

REMOVED FROM THE SHADOW

Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah. Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute. Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain's sister was Naamah. Lamech said to his wives,

"Adah and Zillah, listen to me;
wives of Lamech, hear my words.
I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for injuring me.
If Cain is avenged seven times,
then Lamech seventy-seven times," Gen. 4:19-24

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We are looking at the descendants of Cain, a people who lived according to the ways of the world. Lamech is the first recorded man who broke the law of marriage by taking two wives. Worldly things are the only things that carnal people set their hearts upon, and are most clever and industrious about it.

Here was a father of shepherds and father of musicians, but not a father of the faithful. Here is one to teach about brass and iron, but none to teach the good knowledge of the Lord. Here are devices how to be rich and mighty and merry, but nothing of service and fear of God.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary: <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/4-24.htm>

Lamech the father of Tubal-Cain is depicted as exulting in the weapons his son's genius had invented, and with boastful arrogance killed the first man that injured him with these same weapons. Furthermore, he was impiously asserting if Cain was to be avenged seven times for murder, then Lamech would be avenged seventy seven times for an act of self-defense.



The descendants of Cain weren't interested in receiving what lies in the heart of God, but they didn't hesitate to claim what the hand of God bestows. As we dig for deeper meaning, the name Lamech means poor; made low. This is a person who does not recognize their own spiritual poverty, their need for God. Jesus told us:

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted!”

Matt. 5:4

Comforted by God, by His Word of Truth for recognizing how beautiful the Lord is, and the need to repent and mourn for the ugliness of sin.

What's interesting the names Jabal, Jubal and Tubal-Cain share the same meaning to flow, to bring forth especially with pomp (pretentiousness, pretense, extravagance). This description definitely exposes the great counterfeiter, Satan himself. This article by Don Stewart explains: How Satan Counterfeits Jesus?

1. Unique Son, and Son of Destruction

The Lord is the unique Son of God.

No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, Who is at the Father's side, Christ Jesus, has been made known (John 1:18)

In a sense, Satan has his son, the man of sin. He is called "the son of destruction"

Let no one in any way deceive you, for the Lord will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed the son of destruction (2 Thess. 2:3)

Though, not a literal offspring of Satan, this man is the counterfeit of the Lord Jesus.

2. Children

God has His own children – those who have put their trust in Him.

But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe in His name (John 1:12)

Satan has his own brand of children – those that practice evil.

The field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the Kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one (Matt. 13:38)

3. Apostles

Jesus chose twelve apostles to do His will.

And Jesus called unto Himself His twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness (Matt. 10:12)

Satan has his own apostles.

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ (2 Cor. 11:13)

4. Mark His Own

God will demonstrate His seal of ownership on His servants with a mark on their forehead.

Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God (Rev. 7:3)

In the same manner, Satan will have a mark of ownership placed upon his followers.

And he compels all, the small and the great, the rich and the poor, the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their right hand or upon their forehead. So that no one will have power to buy or sell unless they bear the mark that is the name of the beast or the number of his name. Here is room for discernment (a call for the wisdom of interpretation). Let anyone who has intelligence calculate the number of the beast, for it is a human number of a certain man, which is 666 (Rev. 13:16)

Satan has worked to counterfeit (contrive, deceive, mislead, imitate)

5. **The Trinity**

God is Triune - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Satan has his own unholy trinity - himself, the beast and the false prophet.

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and sulfur, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever (Rev. 20:10)

https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_71.cfm



As explained by Fausset's Bible Dictionary regarding "The Book of the Living," "The Book of Life" - the Israelites who came up out of Egypt were entered in a muster roll of the living citizens, called "The writing of the house of Israel." Those who died were erased each year. An image of God's book of predestination to eternal life: In man's point of view it has in it names of the living who are dead spiritually, and therefore may be blotted out, as was Judas. However, in God's point of view it contains those who are never blotted out, but elected finally to life.

- I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books (Rev 20:12-13)
- If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, they were thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 20:15)
- Nothing impure will ever enter, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev 21:27)
- He who overcomes will be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Rev 3:5-6)

So as we've discovered the names Jabal, Jubal and Tubal-Cain are as depictions of how people that don't call on God bring forth, carry out and cause evil to flow as a stream into the world. This is why God sent His Word to warn of the things that are in the world that we would make the

Most High our dwelling. For this is God's promise given to those who make the Lord their refuge – no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent:

“You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.”

Ps. 91:8-10



Yes, we all struggle against the ways and the will of Satan. Some have even aligned themselves to the enemy's way of thinking – to kill, steal and destroy (John 10:10). James asks us to consider those things of which we struggle like what causes fights and quarrels?

He goes on to explain they come from the desires that battle within us. “You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want,” James 4:1-2. God is not being honored. He is not being esteemed as the Source of affection, goodwill, love and benevolence toward mankind and the Author and Promoter of peace (2 Cor. 13:11 AMP). There are those who even think it is futile to serve Him.

They have a proud and arrogant attitude toward God. But the Lord says of those who fear Him and honor His name:

“They will be Mine in the day when I make up My treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who don’t.”

Those who believe in what can be seen often consider the proud and arrogant to be happy and favored because evildoers are exalted and prosper (Mal. 3:13-18).

Sadly, godly wisdom is lacking. As is understanding, for even though we can make our own plans, and have our own opinions it is the Lord Who gives the right answer. Since a point of view can always be “proven” when our ways seem right in our own eyes; however, what is not always considered can the Lord, Who examines the motives of our heart, be convinced?

What is amazing and completely awe-inspiring when one considers how miraculous, for the Lord has made everything to accommodate itself and contribute to its own end and His own plan and purpose – even the wicked are fitted for their role for the day of calamity and evil. However,

those who commit and trust whatever they do to the Lord will discover He causes our thoughts to become agreeable to His will so our plans can be established and successful (Prov. 16:1-4 AMP).



From the very beginning there have only been two perspectives from which to choose – Good or Evil – right or wrong. What God says is full of living power – Truth, which makes us uncomfortable by cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires, exposing what we really are (Heb. 4:12 TLB).

While the evil one can speak no good or right because his talk is foul like the stench from an open grave; his tongue is loaded with lies. Everything he says has in it the sting of a deadly snake because his heart is filled with venom (Rom. 3:13 TLB).



So know our words will reflect our fate: either we will be justified by them or we will be condemned (Matt. 12:37). There is no in between, there is only time to re-evaluate because it is the Lord Who makes us the head and not the tail, if and when we pay attention and heed God's Word (Deut. 28:13).

And though Jesus brought New Wine to be savored, He didn't come to abolish the Law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. He came to accomplish their purpose. To speak the Truth so confidence and assurance could be gained from knowing not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved (Matt. 5:17-18 NLT).

However, after drinking the old wine there are many who don't seem to want the fresh and the new. 'The old ways are best,' they say," Luke 5:39 TLB. Hopefully, it is becoming apparent God's Word when applied is not only beneficial for our spiritual well-being but also our physical, emotional and intellectual well-being.

However, over time attitudes and opinions have become embedded in a system of beliefs, traditions, taboos, opinions, habits and customs making it difficult to adapt to change.

Truth be told, any life is a life of change. Many of us may spend a great deal of time and energy to avoid change, but it will eventually and inevitably catch up to us. However, because our characteristics are so deep-seated they often seem too difficult to change, and we could become prisoners to our past.

Our characteristics and personality deficits are so much a part of who we are that any suggestion of change may be viewed as a personal attack. However, in order for us to experience the transformation of which God speaks – the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2) – we must be willing to form new perceptions on this life-changing subject of Good and Evil.

As renowned psychologist, James Prochaska, proposed we often find ourselves in the same predicaments as a result of our perceptions of change. Behavioral change is rarely a discrete or single event; even though we may view it that way. More often than not, behavioral change is a process that occurs gradually, over time. (Information taken from Psychology Today: Why is Change so Hard? Author – Katherine Schreiber, MFS LMSW. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-truth-about-exercise-addiction/201608/why-is-change-so-hard>



This spiritual journey involves process for it requires time and dedication to take off our old self with its practices and character deficits and prideful attitudes and opinions so we can continue to grow and mature in the new self we have chosen to put on. By living a brand new kind of life that is continually being renewed as we learn more and more of what is right and true.

Being constantly determined to become more and more like Christ Who creates this new life within us. And in this new life one's nationality or race or education or social position is unimportant; such things mean nothing. Whether a person has Christ is what matters, and He is equally available to all (Col. 3:9-11 TLB).

Word studies and investigating the meaning of names gives us additional insight and understanding of God. Like the name Naamah, who has been identified as the sister of Tubal-Cain, and means beautiful; agreeable. Keep in mind we have been discussing people who did not depend or rely on the Lord; instead, they looked to themselves and others. As a result of being agreeable, unhealthy personality traits or disorders such as people pleasing, obsessive compulsiveness, paranoia, antisocial behavior, dependence, narcissism and codependent patterns and traits develop.

