisoner in the Lord, encourage you to live [literally, walk] the kind of life which proves that God has called you” (Eph. 4:1).

Taken from the website Jesus the Way 4 You – Bible Signs and Symbols (Feet): <https://jesusway4you.com/2016/09/13/bible-signs-and-symbols-feet/comment-page-1/>

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Beautiful feet spread the Good News of the Gospel – Jesus’ feet symbolize active love. Jesus didn’t walk away from anything that life on earth brought His way. Jesus is God’s Word of Truth – He is God’s gift of eternal Life – He is the Way to learn of God. He desires to bring us back to this place beside Him, and let us live in safety. To be His people, so He can be our God. He will give to us singleness of heart and action, so that we will always fear (amazed, awe, revere) Him for our own good and for our children. He makes an everlasting covenant with us.

God will never stop doing good to us, and He will inspire us to fear Him, so that we will never turn away from Him. God will rejoice in doing us good, and will assuredly plant us in the land of promise with all His heart and soul (Jer. 32:37-41).



So do more than being fearful, shameful, blameful and full of anger. Instead, acknowledge your sin to the Lord, and don’t cover up its blemishes – guilt, regret, shame, distress...Confess your wrongdoings for God freely, earnestly and everlastingly forgives (Ps. 32:5).

Yes, whoever confesses (concedes, owns up to, admits) and renounces (gives up, hands over, steps aside from) their sins (offenses, ills, cancers) finds mercy (Prov. 28:13).

Why confess (expose, wise up, give away)? Well I believe the Thesaurus continues to give us several additional valid reasons for God – (affirms, reveals, imparts) so we can taste and see the Lord is good (Ps. 34:8).

In this scenario that occurred in the Garden of Eden, the source of evil of course is Satan. Seemingly a brief interaction that became responsible for a very long and devastating consequence. As a result evil can be identified as being a deceiver, intimidator, betrayer, swindler, hater, condemner, victimizer...an overall very bad guy who enjoys causing a lot of very bad stuff to be known through experience.



It is very obvious Adam and Eve were made to feel bad when they were duped. Without Holy Spirit how could they know the Lord the Lover of our souls is an apple tree, the finest in the orchard. He seats us in His much-desired shade and His fruit (love, peace, joy, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, patience and self-control) are lovely

to eat. He brings us to the banquet hall, and everyone will see how much He loves us (SS 2:3-4).

Sadly, they hid in fear and shame from the wrong person, from God. They didn't know to bless the Lord with all their heart. Nor, did they know the holy name that should be blessed, Jesus. As a result, their heart didn't really know the Source of Good and all His benefits (Ps. 103:2). They didn't cling to God's Word so they couldn't truly comprehend the Lord is the Fountain from which all God's benefits flow:

1. FAITH
2. SALVATION
3. TRUTH
4. THE WAY THAT LEADS TO THE FATHER
5. ETERNAL LIFE
6. THE DOOR TO GOD'S KINGDOM
7. THE LIGHT SHINING IN DARKNESS
8. FREEDOM
9. FREEDOM FROM ERROR
10. "MANNA" SPIRITUAL BREAD OF LIFE
11. GROWTH
12. VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION

13. HAPPINESS OR BLESSEDNESS
14. RIGHTEOUSNESS
15. SELF-DIAGNOSIS (SPIRITUAL CHECK-UPS)
16. GUIDANCE
17. COMFORT
18. ANSWERED PRAYER
19. VICTORY
20. HEALING
21. ASSURANCE
22. JOY
23. PREPARATION FOR GOOD WORKS
24. WARNING

Instead, they responded to God as a victim does with blame and accusation and anger. Not fully realizing the significance of the sin offering – the sacrifice of innocent lambs – God, their heavenly Father, made for them (Lev. 14:19).



Atonement made with love and mercy and forgiveness for everyone needs to be cleansed from their uncleanness. And for this very reason

the Lamb of God was offered as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2).

Yes, God offered Jesus as that sacrificial Lamb so through Him He could cause us to ascend up, break the Day, cause to burn, show, cause to come up, dawn, depart, exalt, grow, increase, light, mount up, perfect, recover, restore, spring up, work....all words the Strong's Concordance refers to offering.

So I encourage you to give thought to the human condition - for God is letting the world go on its sinful way so that He can test mankind, and prove they are like the animals. For they share the same fate - both breathe and both must die. They all go to one place - the dust from which they came and to which they must return. For who can prove the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of animals goes downward into dust?

I know this, that whatever God does is final - nothing can be added to or taken from it. God's purpose is that people should revere and fear Him, the All-Powerful God. What is happening now has happened before. Moreover, I notice that throughout the earth justice is giving way to crime, and there is evil and corruption in the courtroom. The

injustices of Life! However, in due season God will judge everyone, both good and bad, for all their deeds (Eccl. 3:14-22 NLT).



How many interactions have resulted in your experiencing the unexpected? And as a result, how much did the negativity weigh you down? How badly did you want to hide and cover yourself with some form of self-protection?

God knows. There was an old TV sitcom “Father Knows Best” well the reality is Father God does know what’s best. When we doubt, mistrust and disbelieve in the power and authority of His Word, we place ourselves in a position to be duped. I’ve told my grandchildren if you go out in the rain without an umbrella you’re definitely going to get wet.

God makes us confess so we can be healed (James 5:16). Pain, discomfort, irritation, upset, trouble...will happen in our lifetime, but misery is optional. God can heal us of our sin, which He does, but He can’t prevent us from choosing to retain a victim mentality.

It is only natural to want to hide and cover up our faults and misjudgments. The problem - an additional weight of guilt. With it comes a need like a driving force to prove to ourselves and others we're not bad, we're not a mistake, we're not a failure....whatever it is we feel we need to prove. This is a set-up for failure.

Like a dog chasing something that can never be caught, their own tail. While at the same time deepening a rut they might fall into. The weight of negativity can place such a heaviness on us causing it to feel as though we're in a pit of despair. A very lonely and vulnerable place to be, and I don't know about you, but try as we may, there is no way to know what's going on inside another person.



God does! He knows every detail. The last thing I ever thought would be helpful was confessing. There were so many reasons not to do so, all of which pointed to fear. What would people think about me? Here's what I discovered. People are going to think whatever they want. I can't change that no matter what I would or could do. If I make the opinion of myself about what others think this too sets me up for failure.

Why? Can we ever do enough to please someone else? There is a huge difference between being pleasing and working to please. One day your efforts may pay off, but completely fail on another.

My parents used to say if I give you a foot you'll want a yard, if I give you a yard you'll want a mile. Expectations! Unrealistic, disrespectful, unreasonable, uncommunicated, unmet...more upset. The only expectation God has is for me to BE myself.

Free-will what a tremendous gift! However, when a decision goes awry how often it's wondered where was God? Maybe we should be wondering where we have placed God and His Word? For then understanding would be had – the consequences are ours to bear (Ezek. 16:58)



Here's a sorry admission. When I began this journey of renewal and recovery and revival I wasn't able to really identify how I felt or what I thought. So much of my time and effort was directed towards caring for others that I didn't realize how I had misplaced myself. How I waited for someone else to share their thoughts a feeble attempt at not upsetting anyone.

Another thing I discovered about confessing my misjudgments it's very empowering. God doesn't hide our mistakes from us. The Bible is full of people doing their own thing and going their own way.

Accountability provides us opportunity to confess, to repent, to make amends, to change, to be transformed. How amazing how liberating the potential for change. When the need for change is recognized and acknowledged we can be released from beliefs, opinions and behaviors that have actually been working against us and our relationships especially with God.



We mustn't continue doing what the enemy set in motion from the beginning – hiding and isolating, blaming and shaming, criticizing and complaining, accusing and denying, being fearful and angry, refusing accountability and shirking as much responsibility as we possibly can.

Instead, we can learn to be content with who we are, a unique and fallible earthen vessel. A cracked pot or a crack pot; someone with character or a real character; we are all of these but so much more because we are God's very good creation.

Can you imagine being offered unconditional love, honor, respect, dignity and value for being exactly who you are? We are so used to strings being attached. Receiving isn't an easy thing to do. So we go about making those self-serving choices that send us in a different direction than the Way of God.