Being agreeable with the ways of the world causes what is seen and desired to be perceived as beautiful, but what is unseen, what lies within a heart, not so much.

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Unhealthy and ungodly developments occur. For instance, Genesis 2:24 portrays marriage as designed by God: A man shall leave his father and his mother and shall become united and cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh (AMP). The first recorded perversion of marriage as ordained by God is Lamech's polygamous relationship with Adah and Zillah.

Lamech also seems to give us a glimpse into a narcissistic personality disorder (NPD), which involves a pattern of self-centered, arrogant thinking and behavior, a lack of empathy and consideration for others and an excessive need for admiration.

Individuals with NPD are often described by others as being cocky, manipulative, selfish, patronizing and demanding. This way of thinking and behaving surfaces in every area of the narcissist's life: from work and friendships to family and love relationships.

People with narcissistic personality disorder are extremely resistant to changing their behavior, even when it's causing them problems. Their tendency is to turn the blame on to others. What's more, they are extremely sensitive and react badly to even the slightest criticisms, disagreements, or perceived slights, which they view as personal attacks.

For the people in the narcissist's life, it's often easier just to go along with their demands to avoid the coldness and rages. Information taken from the following website: Help Guide

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-disorders/narcissistic-personality-disorder.htm>

Such a grandiose sense of self-importance, marrying two women and claiming he is ten times more deserving to be avenged than Cain, is the defining characteristic of narcissism. To do as the name Adah suggests: to pass on or continue, to remove, pass by or as the name Zillah suggests: to hover over or to shade, gives us a good indication of unhealthy emotional and psychological patterns of behavior.



It takes radical honesty and a good dose of self-compassion to recognize a repetitive pattern. Sometimes our recurring behaviors and experiences become so ingrained they feel like a part of our identity. When we repeatedly find ourselves in a similar yet unwanted situation, or when we replay the same scenario over and over again, not knowing why, it might mean we are caught in a repetitive cycle.

The first step to freeing ourselves is recognizing the pattern for what it is. One of the ways to do so is to step back and look at the situation through a wider lens.

Many techniques can help us gain some helpful distance from our thoughts and emotions, meditation being the most well-known. However, journaling, especially stream-of-consciousness writing, in which you don't censor yourself and just let the words flow on the page, allows you also to gain the distance necessary for pattern recognition. So, pull out a piece of paper and reflect on your past and present.

Are you currently in a situation that triggers a familiar sense of discomfort? Does this situation remind you of something from your past? Usually there is an active link between the past and the present. Ask yourself what led you to where you are. Do you notice any situations that tend to repeat themselves – like always getting involved with a similar type of person or continuously bypassing opportunities because you don't feel you're "good enough"?

Sometimes it's not so obvious and visible, but the essence of the situation might be the same – meaning it makes you feel the same way. There is a strong sense of familiarity or *déjà vu*, although the circumstances might

be very different. It feels like home, but not in a good way. Take note of that. It's your clue, leading you to uncover a pattern.



Next, look for patterns that are more internal, like a pattern of negative self-talk. Maybe you continuously put yourself down or tend to catastrophize (to imagine the worst possible outcome of an action or event). Those patterns lead you to make specific choices and behave in a certain way, so, sooner or later, they will manifest externally.

The same is true of emotion. Is there a negative emotion that's always there, in the background of your life? Are there emotions you are experiencing on repeat? Do you seem to be recycling the same feelings, and often they are not reflective of what's happening in your life at the moment? These are clues leading you to identify a pattern that could be potentially sabotaging your conscious efforts.



Once you recognize the pattern, you can start looking for the beliefs that created it, and this is how you release it. Identifying the pattern is the first step in the healing journey it's a positive step because you can't heal what you don't know.

I mentioned self-compassion for a reason, as seeing our patterns in a bright light of the day can be difficult and cause us to feel guilt or shame. You want to avoid falling into this trap. Treat yourself as you would your best friend or someone you love.

Every single one of us carries emotional baggage, does things we are not proud of, and fails from time to time. It's natural and human to react to old hurts and stories by forming some patterned behaviors or experiences. What you are doing is an act of courage, so extend yourself some love and forgiveness.

Information taken from the article, "How to Recognize Repetitive Patterns of Thought, Emotion and Behavior," written by **Monika Walankiewicz**, which she posted on the website **Wholebeing Institute**.

<https://wholebeinginstitute.com/recognize-repetitive-patterns/>



This article written by Rose Cole, "7 Signs of People-Pleasing & Codependency," explains how shocked she was to discover what she was doing:

- Stuffing her true feelings, wants and desires because she didn't want to hurt anyone or "rock the boat"
- Always waiting for the "right time" to talk about what she thought or needed, but the time never seemed to come, so feelings were buried and resentments rose
- Pushing away help even when stressed and overwhelmed
- Unable to set healthy boundaries
- Overextended and stressed all to "be of service to others"
- Berating herself for committing to yet another thing there was no time for
- Difficulty saying "No"
- Avoiding tough conversations
- Being reactive and defensive
- Struggling with issues of control
- Being empathic to a Fault
- While self-care slips



She states the interesting thing...almost everyone is doing these things to some degree, but almost no one realizes it...and it's costing us more than we realize. We each can have codependent patterns that flare up from

time to time, but for some it's ruling our lives and we may not even know it. Many accomplished, highly intelligent and spiritually evolved people are shocked when they realize how much codependency is running their lives, and how deep it can go.

Codependency was originally thought to only involve families of substance abuse but it can actually affect any kind of relationship...really, any interaction with another human being. It's characterized by sacrificing one's personal needs in order to try to meet the needs of others...but this can show up in many forms, and can unknowingly sneak into every area of our life.

The biggest thing to realize is that when we are acting out of codependency we're giving our power away, and unwittingly creating drama and chaos in our life. Codependency is actually one of the top ways we sabotage ourselves from reaching our true potential in life.

<https://rosecole.com/7-signs-of-people-pleasing-and-codependency/>



I share the Word of Truth so with knowledge of God we can better understand the differences in our fallen nature and His divine nature

because it is through Love, the Lord can work resolution and peace into every one of our disorders (1 Cor. 14:33).

And God's peace which transcends all understanding (Phil. 4:7) calls for our becoming aware of the issues of our heart, and to wholly understand His nature, which is totally different than ours, because it is one of love which flows profusely from His being because - God is love (1 John 4:16).

When Adam and Eve became mesmerized with concern for "self," they became blinded by an unfamiliar notion - conceit (delusion, concoction, fabrication). Not just life but their very nature was converted (redesigned, distorted, supplanted) as the result of their self-centered thinking. They developed a beclouded and stupid state of mind, and fell into the condemnation that the devil did (1 Tim. 3:6 AMP), which has been passed on to all mankind.



Satan's heart is filled with envy and selfish ambition (James 3:16).

However, his pomp has been brought down to the grave. Isaiah spoke of that time when maggots are spread out beneath him and worms cover him who said in his heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on

the utmost heights of the sacred mountain; I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High," Isa. 14:11,13-14.

Indeed the devil is arrogant and never at rest. Because He is greedy as the grave and like death is never satisfied, he gathers to himself all the nations and takes captive all the peoples (Hab. 2:5). Why? Lucifer coveted and tried to claim for himself all that was good, all that was God's. Yes, Lucifer saw first-hand how beautiful God and His creations, now his goal is to claim as much good as we agree to.

In his arrogance this wicked man hunts down the weak who are caught in the schemes he devises. He boasts of the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the Lord. In his pride the wicked one does not seek the Lord; in all his thoughts there is no room for God (Ps. 10:2).

How he has fallen from heaven, that morning star, son of the dawn! He has been cast down to the earth, him who once laid low the nations! Brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit; those who see him stare at him and ponder his fate: "Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble," Isa. 14:12&16.

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So why do people boast of evil? Why boast when they are a disgrace in the eyes of God? Their tongues plot destruction; it is like a sharpened razor in those who practice deceit. They love evil rather than good, falsehood rather than speaking of the Truth.

Surely God will bring them down to everlasting ruin: He will snatch them up and tear them from their dwellings; He will uproot them from the land of the living. The righteous will see and say, "Here are those who did not make God their stronghold; instead, they trusted in their wealth (Ps. 52:1-7).

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone (Rom. 5:12). So what mere person can bring what is pure from the impure? No one! (Job 14:4). Because the heart is the most deceitful thing there is and desperately wicked. No one can really know how bad it is! Only the Lord knows! (Jer. 17:9-10 TLB). We are guilty of following our own plans, and acting according to the stubbornness of our evil heart (Jer. 18:2 ESV).

Yes, where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice (James 3:16). Which is why the law was given to Moses to show people their sins, but the law was designed to last only

until the Seed to Whom the promise referred had come, Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:19).