Consider this, God doesn't goad or shame or belittle, there's more than enough of that being done by us. Even at our very worst there's a continued willingness to forgive our bad behavior.

And for many like myself when life brings you to the end of yourself downcast and dejected, it is God's Word that lifts our chin so we look up. Sadly, all the benefits that are received from God, His blessings, comfort and guidance are not readily sought.



Instead, denial, doubt, disbelief and indifference are retained. Why can't their tremendous cost be recognized and understood? God walked freely at the coolest part of the day to be with Adam and with Eve. However, as a result of their unpleasant experience, they hid to put distance between themselves and God. Their response to self-

protect was and remains for us an inadequate means of adapting to change.

As defined adaptation is the act or process of changing something to fit a new use or situation. We change ourselves - our thoughts, feelings, opinions, perspectives (interpretation, vantage point, impression) and beliefs - to better navigate life and fit in. Consequently, self-defensive mechanisms are adopted when certain events, situations, actions, thoughts and behaviors prove to be unpleasant experiences.

Strategies such as compensation, denial, rationalization, projection to name a few means of self-protection have evolved. These strategies (tools, innovations, concoctions) are an attempt to separate us from threats or unwanted feelings such as guilt, shame, humiliation, failure, fear.... Pretense (complacency, façade, performance)!

When our ego - our sense of self-esteem and self-importance - is wounded, a façade may be constructed - an outward appearance that we work to maintain to conceal a less pleasant or creditable reality.

~

And reality: the world or the state of things as they actually exist, as opposed to an idealistic or notional idea of them. An imagined reality as powerful, persuasive and pervasive as any faith-filled belief because it's so very personal.

The thoughts, feelings, beliefs, opinions and judgments we possess are the driving force behind *the actions or processes that are required to carry out or accomplish an action, task or function* – the italicized is the definition for performance.

We are always working at doing something anything we think, feel or believe is in our best interest; instead of learning how to just be ourselves; instead of training ourselves so we can live in a state of happiness, peace and contentment. Unfortunately, life in this world is not conducive (productive, helpful, favorable) to such a state of excellence (preeminence, goodness, worth).



With faith in God, in His message of peace, grace and salvation through Christ, Holy Spirit can lead us into a more excellent Way (1 Cor. 12:31). So we can live under God's protection forever, with His unfailing love and faithfulness watching over us (Ps. 61:7 NLT).

Knowing, believing the Lord will not withhold His mercy from us for His love and His truth will always protect us (Ps. 40:11). Why? As far as the east is from the west, so far has God removed our transgressions from us (Ps. 103:12).

Yes, the Word of Truth will help us to be on our guard, self-controlled and alert for our enemy the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. For this reason Truth is needed so we can stand firm in the faith for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Eph. 6:12).

And though we struggle with the human condition – all the characteristics and key events that compose the essentials of our human existence which includes birth, growth, emotion, aspiration, conflict and mortality – the need to be loved is essential.



When the Word of God is known (grasped, appreciated, understood) in whatever storm that comes against us the loving-kindness of Christ Jesus will be made known:

“Take courage! Don’t be afraid! It is I the Lord your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel Who will help and comfort you. Though you wrestle with your thoughts and the sorrow in your heart, you too can walk above the troubled waters when your eyes are on Me.”

“Know this, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. So believe, I give you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions (whatever would strike at you from the front or from behind) so you can overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you (your eternal being). However, don’t rejoice when the spirits submit and flee from you; instead, rejoice (in what God has done) written your name in heaven.”

Isa. 41:14, Ps.13:2, Luke. 10:18-20



The enemy depends on our codependence and self-reliance for he knows our tendency is to look toward ourselves and others for strength, encouragement and comfort instead of keeping our focus on Jesus. We look to the Lord as Savior, but not to God's Word as Lord (Everlasting, Author, Creator). When troubles occur, it's so easy to be distracted when we are being buffeted (wounded, pounded, lashed) about by wave-after-wave of strong emotion.

Instead of listening to the voice of fear or anger or revenge, let the voice of God's Word be heard for it is Jesus Who leads us in the way everlasting (Ps. 139:24).

The Lord is faithful to all His promises and loving toward all He has made. The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. For He is righteous in all His ways and loving toward all He has made. The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth. He hears their cry and saves them. The Lord watches over all who love Him (Ps. 145:13-20).

Who believe, acknowledge and receive God's Word of Truth that unto us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on

His shoulders. He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).



Truth is the same for the atheist, the prodigal, the agnostic – every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, Who does not change like shifting shadows (James 1:16-17). So like Peter when we allow fear and doubt and disbelief to cause our faith to be made little, we can train ourselves by practicing to praise the Lord in every circumstance remembering His loving-kindness, mercy and grace. We can decree (announce, declare, proclaim) the Word of God Who opens eyes so we can see what God Almighty wants to show us (Num. 24:3).

God makes us confess so He can remove us from any and all forms of hiddenness – the state of concealment, secrecy, privacy – we don't have to languish in this condition of being concealed or hidden. When the prince of this world is allowed to cover us with fear and shame, anger and regret, accusation and guilt we are allowing him to conceal the full measure of God's love and kindness and truth from us.

When evil and sin and death entered our world, for surely their presence are not in heaven, so too did the curse. This may have been the first time this word was heard in the garden; however, Satan was aware of its eternal meaning. He was the first to hear God say, “Depart from Me, you who are cursed to eternal fire,” Matt. 25:41.

Sadly, God’s blessings may be difficult to see let alone at times to understand. My life (BC) before Christ wasn’t focused on theology or relationship with God. I believed each day would unfold as a hand of cards being dealt to me. Chance! Some days the cards were good on other days I was made to throw up my hands and fold. Life for me was about playing the hand I was dealt.



Here’s what I know now in my (AD in the time of the Lord) life. Bad things happen all the time to everyone. I believe when a person confesses to the world they have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior more trouble and problems and conflict will actually occur. The enemy hasn’t changed his strategy knowing, when tempted to doubt and question and become angered because God doesn’t remove an undesirable consequence his work to remove us from God’s presence has begun.

When we allow Jesus, the Word of God, to be our Lord we can depend and lean on and trust when confessed Truth will slice through the opposition – the deception, the anger, the unforgiveness, the bitterness, the depression, the fear... cutting it to shreds; for these are active and living words of Him Who has the sharp, double-edged sword (Rev 2:12).

The sustaining and nutritional “Manna” God sends in His Word will strengthen and support us so the uselessness of negativity can become as chaff being blown from our lives by the breath of God’s Holy Spirit.



The Word of Truth strengthens us so we don’t give up; though our natural bodies are being destroyed and dying, our inner strength in the Lord is growing every day because our inner person is being renewed day by day. Our troubles and sufferings won’t last very long. Yet, know these short times of distress will result in God’s richest blessing being upon us forever and ever.

Yes, they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs our affliction and trouble that will last forever (2 Cor. 4:16-17). Giving us opportunity to know and experience, to taste and see God’s goodness

at work for those who take refuge in Him (Ps. 34:8). So new habits can be formed such as not focusing on what can be seen, but what is unseen; for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal (2 Cor. 4:18) Good and Evil alike.



When a person has love, honor, respect, dignity and value for God's Word they will receive Life for following the Way of Truth. They will also receive another Counselor from the Father – Holy Spirit Who leads us into all Truth. Sadly the world cannot accept Him. But you can get to know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you (John 14:16-17).

Jesus went on to say:

“The world must learn that I love the Father, and that I do exactly what My Father has commanded Me. I am going away and I am coming back to you. I told you before it happens, so that you will believe.”

“Be glad I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. If anyone loves Me, they will obey My teaching. The Counselor, Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My

name, will teach you all things, and will remind you of everything I have said to you. So don't let your heart be troubled, and do not be afraid. My peace I give to you."

John 14:25-31



God's peace [shall be yours, that tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and being content with its earthly lot of whatever sort that is, that peace] which transcends all understanding shall garrison and mount guard over your heart and mind in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:7 AMP).

When we confess and begin to take new steps to seek a deeper relationship with God. When we start to put into practice the principles for taking steps toward renewal and recovery and revival so we can become more God-dependent instead of being Co-Dependent.