The power of the law touches only the living. For instance, a wife is legally tied to her husband while he lives, but if he dies, she's free. If she lives with another man while her husband is living, she's obviously an adulteress; but, if he dies, she is quite free to marry another man in good conscience, with no one's disapproval.

So this is something like what has taken place with you. When Christ died He took that entire rule-dominated way of life down with Him and left it in the tomb, leaving you free to "marry" a resurrection life and bear "offspring" of faith for God.

For as long as we lived that old way of life, doing whatever we felt we could get away with, sin was calling most of the shots as the old law code hemmed us in. And this made us all the more rebellious.

In the end, all we had to show for it were abortions and miscarriages and stillbirths. But now that we're no longer shackled to that domineering mate of sin, and out from under all those oppressive regulations and fine print, we're free to live a new life in the freedom of God.

But I can hear you say, “If the law code was as bad as all that, it’s no better than sin itself.” That’s certainly not true. The law code had a perfectly legitimate function. Without its clear guidelines for right and wrong, moral behavior would be mostly guesswork. Apart from the succinct, surgical command, “You shall not covet,” I could have dressed covetousness up to look like a virtue and ruined my life with it.



The law started out as an excellent piece of work. What happened, though, sin found a way to pervert the command into a temptation, making a piece of “forbidden fruit” out of it.

The law code, instead of being used to guide me, was used to seduce me. Without all the paraphernalia of the law code, sin looked pretty dull and lifeless, and I went along without paying much attention to it. The very command that was supposed to guide me into Life was cleverly used to trip me up, throwing me headlong. So sin was plenty alive, and I was stone dead. But the law code itself is God’s good and common sense, each command sane and wholly sound counsel.

I can already hear your next question, “Does that mean I can’t even trust what is good (that is, the law)? Is good just as dangerous as evil?” No again! Sin simply did what sin is so famous for doing: using the good as a cover to tempt me to do what would finally destroy me. By hiding within God’s good commandment, sin did far more mischief than it could ever have accomplished on its own.



I can anticipate the response that is coming: “I know that all God’s commands are spiritual, but I’m not. Isn’t this also your experience?” Yes. I’m full of myself – after all, I’ve spent a long time in sin’s prison. What I don’t understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So if I can’t be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God’s command is necessary.

But I need something more! For I know the law but still can’t keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don’t have what it takes. I can will it, but I can’t do it. I decide to do good, but I don’t really do it. I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don’t result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the

better of me every time. It is sin dwelling in me fixed and operating in my soul (Rom. 7:1-20 Message).



There is so much understanding to be gained; for instance, the law always ended up being used as a Band-Aid on sin instead of a deep healing of it. And now what the law code asked for but we couldn't deliver is accomplished as we, instead of redoubling our own efforts, simply embrace what Holy Spirit is doing in us.

Those who think they can do it on their own end up obsessed with measuring their own moral muscle, but never get around to exercising it in real life. Those who trust God's action in them find that God's Spirit is in them – living and breathing God!

Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God and His Word leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life. Focusing on self is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, and ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores who God is and what He is doing. And God isn't pleased at being ignored.

But, when you really believe if God Himself has taken up residence in your life, you can hardly be thinking more of yourself than of Him. Anyone, of course, who has not welcomed this invisible but clearly present God, the Spirit of Christ, they won't know what we're talking about.

But for you who welcome Holy Spirit, who allow your heart to be His dwelling – even though you still experience all the limitations of sin – you yourself experience life on God's terms.

It stands to reason, doesn't it, that if the alive-and-present God who raised Jesus from the dead moves into your life, He'll do the same thing in you that He did in Jesus, bringing you alive to Himself? When God lives and breathes in you (and He does, as surely as He did in Jesus), you are delivered from that dead life. With His Spirit living in you, your body will be as alive as Christ's!



So don't you see that we don't owe this old do-it-yourself life one red-cent. There's nothing in it for us, nothing at all. The best thing to do is give it a decent burial and get on with your new life. God's Spirit beckons. There are things to do and places to go!

This resurrection life you receive from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike "What's next, Papa?"

God's Spirit touches our spirit and confirms who we really are. We know Who He is, and we know who we are: Father and child. And we know we are going to get what's coming to us – an unbelievable inheritance! We go through exactly what Christ goes through. If we go through the hard times with Him, then we're certainly going to go through the good times with Him also! (Rom 8:3-17 Message).



Yes, thank God because our help comes from Jesus Who acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different (Rom. 7:25 Message).

There is now no condemnation awaiting those who belong to Christ Jesus. For the power of the life-giving Spirit – and you should know this power is ours through Jesus – frees us from the vicious circle of sin and death.

We aren't safe from sin's grasp by knowing the commandments of God because we can't and don't keep them. But God, He put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent His own Son in a human body like ours – except that ours are sinful – and destroyed sin's control over us by giving Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. So now we can obey God's law if we follow after Holy Spirit and no longer obey the old evil nature within us.

Those who do let themselves be controlled by their lower natures are living only to please themselves, but those who follow after Holy Spirit find themselves doing those things that please and glorify God.

Following after Holy Spirit leads to life and peace, but following after the old nature leads to death because the old sinful nature within us is against God. It never did obey God's laws and it never will. That's why those who are still under the control of their old sinful selves, bent on following the old evil desires, they can never please God (Rom. 7:22-8:10 TLB).



Here is another reason we can give thanks to God, He never stops sending His Word Who always offers us encouragement by sharing His

knowledge with us so we can really start to get it - the battle is not ours, but God's (2 Chron. 20:15 NKJV).

You can wholeheartedly trust that God's way is perfect; and the word of the Lord is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in Him. For Who is God besides the Lord? And Who is the Rock except our God? It is God Who arms us with strength and makes our way perfect. He gives us His shield of victory, and His right hand sustains us. He stoops down in gentleness to make us great (knowledgeable, adept, refined) (Ps. 18:30-36).

Those who seek greatness (distinction, importance, value) to glorify and exalt self will make this discovery about time as we all must do: The number of the days until our life's end is fleeting, a mere handbreadth. The span of our years, are as nothing before God. Each person's life is but a breath. We are as mere phantoms going to and fro; bustling about, but only in vain; heaping up wealth, not knowing who will get it (Ps. 39:4-6).

Time is a gift from God giving us opportunities, challenges and yes even despair to bring us to the end of self. For it is here where self-achievement is evaluated. Those thoughts and feelings and behaviors we follow into empty promises of happiness and contentment. And no matter our status

in life when self-interest is prioritized there are things we've done that don't leave us feeling very proud.



The need for those promises and “inner vows” we've made to self may have seemed to be substantiated; however, they actually work against us. On the website Teaching Humble Hearts, Jennifer Sum posted this article “Inner Vows Must Be Revoked:”

God's words are powerful and so are ours. His Word is binding and will always accomplish what He sets out to do. God's spoken Word is like a contract. In the Gospels, we saw an instance where Jesus cursed a fig tree and it withered within 24 hours. He explained to His surprised disciples that anyone who says anything and truly believes it will make it eventually come true, similar to a contract.

Inner vows will come to pass- whether they were intentional or not, remembered or not, voiced out or not. They represent us choosing our will over God's and need to be revoked before the fullness of Holy Spirit can be experienced.

Jesus answered them:

“Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart, but believes that what they say will come to pass, it will be done for them.”

Mark 11:23



Before the legal profession was formed, man’s word was his binding contract. The Bible points out that words can bring spiritual life (blessings) or spiritual death (curses) – and they are binding. Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit (Prov. 18:21).

Similarly, research has shown that a single word has the power to influence the expression of genes that regulate physical and emotional stress. Positive words such as “peace” and “love” promote the brain’s cognitive functioning and resilience, while negative words stimulate stress and the brain’s fear center, interrupting its functioning. Hurtful words may not literally break bones, but they can affect us physiologically and crush our spirit.

Notice that every time something is said about a person in the Bible, it will come to pass. Consider the Israelites whom Moses helped escape from

Egypt and leave for the Promised Land. Except for Caleb and Joshua, an entire generation died in the desert after wandering around for 40 years.

Why? It wasn't because God is wicked – but primarily because they kept doubting and grumbling and declaring again and again that they would die in the wilderness. God never intended to leave their bodies in the desert, but eventually, their own words and the behavior they inspired overturned God's intent. God respects our freedom to choose, our invisible spoken words can bring about changes in the visible, physical realm.

All the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron...would that we had died in this wilderness! And the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron...Say to them:

“As I live, what you have said in My hearing I will do to you; your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness.”

Numbers 14:2,26,28-29



Declarations over our souls will come to pass. Declarations include pledges, covenants, oaths, wishes, promises and vows all of which have an impact

on our future. By the nature of our words, we are either saved or condemned. Like it or not, we will invariably “eat the fruit” of our words.

God knows that we are incapable of always making godly choices with regard to our words and declarations. Therefore, to keep us safe from our own demise, God warns us not to make any oath of any sort, except to swear allegiance to Him alone.

To illustrate, let us suppose a believer is in the hospital for cancer treatment. He vows to God to follow Him for the rest of his life when he is completely healed. This is a vow that man should keep. If however, he vows to himself that he will study medicine and become a doctor when he gets out of the hospital, without confirming if this is God’s will for him, he has made an ungodly vow. In spite of any good intention, the cancer patient needs to repent of and renounce this inner vow.

Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “Yes” be yes and your “No” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation (James 5:12).

~

In the midst of pain and suffering, however, we may make declarations about ourselves in an effort to avoid suffering in the future. Such inner vows even the ones that sound positive, are self-destructive because they stop us from submitting to God's greater plans and blessings for us. We end up setting a trap for our soul through our own vows.

It is a trap to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider one's vows (Prov. 20:25).

1. SINFUL REACTION TO PAIN

An inner vow is usually the result of unhealthy or fleshly responses to hurts, unfulfilled expectations and unmet needs. Only God can shield us and show us how to stand up against life's disappointments and pain. When we fail to turn to God, we end up relying on our own limited strength and understanding. As a result, this creates a lot of stress and strife. Human beings have no hope of becoming their own personal saviors.

2. A FORM OF IDOLATRY

An inner vow is a form of self-determination and idolatry because we place our desires above God's desires for us.

We decide to rule the direction of our futures by vowing to make what we want to come to pass, even though we can't even predict or control the future. This seems foolish.

Even positive-sounding inner vows, such as "I will be the most respected sibling in my family," are idolatrous, because they seek to control our own destiny, rather than joyfully follow God's plans. We lack the freedom to become all we were created to be, because our one-dimensional and superficial inner vows will keep holding us back. In the example, we will form a competitive spirit with our siblings and keep ourselves from being vulnerable and authentic with them.



Come now, you who say: Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit – yet do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes; instead, you ought to say: If the Lord wills, we will live and do this and that (James 4:13-15).

3. PASSING JUDGMENT

Inner vows are also often made in response to our condemnation, critical and judgmental opinion of others. Vows such as “I will never be like her/him” or “When I have my own children, I will make sure they listen to me, unlike those parents at school” are a result of us judging the actions of other people.

Therefore, you have no excuse every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things (Rom. 2:1).

4. HARDEN HEARTS

Inner vows form walls around our hearts. Our hardened heart alienates us from the life that God has planned for us. They keep us ignorant and darkened in our understanding of His ways and blessings.

They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart (Eph. 4:18).

5. HOSTAGES

Inner vows cause our hearts to become hostages to our past, even if our circumstances have changed drastically. Our souls cannot truly be free to follow Christ. There is only one vow we should make, and that is to follow God all the days of our lives.

If you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth (Deut. 28:1).



Inner vows continue to work in our subconscious minds, long after our conscious minds have stopped thinking about them. They typically bring stress and block peace. If we notice that we feel “torn” and our soul struggles to follow God, it might be worth asking Holy Spirit to reveal any inner vow we have ever made that shuts God out of areas of our lives.

Inner vows made as children are still binding and follow us into adulthood. Childhood inner vows are often made in response to intrinsic emotional needs that we have felt. Growing up, we have all instinctively needed and desired to feel:

1. Unconditionally loved

2. Validated and accepted
3. Valued for who we are
4. Part of a family
5. Safe and secure
6. Forgiven for our mistakes
7. Guided and taught lovingly
8. Little or no shame
9. Happy with our looks
10. Happy with our genders
11. That we have a voice, and our opinions mattered

Some possible symptoms of inner vows include:

1. Anger
2. Anxiety
3. Compulsive behavior
4. Unrealistic expectations
5. Hatred
6. Stubbornness
7. And generally strong reactions to certain triggers

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Let's look at an example of a man whose mother kept telling him that he was "good for nothing" because he did not excel in his academic results, despite his "A" grades in music and art. God blessed him with incredible creative talents, but his mother was too fearful that he would not have a rewarding career in these fields. As a result, she pushed him to study mathematics and science instead. In his pain and frustration, he made an inner vow as a boy to "Prove to the world he would become successful in the future."

He dedicated himself to working hard and eventually became an investment banker. To keep up with the inner vow he made as a child, he spends the money he earns on expensive cars and apartments he can't really afford, to show the world that he "has made it."

All the while, he struggles with high levels of anxiety and stress, but his hardened heart and pride keep him from being honest with himself. He also finds it hard to maintain healthy relationships with women. Subconsciously, his mother's harsh words and curses haunt him. He is fearful of marriage because he is afraid his wife will find out that he is "good for nothing" and leave him.

This man’s story began not at his birth, but at his mother’s. She grew up in severe poverty and had previously made her own inner vows to “never allow my children to suffer poverty and disgrace like I have.” Her inner vow blinded her to the blessed creative gifts that God had endowed on her son, and brought unexpected suffering to the one she wanted so badly to protect. Sadly, this is not an unusual scenario.

Here are sample inner vows and their crippling consequences:

“I will never....

This person will struggle to:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| • Trust anyone | Fully trust God |
| • Trust Christians | Fully trust Christian community |
| • Trust authority figures | Will tend to revolt against them in their heart |
| • Let anyone hurt me | Be authentic with people |
| • Let same sex person hurt me | Be authentic with same-gender accountability groups |
| • Let opposite sex person hurt me | Trust one’s spouse and enjoy the intimacy in marriage that God intended |
| • Let anyone in my heart | To invite Jesus in one’s heart |
| • Let anyone take anything from me | Surrender harmful things to our loving God |
| • Let anyone control me | Submit to God’s will and plans |
| • Let anyone look down on me | Be humble |
| • Be as successful as my dad | Find one’s identity in God alone |
| • Be good enough | Accept God’s unconditional love |
| • Be loved | Believe God loves you |

- Be financially secure enough

Be content with what God has given. Wanting more

“I Will Never...”

- Be weak, vulnerable, cry
- Be honest about how I feel
- Be like my mother
- Be like my father
- Be sick
- Be successful
- Matter to anyone
- Stand out again
- Make much of my life
- Live in a messy environment

This person will struggle to:

Release pain and receive healing
 Seek help for personal struggles
 Truly forgive one’s mother. Accept God fully
 Truly forgive one’s father. Accept God fully
 Not to panic when ill
 Be confident in Christ and stay faithful to God
 Celebrate life. Suicidal ideation
 To take on ministry opportunities
 Embrace God’s plans
 Volunteer to help or go on mission trips

“I will

- Make sure people like me
- Overcome the lack of a parent’s love - Overcome same-sex attraction
- Be as successful as _____
- Be a self-made person
- Stay young for a long time
- Always look perfect
- Do anything to protect myself

This person will struggle to:

Love others unconditionally. Will control or manipulate
 Follow God’s definition of success and prosperity
 Be thankful to God
 Focus on the heart instead of physical appearances
 Be authentic and real
 Practice integrity and be vulnerable

- Do anything to win love Practice sexual purity
- Always live in this country Accept that God may have other plans elsewhere

Notice that all the vows in the table above may seem good, but they will ultimately become stumbling blocks that stop us from submitting to God’s love and His plans for us fully.

In the earlier example, the man struggled with both the words of death his mother spoke over him (curse) as well as the declarations he made for his future (inner vow). Both need to be broken in the name of Jesus. Only God can wipe our spiritual slate clean and give us a fresh start.



In the Bible, Jabez was a man whose mother also did not give him the best start in life. Because of her labor pains, she gave him the name, Jabez, which means “he makes sorrowful” in Hebrew. Jabez knew that he had to cancel out the effects of his mother’s curse on his life by calling out to God for help.

The key thing to note is that Jabez is described as being “more honorable than his brothers.” He submitted his life to God and sought his heavenly Father first, before he asked God for His blessings and protection. We too can ask God to replace the mistakes of our past by seeking Him first.

1. Acknowledge God as our King

First, we need to ask Jesus to rule over our minds, wills and emotions and invite Holy Spirit to fill us. We need to take ourselves off the thrones of our lives and invite God to take His rightful place, so that we can enjoy all the benefits of our spiritual inheritance.

2. Ask Holy Spirit to Help Us Remember All Our Inner Vows

God always answers our requests for help when we ask, particularly when it comes to restoring us spiritually. We can ask the Source of all wisdom and truth, Holy Spirit, to show us what inner vows we need to renounce.

3. Repent for Following Our Fleshly Desires

There are various reasons why we resort to inner vows and none of them pure. We need to repent of obeying any fleshly desire, such as pride, greed or the need for control that led us to make inner vows. Thus says the Lord:

“Cursed is the person who trusts in man and makes flesh their strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord!”