- The first key 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 confessing because the Lord wants us to know and enjoy His tremendous Victory:

- 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



- The purpose for taking these steps toward renewal, recovery and revival is for you to experience Victory over thoughts, attitudes and behaviors that actually work against you
- To acknowledge you have come to the place where you are ready to stop doing the things that your character defects list has shown that you do
- That you come to understand these defects of character interfere with your relationships to yourself, to others, and your Higher Power
- Character defects that keep you from fully receiving during this process of renewal, recovery and revival; and from being responsible for your own life

- One of the most powerful things we can ever do with our lives is to choose what we really want
- The heart of being formed in the image of God is that as humans we get to exercise free will
- As God's children we get to pick which direction our lives will go -- toward the brilliance of the Light or toward the abyss that is the darkness
- The damage that many forms of emotional trauma leave is that choice to pick the direction our lives will go is preempted, and is snatched away from us
- Trauma often leaves you with gaping holes in your self-confidence
- When your doubts outweigh your beliefs, your life direction and momentum suffers
- Life feels stuck in neutral, seemingly forever
- For some trauma survivors, the confidence gap becomes clear through choice avoidance
- For many, making decisions is downright painful
- People who have lived through their share of trauma often don't feel comfortable making tough choices
- It is only out of your own pain that you become Ready to surrender

- Knowledge will be gained that causes you pain, and it is this pain that brings you to the point where it isn't worth it to you any longer to stay the same
- Working these steps is an ongoing process, a life-changing journey to the end of self, a destination that launches us forward with a sincere heartfelt desire to be released from those shortcomings that have been an hindrance in our lives
- Teaching pastor Kyle Idleman has observed some very interesting behavior in his congregation through the years. Some stories are worth telling, others are not. But one common thread he has witnessed over and over again is that sometimes it takes a journey of personal hardship and utter misery for Jesus Christ to grab our full attention
- Unfortunately, when a person spends too much emotional energy living in the past or the future, they find themselves in a strange no-man's land between the "Already Gone" and the "Not Yet"
- That state of limbo is a very tough place in which to function and set down roots emotionally and spiritually

Dear Lord, I acknowledge that I have had a rough time reliving past hurts. There have been moments when my cup has run over with grief. My pain has at times over-taken me. But I remember that You have taught me that I can move on. With your help I can heal, I can grow, I can detach from the disappointments of the past. I choose to receive Your caring instruction and live in the present. You are my Source. I thank you, Lord, for hearing this prayer. Amen.

- Taking these steps results in experiences between you and God
- In your mind you can say something like this: I have allowed myself to know about this character defect to the point where I am in pain about it. I am aware of how
 - (1) It has adversely affected other people and
 - (2) It is adversely affecting me
- I can't stand the pain and I want to stop this behavior (or character defect). Would you please remove it from me because I can't
- The main point is to surrender and let go of the shortcoming
- You are now willing to learn to live without it
- You have done all you can do to eliminate it, and now you are asking God to take it

- Until it goes away, you can begin to change what you are able to about the defect, but you must be willing to learn to live with the character defect in your life, knowing you have surrendered it, and respect yourself anyway, until it is removed
- List any shortcoming you would like to surrender, and describe a healthy substitute for it
- You will discover God takes only those traits that restrict and stop us from being ourselves
- You discover God flips our negative aspects to reveal the positive side like - when obsessiveness is flipped it become determination
- God works to refine or temper our defects; for instance, caretaking - focusing on others to the detriment and neglect of self - so it can become respect for self and others manifested in a nurturing, life-giving way that holds ourselves and others in honor and respect
- You will discover some of our defects need to be let go of, like fear
- Letting go of our defects does not eliminate our personalities, it allows them to come through and shine --- something they may not have done since childhood
- We humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings: we don't yell at Him to change us; we don't demand; we don't have to whimper,

grovel, beg, plead, or incessantly ask – we acknowledge that God is the Power

- We acknowledge that God is all-powerful, we aren't and don't have to be
- We acknowledge the difference between God and ourselves
- We discover that some things we just can't do ourselves, changing ourselves is one of those things

- Taking these steps helps us realize this process of change is gradual not instantaneous; it is a spiritual process which brings healing; a palatable process that helps us heal from the pain in our past, if we become willing to feel instead of resist, once we become willing to surrender

- We become willing to follow God's process for change: ASK, SEEK AND KNOCK
- With faith to follow God we will surely receive His promises to ASK and it will be given to you; SEEK and you will find; KNOCK and the door will be opened to you (Matt. 7:7)

- You learn that though life may seem to be stagnant with not much progress made -- You can move forward

- The power of emotional trauma is in its ability to chain you to your past
- You want to move forward, but until you learn how to break trauma's hex, you find yourself spellbound -- unable to move and unable to grow
- You find yourself transfixed, staring endlessly into space, wondering what happened to you
- You commiserate endlessly about what "Woulda, Coulda, Shoulda Been"
- You are behind the wheel, but you never take your eyes off the rearview mirror to look at the road ahead of you
- It's tragic to become so bound by the wounds inflicted upon you by past pain at the hands of another or due to regretful choices that you lose sight of the gifts God has placed at your disposal today
- It's tragic to get knocked down by circumstances and then to allow being down to become a way of life
- The good news is that our hurts don't have to have the last word

- We can break the shackles of yesterday's tears by trusting God to lead us in a new direction
- One of the aspects of your character that breaks down when there are too many stressful demands on you is the loss of hope and faith that your life can get better
- When you lose faith, you lose momentum, vision and direction
- When you lose faith you become a minimalist
- You can only deal with what you can see
- We can break free from the trap of little faith and little hope
- We can accept the mantle that our forefather Abraham took on and become free
- Abraham had no idea where the Lord was going to lead him
- He just knew that trusting God meant he was going to have to break free of the routine he had grown accustomed to following

- Abraham understood that he was being called to launch out and explore a land, a people and a culture he was unfamiliar with
- Emotional healing takes a similar slant
- In order to heal from the trauma that embeds itself in your soul and keeps you from moving forward - you need Abraham-like faith to recognize that sometimes healing means you “Tear it up and start all over again”
- It means being willing to take a careful look at your life and ask, “What is causing me to be stuck right now?”
- Faith also downloads the courage you need to act on the answer you get from the “What is keeping me stuck?” question
- Jesus taught us that faith could move mountains
- We can speak to our mountains of fear, our mountains of despair, our mountains of broken dreams and tell them, “Be Gone”
- This happens by faith not by unrealistic expectations
- You may have heard the saying: “Expectations are premeditated resentments”

- As stated by John A. Johnson, Phd. in Psychology Today, merely expecting something to happen will not make it happen
- Many normal adults engage in various forms of magical thinking -- believing their thoughts can directly cause things to happen
- Human beings have a natural tendency to pin their hopes for happiness on fulfilled expectations
- There is nothing wrong with this if there are good reasons from past experiences that ensure we know certain things make us happy
- The problem of expectations occurs when we expect something to happen without good reasons for that expectation
- We are using magical thinking and setting ourselves up for disappointment if we believe our expectations alone will accomplish what we want
- Many of us at some time, believed that expecting someone else to behave the way we want will actually make them behave that way
- When the other person has no interest in living up to that expectation turmoil occurs

- Expectations are premeditated resentments
- It should be easy to think of examples in your life where you have felt resentful toward someone who did not live up to your own expectations

- Times when you expected a different response from a certain someone, when good intentions brought about upset and annoyance because all your planning and work could not accomplish the expected
- You felt shocked, indignant and a bit resentful
- “Expectations are premeditated resentments”

- We can break the shackles that hold us back by changing what we think and expect from our lives

- Travis Bradberry, Ph.D. wrote the following in an article for Talentsmart:
 - Our expectations, more than anything else in life, determine our reality
 - When it comes to achieving our goals, if we don’t believe we’ll succeed, we won’t
 - The tricky thing about our expectations is that they impact other people too
 - Indeed, we get the most out of other people when we believe in them
 - This happens because when we believe in someone
 1. We treat them better than people we think will fail

2. We give them more opportunities to succeed than we give those we think will fail
3. We give them more accurate, helpful feedback than we give others
4. We do more teaching because we believe it's time well spent