Jer. 17:5

4. Forgive Those Who Have Hurt Us

Importantly, we also need to forgive those who caused us any pain that resulted in us making our inner vows – before we seek God’s forgiveness. Remember, forgiveness is not letting someone off the hook, it is us letting go and trusting God so we can be set free. Forgiveness is a process.

5. Break Curses in the name of Jesus

There will be people who can’t help themselves but pass their misery and insecurities on to others through words of bitterness and curses. We must be cautious not to allow their curses and the resulting effects to take root in our soul and harden our heart.

In the case of our example, the young man made his inner vows as a result of his mother’s curses. Let us break and reject the curses spoken over us in Jesus’ name, invite God to heal our wounds and release us into His full favor. Remember, we are to also bless those who curse us and not curse them back.

All mankind is under sin with mouths full of curses and bitterness. With feet swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known (Rom. 3:14-17).

6. **Repent and Renounce All Inner Vows in the Name of Jesus**

After these steps, we should repent of choosing our own destinies and foolishly making inner vows, and release ourselves from the bonds we put our soul under in Jesus' name.

Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us (Psalm 2:3)

7. **Ask God to Transform Our Heart**

Where our heart has been hardened towards God's will, we can invite Jesus to give us a new heart and spirit so we can be free in Christ and be filled with Holy Spirit.

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh!"

Ezek. 36:26

8. **Replace the Inner Declarations with God's Declarations**

A crucial aspect of revoking inner vows is replacing our harmful self-promises with the promises of God. We can ask Holy Spirit to open our eyes to the riches of His blessings so we are not tempted to follow our fleshly desires.

Having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which God has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints (Eph. 1:18).

For example, someone who once declared “I will never be good enough” can overturn this inner vow with the Word of Truth by declaring, “I celebrate all my strengths and weaknesses, because God has a purpose and a plan (Jer. 29:11) in making me this way.

I will not be afraid to admit my weaknesses (2 Cor. 12:9), so that people will see that it is God Who has helped me attain everything that I have. With God as my Helper, I never need to fear (Heb. 13:6). My sufficiency is from God (2 Cor. 3:5).

Practical Christianity - <https://teachingumblehearts.com/en/inner-vows-must-revoked/>

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The promises God made are for our well-being. His promises are meant to give us a sturdy and reliable foundation upon which to stand. And though really believing and living these promises can be challenging, they are meant to reveal the truth and the power of Good, which of course speaks of God.

For every good and perfect gift we have received is from above; it comes down from the Father of all that gives light, in the shining of Whom there can be no variation or shadow cast by His turning as in an eclipse. And it was of His own free will that He gave us birth as sons by His Word of Truth (James 1:17-18 AMP) so we could truly know and experience His loving-kindness.

This article by Noelle Kirchner from the website Believe discusses “11 Promises from Scripture God Wants You to Know and Cling To”
<https://www.ibelieve.com/faith/five-promises-to-live-by.html>

Promise #1 - God Loves You Unconditionally

This sinful, fallen world that we live in is teeming with conditional promises and relationships. Sometimes even those closest to us let us down. Heck, we even let ourselves down at times. Despite this reality, our greatest need is to be loved unconditionally. We want to be loved with a

perfect, sacrificial, forever kind of love in spite of our faults by someone who knows us intimately.

Many relationship problems occur because we look to receive from an inferior source of love, the human heart, which can also cause the flow of love to be impeded (obstructed, stopped, rejected) because of its self-serving design. Further, we want to be supported and inspired by that love to not only become better people, but to also leave a lasting impression on this earth.



God provides us with what no one else really can. That's what theologians have meant over the years by saying that we have a God-shaped hole in our heart; there's a space we were created with that only God can fill. Yes, we are familiar with the workings of time:

A time to be born and a time to die

A time to plant and a time to uproot

A time to kill and a time to heal

A time to tear down and a time to build

A time to weep and a time to laugh

A time to mourn and a time to dance

A time to scatter stones and a time to gather them

A time to embrace and a time to refrain
A time to search and a time to throw away
A time to tear and a time to mend
A time to be silent and a time to speak
A time to love and a time to hate
At time for war and a time for peace

Eccl. 3:2-8

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven. However, God also set eternity in our hearts; yet, we can never completely understand everything He does (Eccl. 3:11 ERV). Sadly, God was also forced to set the world in our heart (Eccl. 3:11KJV) because it was not thought worthwhile to retain knowledge and trust in His Word, His promises. He gave us over to a depraved mind to do what ought not to be done. As a result we become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity - full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice (Rom. 1:28-29).



The Love we crave and were made to need is strong and unshakable. And my prayer is for you to experience this love for yourself. With Christ more and more at home in your heart, living within you, your trust in Him will

grow and be strengthened as you are rooted deep into the heart of God into His marvelous love. So you can feel and understand, as all God's children should, how long, how wide, how deep and how high His love for us really is.

Though God's love is so great we will never see the end of it or fully know or understand it, until at last we will be filled up with God Himself. Who by His mighty power at work within us 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.

My hope is for God to be given glory forever and ever through the endless ages because of His master plan of salvation for the Church through Christ Jesus (Eph. 3:20-21 TLB).

The Apostle Paul, who was one of the founders of the early Church writes: For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 8:38-39). God Who is Love claims you by faith. Wherever you are feeling unloved today, just drink it all in.



Those who have God's Word in their heart knows it is the eternal God who arms us with strength so we can stop loving the evil things of this world and all that it offers (1 John 2:15 TLB). For we know it is God Who makes our way perfect. Who enables us to stand on the heights trained for battle (Ps. 18:32-34).

Because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, because of our God Who helps us, because of the Almighty, Who blesses us with blessings of the heavens above (Gen. 49:24-25) we can see through the eyes of those who went before us to serve the Lord.



We can know not just with our intellect but by heartfelt experience as Elisha who said: Don't be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them. Lord open the eyes of your servants so they too can know You fill the hills full of horses with chariots of fire around (2 Kings 6:16-17) those who dwell in the shelter of the Most High; who rest in the shadow of the Almighty saying of the Lord: He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in Whom I trust. Who says:

“Because they love Me, I will rescue them; I will protect them, for they acknowledge My name. They will call upon Me, and I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will deliver them and honor them. With long life will I satisfy them and show them My salvation.”

Ps. 91:1-2, 14-16



In Chron. 7:14 God says:

“If My people, who are called by My name...”

There is no one on this planet who can deny God created us to be called by His name. When Moses saw that burning bush in the desert God identified Himself as “I AM WHO I AM,” a name of promise, that no matter when or where God is there.

Whenever introductions are made we also identify ourselves as “I am” which should be our constant reminder that God is there. No matter when, no matter where, no matter who - God is there, which Moses came to understand.

God lead those who could see no way out of slavery. I AM, this name of promise, continues to free us from bondages of fear and shame and guilt...so we too will know we can count on Him whose call is for the atheist, the doubter, the arrogant and high and lofty, but it is the believer who will gain the fulfillment of God's promises:

“If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayers offered. I have chosen you to be consecrated as a temple, your body the very sanctuary, of Holy Spirit so that My Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.”

2 Chron. 7:14-15, 1 Cor. 6:19 AMP, 2 Chron. 7:16



I AM WHO I AM is similar to the expression given in Rev. 1:8:

“I am the Alpha and the Omega!”

Which the Lord proclaimed. The voice of One calling:

“In desert times when your tongue is parched with thirst because you’ve forgotten the God of promise, I AM.”

Therefore, prepare the way for the Lord Who gives His people salvation through the forgiveness of their sins. And gain knowledge of God, of His tender mercy by which the rising “Son” comes to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace (Luke 1:76-79).

Then you shall know it is the Lord Who raises up every valley (loneliness, rejection, depression); every mountain (pride, defiance, rebellion) and hill (doubt, worry, anxiety) made low; the rough (confused, troubled, downcast) ground shall become level, the rugged (everlasting, enduring, thriving) places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. The Lord has spoken – it shall be (Isa. 40:3-5).

God’s Word says what He means, and does what He says. Jesus took a cup of wine and gave thanks for it and gave it to His disciples saying:

“Each one drink from it, for this is My blood of the New Covenant, which is being poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” Matt. 26:27-28 AMP

The problem remains as it has from the beginning: not all but many will understand they are drinking of God’s love when the cup of salvation is lifted, and the name of the Lord is called on (Ps. 116:13).

As 1 John 3:16 states: This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life – FOR US. God shed His blood so we could be set free from the diabolical purpose of sin – for Death to be faced a second time, and its penalty – eternal separation from Him Who designed everything good and loving and kind. Because of the weakness of our human nature, Paul used the illustration of slavery to help us better understand. For many don’t realize that we become as a slave of whatever we choose to follow and obey (Rom. 6:19).