- Letting your doubts cloud your belief in yourself, someone or something practically ensures failure
- Medical professionals call this the “Nocebo” effect
- Our expectations shape our reality
- They can change our life, emotionally and physically
- We need to be extra careful about (and aware of) the expectations we harbor as the wrong ones because they make life unnecessarily difficult
- These following expectations identified by **Travis Bradberry, Ph.D.** cause people all kinds of trouble

1. LIFE SHOULD BE FAIR

- We've all been told (and likely told others) that life isn't fair, but in spite of what we know about the intricacies of injustice, it's a concept that doesn't quite sink in – in practice

- A surprising number of us subconsciously expect life to be fair for us (quite similar to ignoring the warnings for smoking -- nothing will happen to me)
- We believe that any unfairness that we experience will somehow be balanced out, even if we don't do anything about it
- If you're stuck in that mindset, it's time to get over it
- When something "unfair" happens, don't rely on outside forces to get you back on your feet
- Sometimes there isn't any consolation prize, and the sooner you stop expecting there to be, the sooner you can take actions that will actually make a difference

2. OPPORTUNITIES WILL FALL INTO MY LAP

- One of the most important things a person can do is stick their neck out and seek opportunity
- Just because you deserve a raise, a promotion, or a company car doesn't mean it's going to happen
- You have to make it happen
- If we limit ourselves to what's given to us, we are at the mercy of other people
- Think, when you take action -- What steps do I need to take

- What obstacles are in my way, and what do I need to do to remove them
- What mistakes am I making that take me away from my goals rather than toward them

3. EVERYONE SHOULD LIKE ME

- People have hang ups, and that means all sorts of decent, kind, respectable people are not liked by some, for no good reason at all
- When you think everyone should like you, your feelings get hurt when they shouldn't
- When you assume that people are going to like you, shortcuts are taken
- You start making requests and demands before you've laid the groundwork to really understand what the other person is thinking and feeling
- Instead of expecting that people will like you, focus on earning their trust and respect

4. PEOPLE SHOULD AGREE WITH ME

- When you know what you're talking about, and for that reason, people should take you seriously, but expecting people to agree

with you out of courtesy or because your ideas are sound is another story

- Something that's obvious to you might not be so to someone with different experiences and a different agenda
- So don't get offended when people disagree with you
- Don't assume there is only one right answer (yours)
- Instead, focus on how you can find solutions that give everyone what they need

5. PEOPLE KNOW WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY

- People can't read your mind, and what you're trying to say is rarely what other people hear
- You can't expect people to understand you just because you're talking -- you have to be clear
- It's easy to leave out relevant information because you don't think it's necessary
- Communication isn't anything if it isn't clear

6. I'M GOING TO FAIL

- If you expect to fail, you stand a higher chance of creating the very outcome you're concerned about

- Accept the fact that sometimes you will fail and sometimes you will succeed
- When pursuing an endeavor, believe with all your heart that you're going to succeed
- Otherwise, you will limit the chances of that occurring

7. THINGS WILL MAKE ME HAPPY

- Sure, in the short run things can make life more comfortable and fun, but they can't make you happy in the long run
- Too many of us expect a future event to make us happy, instead of looking more deeply into the real causes of our happiness
- If what's going on inside isn't fixed, no external event or item is going to make you happy

8. I CAN CHANGE HIM/HER

- There is only one person in this world you can truly change -- yourself -- and that takes a tremendous amount of effort
- The only way a person changes is through the desire and determination to change
- Still, attempts to try to change someone else are made, as if by sheer will and desire for them to improve will work to change them

- You may choose people with problems thinking you can “fix” them
- Let go of faulty expectations
- Let’s believe together that as we trust in the Lord with all of our heart, we can make better decisions
- Better choices create better outcomes
- Better results build up our confidence
- With better confidence, we become more comfortable and at peace with ourselves and the work that Christ has called us to do
- We become comfortable enough to break free of our shackles and, like Abraham, move forward into a place of Divine promise and possibility

Dear Lord, I have been stuck for a long time. But, I’m ready to break free from the shackles of my pain. I allowed myself to be bound by my fears, but I realize that better days lie ahead as I step out on Faith. I can be like Abraham and follow You into a better place. I choose to leave behind my past hurts and embrace my new life in You, one day at a time. Amen.