From the beginning evil has worked with deception, fear and confusion so sin could defile and pollute what God deemed good. As we consider the condition of our world in general and certain areas of our lives specifically, it is blatantly apparent how successful the enemy’s strategy of destruction. Sadly, a strategy implemented by human hands.

How impactful the consequence of choice. Peace traded for chaos, Love for fear, Life for death, Happiness for discontent, Respect for contempt, Glory for shame, Innocence for guilt.....Choices that are made to serve sin by satisfying a lustful will always lead to death.

God made a choice to let His hand be upon the Man of His right hand, upon the Son of Man Whom He made strong for Himself. So then we would never depart from Him; we will call upon His name to revive us (give us life) and restore us. Causing God's face to shine in pleasure, approval and favor on us, and we will be saved (Ps. 80:17-19).



How Powerful Humility

The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28). Jesus, Who although being essentially one with God and in the form of God, did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained; instead, stripped Himself of all privileges and rightful dignity, so as to assume the guise of a servant, in that He became like men and was born a human being.

After He appeared in human form, He humbled Himself and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross! God has highly exalted Him and has freely bestowed on Him the name that is above every name. At the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:6-11 AMP).

Jesus became a servant on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises that were made and so God would be glorified for His mercy (Rom. 15:8-9). Glorified for His amazingly awesome gift, freely given to us - eternal life through our union with the Son of Man, Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23 AMP).

In union with the Son of God, for in Him there is all of God in a human body; so you have everything when you have Jesus, and you are filled with God through this union with Christ. He is the highest Ruler, with authority over every other power (Col. 2:9-10 TLB).



Together In Unity

So what union can there be between God's temple and idols (2 Cor. 6:16a)? As many times as I have read this passage of Scripture I never thought it applied to me because I thought of myself as a temple for Holy Spirit. During the days when my husband and I were struggling we spoke to a Pastor who asked what idol was in my possession. There was only one I could think of my family.

Years before the Lord had helped me to see my attachment to the material things of this world. Over time I have come to understand what Paul was saying in Phil. 3:7: All these things that I once thought very worthwhile – I've thrown them all away so that I can put my trust and hope in Christ alone. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

I have put aside all else that is material, counting it worth less than nothing, in order that I can have Christ and become one with Him. I no longer count on being saved by being good enough or by obeying God's laws, but by trusting Christ to save me. For God's way of making us right with Himself depends on faith – counting on Jesus alone.

I have given up everything else – I have found it to be the only way to really know Christ and to experience the mighty power that brought Him

back to life again, and to find out what it means to suffer and to die with Him (Phil. 3:7-10). It was through Scripture that I came to realize that I could never find God's favor by trying-and-failing-to obey the law. I came to realize that acceptance with God comes by believing in Christ Jesus.

So I consider myself crucified with Christ; that I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me. I am not one who treats Christ's death as meaningless. If we could be saved by our own efforts, then there was no need for Christ to die (Gal. 2:19-21 TLB).

For this reason since we have flesh and blood, Jesus too shared in our humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is, the devil - and free those who are held as captives by their fear of death (Heb. 2:14). Jesus faced death so we could live together forever with Him (1 Thess. 5:10 TLB). When Jesus faces death a second time - Death and Hades will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). Yes, the very last of God's enemies to be destroyed is Death (1 Cor. 15:16).

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God Justifies

We are all destined to endure the consequence for the guilt of our sin – physical death. However, God went for the jugular when He sent His own Son. He didn't deal with the problem as something remote and unimportant. In His Son, Jesus, He personally took on the human condition, entered the disordered mess of struggling humanity in order to set it right once and for all (Rom. 8:3 Message).

God made Jesus Who had no sin to be sin for mankind, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). So let us hold firmly to the faith we profess, for God has given us a great High Priest Who has gone through the heavens. Someone Who can sympathize with our weaknesses, for He also was tempted in every way, just as we are – yet remained sinless (Heb. 4:14-15).

And because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He lives to intercede for them. Such a High Priest meets our need – One Who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, and exalted above the heavens (Heb. 7:24). Making it possible for believers to approach the Throne of Grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Heb. 4:16).

Yes, we become God's temple, the home of the living God, and God has said:

"I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they shall be My people."

That is why the Lord has said:

"Leave them, separate yourselves from them, don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you and be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters."

2 Cor. 6:16-18



God ordained marriage so we would know and honor this union of two. So we would understand the significance of entering a covenant relationship. A very special and unique relationship for it requires a sincere commitment to honor and respect and obey the dictates of marriage, which are determined by Love.

A covenant relationship is not meant to be governed by the dictates of human emotion, but by God's Word Who reveals the ways of Love. As evidenced by the rate of divorce, sin has also worked to desecrate the sanctity of marriage.

In these passages set forth in Genesis 4:19-24, Lamech is identified as the first to pervert - to change so much as to create a wrong impression or alter the meaning of - marriage as ordained by God a union between two parties male and female.

When sin was introduced into our world so too was bias, hate, infringement, immorality, atrocity, decay, perversion, corruption... to mention just a few of the indecencies reared by the flesh. None of this behavior is condoned (encouraged, supported, approved) by God, only tolerated.



The clock of Time has been ticking, how long before it's realized everything may be permissible for us; however, not everything is beneficial (1 Cor. 6:12). As stated by the New Living Translation version of the Bible, we are allowed to do anything - but not everything is good for us. Or as translated by the Message Bible just because something is

technically legal it doesn't mean that it's spiritually appropriate. If I went around doing whatever I thought I could get by with, I'd be a slave to my own whims. You know the old saying, "First you eat to live, and then you live to eat?" (Vs 13)

This concept doesn't just apply to food, but to anything we allow to consume us. Whether it is fear, anger, drugs, hate, prejudice... Through circumstance sin, which dwells within, works to consume (exhaust, diminish, devastate) us until it becomes manifested in our behavior. Hurting people hurt people.

No matter the cycle of dysfunction whether it is as minor as a hang-up or as serious as a hurt or habit or addiction God will help us to put on a new nature of Love. God doesn't want our lives to be affected by dysfunction; instead, He wants to bring soundness, wholesomeness, strength, healing, renewal and recovery into our lives as we seek "to know" our Creator so we can become more and more like Him (Col. 3:10).

When we eat from the fruit of righteousness that comes through Christ Jesus we can become fortified and enriched with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These, the fruit of Holy Spirit, will begin to grow and flourish and impede those natural desires to hate and grumble and war within ourselves and with

others. For God's Word trains and disciplines so the fruit of the Spirit can not only be enjoyed but become effectual because it is righteousness that brings about quietness and confidence forever (Isa. 32:17).



When I looked up "To Know" the Merriam-Webster Dictionary gave this definition: to know someone is to love him/her - used to say that people who know someone feel great affection for them. "To Know" someone would necessitate relationship, which was the purpose for our creation - to be in relationship with God and with others.

Having superficial knowledge reveals an interest to be acquainted with someone; however, intimate knowledge is sparked by a vested (empowered, committed, recommitted) interest to look "In-To-Me-See" and being concerned by giving proper care so a richer, deeper relationship would continue to flourish.

God's divine power gives us everything we need for life and for living righteously. We receive all of this by coming "to know" Him, the One Who called us to Himself by means of His marvelous glory and excellence.

And, because of His glory and excellence, He has given us great and precious promises. These promises (we find within His Word) enable us to share His divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human fleshly desires (2 Peter 1:3-4 NLT).

Paul wrote to explain many have been and many still remain a slave to sin. If we personalize the Scriptures God's heart can be heard:

"I AM Jesus, Whom you _____, are persecuting with your sins. Now you can get up and stand on your feet. God sent Me, His Word in the flesh, to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have heard of Me and what I will show you. I desire to send you to open eyes and turn people from darkness to Light, from the power of Satan to God, so they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."

Acts 26:15-18



There are a lot of jokes about forgiveness, but forgiveness is not something that those who are serious about taking steps toward renewal and recovery can take lightly. Forgiveness is clearly the Great Physician's

prescription for those who have been broken because of our fallen, sinful nature.

- During our steps of renewal and recovery we offer forgiveness to those who have hurt us and, when possible, make amends for the harm we've done to others, without any expectations of receiving something in return
- The inability to accept and offer forgiveness can block, stall or even destroy our efforts of recovering what has been taken or unwittingly given away
- However, though forgiveness is a beautiful concept, many times it is not an easy one to put into practice
- No matter how great the offense or abuse, along the path to healing lies forgiveness
- Pretending the hurt isn't there, or that it doesn't bother you anymore won't solve anything
- Jer. 6:14 reminds us, "You can't heal a wound by saying it's not there"
- Facing our past and forgiving ourselves and those who have hurt us, and yes, even God, while making amends for the pain that we have caused others is the only lasting solution
- Forgiveness breaks the cycle

- Forgiveness doesn't settle all the questions of blame, justice or fairness, but trusting in Him Who is Good allows the reconciling and resurrection power of Holy Spirit to work within our hearts and in our relationships to bring about healing and refreshing so a newness of life with new perspectives and possibilities can flourish



- The FIRST and most important offer of forgiveness is extended from God to us
- Have you accepted God's forgiveness
- Have you accepted the work of Jesus on that cross
- By His death on the cross, all our sins were cancelled, paid in full; a free gift for those who believe in Him as the true and only Higher Power - Savior and Lord
- Jesus exclaimed from the cross:

“It is finished!”

John 19:30

- No matter how grievously we may have injured others or ourselves, the grace of God is always sufficient
- His forgiveness is always complete

- Rom. 3:22-25 says: God will set people in right standing with Himself through their faith in Jesus Christ. God does this to all who believe in Jesus, because there is no difference at all; everyone has sinned, and is far away from God's saving presence. But, by the free gift of God's grace all are put right with Him through Jesus Christ, Who sets them free (from the eternal penalty of sin, facing Death a second time, for this is eternal separation from God).

God offered His One and Only Son so that by His sacrificial death, He would become the means by which a person's sins are forgiven, through their faith in Him.

- Remember, if God wasn't willing to forgive sin, heaven would be empty



- The SECOND kind of forgiveness is extended from us to others
- Have you forgiven others who have hurt you
- This type of forgiveness is a process
- You need to be willing to be willing, but to be truly free, you must let go of the pain of the past harm and abuse caused by others

- Forgiveness is all about trusting in God's goodness, His wisdom and His judgments so we can let go
- Remember playing tug-of-war as a kid - as long as the people on each end of the rope are tugging, you have a war – When you forgive others, you are “Letting go of your end of the rope”
- No matter how hard they may tug on their end, if you have released your end, the war is over
- It is finished
- But until you release it, you are a prisoner of war
- Think about who your anger is hurting the most --- YOU
- Forgiveness enables you to become fully freed from your anger, and allows you to move forward positively in your relationships
- Rom. 12:17-18 says: Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.
- Causing an injury puts you below your enemy
- Avenging an injury makes you even with him
- Forgiving him sets you above him
- But more important, it sets you free
- You might have forgotten about someone you may need to forgive:
God

- God cannot and does not sin
- God is perfect in love, mercy and grace
- But remember that He loves us so much, He gave us a free will
- He wanted us to love Him as our choice
- You need to understand, and believe the harm others have done to you was from their free will
- It was their choice, not God's
- It was not God's will
- Once you understand "Free Will" you will understand that your anger toward God has been misplaced



- It's helpful to understand a distorted relationship to willpower
 - The willful person believes that all manner of things can be controlled if one's willpower is strong enough and focused enough
 - Failure (even failure to control events beyond anyone's ability to control) leads to a sense of inadequacy
 - The willing person recognizes the value of determination in those areas where it is possible to exercise influence or control while

accepting the fact that there are some things he or she simply can't do anything about

- God's Word tells us:

"In this world you will have trouble!"

John 16:33

- This promise of God is found in 1 Pet. 5:10: After you have borne these sufferings a very little while, the God of all grace, Who has called you to share in His eternal splendor through Christ, will Himself make you whole and secure and strong
- Jesus said:

"I have told you these things, so you can take heart that in Me you may have peace for I have overcome the world!"

John 16:33



- Suffering was not in the Garden of Eden. Suffering is on the enemy's agenda as evidenced by God Himself having to endure the shame, pain and abuse that has been so regularly inflicted upon humanity throughout time

- If you have been the victim of sexual abuse, physical abuse or childhood emotional abuse or neglect, I am truly sorry for the pain you have suffered
- YOU DID NOT DESERVE THIS
- However, you will not find peace and freedom from your perpetrators until you are able to forgive them
- Remember, forgiving them in no way excuses them for the harm they caused you, but it will release you from the power they have had over you

One of the steps we take during this ongoing process of renewal and recovery: With God's help make a list of all persons who have harmed us, and become willing to seek God's help in forgiving our perpetrators, as well as forgiving ourselves. Realize we've also harmed others, and become willing to make amends to them.

Another necessary step: With the power of God's grace we extend forgiveness to ourselves and to those who have perpetrated abuse against us, realizing this is an attitude of the heart, not a confrontation. Make direct amends, asking forgiveness from those people we have harmed, except when to do so would injure them or others.



- This LAST kind of forgiveness is perhaps the most difficult for us to extend
- We need to forgive ourselves
- You can forgive others, you can accept God's forgiveness, but you may feel the guilt and shame of your past is just too much to forgive
- This is what God wants to do with the darkness of your past:

“Come, let's talk it over! No matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can take it out, and make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you white as wool! If you will only let Me help you.”

Isa. 1:18-19

- No matter how unloved or worthless you may feel, God loves you
- Your feelings about yourself does not change His love for you one bit
- If God Himself can forgive you, how can you withhold forgiveness from yourself
- In fact, I believe that we must forgive ourselves before we can honestly forgive others

- The first name on your amends list needs to be God, the second needs to be yours

- The reason – when asked, “Which is the most important command...?”

Jesus replied:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind, this is the first and greatest commandment. The second most important is similar, Love your neighbor as much as you love yourself.”

Matt. 12:30-31



- How can you love (respect) or forgive your neighbor, if you can't love (respect) or forgive yourself -- if you have not forgiven yourself, your forgiveness toward others may be superficial, incomplete, and done with the wrong motives
- Self-forgiveness is not a matter of assigning the blame to someone else, and letting yourself off the hook
- Self-forgiveness is not a license for irresponsibility
- Self-forgiveness is simply an acknowledgment that you are human like everybody else, and that you've reached the stage in this process of

renewal and recovery where you are able to give yourself greater respect

- By taking this step, you will discover that you are letting go of the guilt and shame
- You'll be able to say, "I'm not perfect, but God and I are working on me. I still fall down, but with my Savior's help, I can get up, brush myself off, and try again"
- We can say, "I forgive myself because God has already forgiven me, and with His help, I can forgive others"
- When you forgive yourself, you don't change the past, but you sure do change the future



"I call on you, O God, for You will answer me; give ear to me, and hear My prayer. Show the wonder of Your great love, You who save by Your right hand those who take refuge in You from their foes. Keep Me as the apple of Your eye; hide me in the shadow of Your wings and I in - righteousness - will see Your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing Your likeness," Psalm 17:6-8 & 15.

Forgiveness is a process, and it definitely challenges us to place our faith and hope and trust in God. My husband and I went through a very

difficult time in our marriage. As a matter of fact, we were separated for a year and a half. I was so hurt and upset I would not have minded in the least if God bounced a frying pan off his head. If I'm being honest I actually put in that request thinking it might have knocked some sense into him.

Of course God didn't do that. What He did was make it very evident to everyone how He was blessing my husband. There are testimonies that could be given, but what is absolutely the most impactful - experiencing God. Because, being told about His goodness and loving-kindness may tickle an interest, but having personal knowledge of God's goodness and loving-kindness can spark a fire in a soul.

So I speak to you of choices. For many are led into captivity (enslaved, deprived) being spiritually arrested because they have no knowledge of God; souls famished while multitudes are dried up spiritually thirsty. As a result, Sheol has enlarged itself. Its mouth opened beyond measure, and those who exult in the ways of this world will descend into it (Isa. 5:13-14 AMP).

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This topic of “Sheol” would be interesting to study. It speaks of Death and the grave and Gehenna, which is hell, and even refers to a pit. Ps. 9:15-17 assures the Lord is famous for the way He punishes the wicked that they fall into the pit they’ve dug. They have no excuse, for the way God works is well-known. They are caught in the snares of their own cunning. The fate of those forgetting the Lord is a one-way ticket they bought for themselves to hell (Ps. 9:15-17 Message).

One explanation given Sheol is used to contrast life in the body, in the absence of revelation. A soul full of trouble as life draws near the grave. One counted among those who go down to the pit; like someone without strength. Set apart with the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, whom God remembers no more, who are cut off from His care (Ps. 94:11).

Sheol is described as a “land of forgetfulness,” but not a “state of unconsciousness.” Where God’s “wonders” are unknown; in its darkness, stillness, powerlessness, lack of knowledge and inactivity, it is a true abode of death.

The Lord knows a person’s thoughts; He knows that they are futile. Blessed is the person God disciplines, the one He tells of His Word; Who grants relief from days of trouble, till a pit is dug for the wicked. For the

Lord will not abandon His people, He will never forsake His inheritance (Ps. 94:11).



In relation to immorality the Old Testament concept of Sheol is contrasted to the idea of death being something unnatural and abnormal for man, a result of sin. The Hope God has given the believer for their future is deliverance and restoration to new life in God's presence.

I am one of the multitudes who come to you to say, "I sinned, and perverted what was right, but I did not get what I deserved. The Lord, Christ Jesus, redeemed my soul from going down to the pit, and I will live to enjoy the Light. God knows each and every person, and He speaks personally and specifically to what is familiar. He does this to get a person to turn back their soul from the pit, so the Light of Life may shine on them," Job 33:27.

Sheol, the abode of the dead, it's the antithesis (opposite, contrary, reverse) of the real life given to us by Christ Jesus. Sheol is the synonym for everything that is gloomy, inert, and insubstantial. However, the Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. My soul will praise the Lord so I forget not all His benefits – Who forgives all our sins and

heals all our diseases, Who redeems our lives from the pit and crowns us with love and compassion, Who satisfies our desires with good things so our youth is renewed like the eagle's (Ps. 103:2-6).



Sheol, the unseen world, where the distinction between good and evil is emphasized; a time of judgment where punishment is received and rewards are given to be eternally enjoyed. The Lord heard my cry and turned to me. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on a Rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to God.

Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord. Yes, blessed are those who make the Lord their trust, who don't look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods. I will wait patiently for my Jesus (Ps. 40:1-4).

And give all glory to God in the highest for on earth peace has been given to those on whom His favor rests (Luke 2:14). On those who see because their eyes are no longer closed, and on those with ears that not only hear but are also listening (Isa. 32:3). Believing in the days of the "King of

Righteousness,” when righteous will flourish; in the days of “The King of Peace,” when prosperity will abound till the moon is no more (Ps. 72:7).

We don't have to be bent over and broken by sin. We can allow the Word of God, Christ Jesus, to set us in right standing so we can be God-dependent not so very Self-Reliant or Independent or relationally Co-dependent. We can take steps toward renewal and recovery by practicing principles that will help us maintain an honest view of ourselves, our reality and our Higher Power, Christ Jesus.



- The first key is to not just consider ourselves and our circumstances as being substantial, but acknowledging the substance of Truth – the Life, the Alpha and Omega, the heart and the spirit as we continually step out in faith:
 - God exists and I matter to Him
 - We admit we are powerless
 - We admit in certain areas our lives have become unmanageable
 - We believe God will restore us with Love, a Sound Mind and Power
 - We believe He will help us stay committed to this decision to put all of who we are into His possession and safekeeping

- We believe the Word of God will encourage, support and strengthen us as we make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves
- Because of God's loving-kindness we are willing to admit to God, to ourselves and another person the exact nature of our wrongs
- With Truth as our solid foundation we are entirely ready to have God remove all our defects of character
- Having received faith and hope and love for the Surety God has given we humbly ask Him to remove our shortcomings
- Having gained knowledge and insight and understanding we make a list of anyone we have harmed, and become willing to make an amends to them all
- Having gained confidence and trust in God's refuge we step out with the mindset we are doing this with God and for His glory to make those amends whenever possible unless to do so would cause injury to others
- We embrace our covenant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by continuing to take a personal moral inventory, and when we are wrong being prompt to admit it
- We invest in our relationship with God by communicating through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact

with Him seeking knowledge of His will and the power of grace to carry that out

- We 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 our affairs



- The purpose for making amends whenever possible is for you to repair the damage you've done in the past, so that you can grow toward increasing maturity
- It is an exercise in how to be appropriately accountable for the part of your "perfect imperfection" that has caused harm to others
- Making amends is more than an apology
- It usually means that you acknowledge specifically what happened, make a commitment to the offended person not to do it anymore, and carry out that commitment to the best of your ability
- This is the primary meaning and is the preferred method when taking this step (when it would not injure the person or other people to talk to them)
- You can make amends by visiting the person, by talking to them over the telephone, or by writing them a letter

- The primary purpose of making amends is not to repair a broken relation between you and the other person
- If the relationship does get mended, that is merely a happy by-product for taking this step
- But whatever the other person's reaction to your amends, you have succeeded if you have cleared off your side of the street
- It is important to remember that after you have made your direct amends, the other person is very likely to have a response
- Remembering we can't change anything but ourselves, you simply listen and observe the response, letting the person be whoever they are
- The response may be a "thank you," or it may be criticism and anger
- The other person's response is not relevant to the reason for taking this step
- What is relevant is your acquiring knowledge and understanding of God, and how leaning on, trusting in, and relying on self and others prompted within us the development of those tendencies, habits and behaviors for which renewal and recovery has become necessary



- You learn all too quickly the trauma you experience is often a lonely road

- If no one else shows you empathy, then at least you can show yourself some sympathy
- Some call it self-pity -- others a “Pity Party”
- When you look at it through the lens of heartache and hardship, it makes perfect sense from the perspective of comfort
- However, when you party with pity too long, you may find the party never ends
- You find that self-pity is at best a temporary fix
- You find inevitably that self-pity does not move you forward
- If the only pity you get comes from yourself, then you are isolated and disconnected
- If you don't get better support, you remain stuck, you wear out and have a difficult time moving forward
- Paul outlines a more excellent way to experience true comfort and release
- Paul speaks directly to the heart of followers who have suffered many trials and tribulations by saying that if we keep our focus, we can take comfort that we reap what we sow

Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. We are each responsible for our own

conduct. Those who are taught the Word of God should provide for their teachers sharing all good things with them.

Don't be misled -- you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature, will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. BUT, those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. So let's not get tired of doing what is right and good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. (Gal. 6:4-9)



- When we continue planting good seeds, we will receive the blessings of having a right relationship with God
- A right relationship doesn't mean that everything will be smooth, but that God is pleased with our lives
- Just knowing that God is pleased with us can give us a boost that is exponentially more sustaining and uplifting than a pity party
- We are clearly told to "Not get tired of doing what is good"
- Spirit fatigue lies at the heart of partying with pity
- You get tired of waiting on the Lord for help so you provide your own entertainment

- You provide your own comfort
- This Scripture teaches us to hang in there and wait for true support -- for the help that comes from above
- God replaces the pity part with something far more formidable -- the peace that passes all understanding (Phil. 4:7)
- Seeking this peace can settle you, even in the presence of overwhelming challenges
- The Way to follow, Christ Jesus, ensures we will find peace of heart and mind by keeping our thoughts from dwelling on our own opinions and feelings, and the doubt or worry or frustration or anger that circumstance attracts, by allowing our thoughts to dwell on the Truth, the Faith, the Hope and the Encouragement of God's Word of Life
- We can choose to do as Jesus did – resist the enemy, and cause him to flee by believing and declaring the promises God has given us through His Word

Dear Lord Jesus, I am so tired of feeling sorry for myself when the going gets rough. I choose instead to acknowledge my feelings whatever they are; but, I also choose not to wallow in my feelings. I will reach out for help from helpful people. I am confident that my needs will be met. I will not always get the

outcome I want, but I will adapt to the demands that confront me daily. Give me the Grace to always turn toward You in a time of trouble. Grant me the Wisdom to turn my self-pity into self-determination. This way, I will love my way out of my pain. I will choose my way to a better path. Thank you, Lord, for guiding me and for sustaining me today. Amen.



- Another reason for taking this step involves offering restitution in addition to amends whenever your harmful action has taken something of value away from someone
- To make restitution means you repay the person in like kind (or as close as possible) for whatever has been lost
- You may have failed to repay a loan
- You may have lost, destroyed or damaged someone's property by physical violence or carelessness
- You may have caused someone to spend extra time doing something that could have been done faster except for your interference
- You may have promised to help someone do something, then failed to do so, leaving the person to do the task alone

- To make restitution you would arrange a schedule to repay money or repair and replace damaged property, and then follow through in a timely fashion
- Many of us are making the same mistakes, personally and professionally seemingly as though we “Can’t Learn”
- Suffering through tragedies in your life -- you reach the point where you become so dazed by your pain that you stop absorbing new information
- You stop learning
- You repeat the same mistakes and expect different results
- When this happens, your trauma is ushering you toward its companion -- addiction to substances or processes
- When trauma has created this unusual condition “Can’t Learn” with which to struggle, you will also struggle with relationships
- It feels as if your relationships are a lit fuse and you are on the other end of it

The following was taken from CrossWalk.Com; written by Debbie Przybylski

"We have underestimated the pain in God's heart over the devastation and brokenness of people who live in darkness. Isaiah 9:2 declares what

the result would be when Jesus' presence came to earth: 'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light' (NIV). God fully intends to continue to bring hope and restoration to forsaken, desolate communities, and He is looking for those who will partner with Him."

Father, I pray for deeper insight and understanding of Your Word so I would know Your presence in my life. Give me faith to believe that You will transform my life. Let Your Kingdom come to me here on earth as it is in heaven. Help me to cultivate Your presence in my life. I choose to co-labor with You, Father. Remove the distractions in my life that keep me from Your presence. I repent of any pride or personal idols that have taken me away from having You in first place and being completely Yours. Take away any luke-warmness in my heart and set me on fire for You.

<https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/prayer/10-morning-prayers-to-use-daily.html>